Teacher Education in the Czech Republic: Evaluating for the Future

Edited by

**Hywel Coleman
and Malcolm Griffiths**

BRITISH COUNCIL
Czech Republic

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Foreword

Paul Docherty, Director, British Council, Czech Republic

You have in your hands a remarkable document. It is an evaluation of the work that has been done in the field of ELT in the Czech Republic over the last ten years, with specific reference to the work initiated and co-funded by the British Council.

I believe the document will speak for itself in describing the work and the results but I would not want to miss the opportunity of saying what a great achievement it represents and to thank all those who contributed to that achievement.

Firstly, of course, to the writers who have contributed to the present book. All of these people have shared with us their comprehensive knowledge of the projects as they have been intimately involved in the areas of work they describe. It is refreshing to see that this closeness to the subject matter has not affected their critical faculties which makes for a powerful collection of chapters providing a serious evaluation of the process and the achievements.

Secondly, I would want to pay tribute to my British Council colleagues who, at every stage in the lifetime of the projects described here, have shown professional dedication and sensitivity to the context in which they were working. It is gratifying to see that the British Council got it largely right in establishing the projects it did in the early months and years after the 'Velvet Revolution'.

The third group that deserves our thanks and admiration includes all the other participants and contributors to the projects over the years. Their determination and stanima were vital in achieving the good results we see reported in this book.

Together with the project leaders and coordinators they ensured that the changes which the projects were designed to achieve were precisely what was required in the Czech context.

If there is something lacking in the present volume, it is the view from one of the major stakeholders, the Czech Ministry of Education. Over the years the projects have worked closely with the ministry and have been much appreciated. I hope this book will encourage the ministry to engage even more with the writers and other contributors in meaningful ways for the future. I am confident that the results have been good and that the ministry will want to build on the achievements to date. With the Czech Republic poised to join the European Union as a full member state, now is a good time to consider future collaborative work in ELT in the Czech Republic. This book captures well the achievements of the last ten years and gives a good indication of what we should be doing together over the next ten years.

Acknowledgements

The editors wish to acknowledge the many contributions which have been made by the following (in alphabetical order):

Carol Berezai
Tony Crocker
Paul Docherty
Helena Gomm
Jaroslav Kalous
Sue Mace
Michaela Píšová
Dáša Sephtonová
Karel Vašta
Staša Závitkovská

as well as the nine members of the Evaluation Team who are the principal authors of this volume.

Thanks are due also to the hundreds of questionnaire respondents, interviewees, e-mail correspondents, archivists and other willing providers of data without whom this evaluation could not have been undertaken.

Glossary and abbreviations

AMATE	*Asociace metodiku/*Association of Teacher Educators (Professional body of teacher educators in the Czech Republic; the title and acronym are bilingual)
ATECR	Association of Teacher of English of the Czech Republic
Bakalar	Czech qualification – first stage of undergraduate degree
BC	British Council
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (a pilot project within INSETT)
coordinator	holder of one of the British Council-appointed ELT professional posts functioning between 1996 and 2001 (also known as 'ELT coordinator', 'Regional coordinator' and 'Cod')
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELT	English language teaching
ELT coordinator	see *coordinator*
ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
ESP	English for specific purposes (also English for science and technology; see also TESP)
HC	heterogeneous classes (also TEHC)
INSETT	in-service teacher training (teacher education for practising teachers)
MA	Master of Arts (UK post-graduate qualification)
MEd	Master of Education (UK post-graduate qualification)
Mgr.	*Magister* (Czech undergraduate qualification)
MSATE	Moravian and Silesian Association of Teachers of English
nostrification	official process in the Czech Republic for recognising equivalencies between qualifications of different national education systems
pedagogical centre	state-run institution which coordinates INSETT activity; they operate at regional level
pedagogical faculty	university institution which undertakes the initial training of teachers (also known as 'teacher education faculty')
PRESETT	pre-service teacher training / teacher education
PRESETT R+D	PRESETT Research and Development (British Council Project, 1998–2000)
regional coordinator	see *coordinator*
SpLD	specific learning difficulties
TEFL	teaching English as a foreign language
TEHC	Teaching English in Heterogeneous Classes (British Council Project, 1999–2001)
TESOL	teaching English to speakers of other languages
TESP	teaching English for specific purposes
TRANSKELT	Transitional Skills for ELT (British Council Project, 2001–2002)
TEYL	Teaching English to Young Learners (British Council Project, 1999–2002)
YL	young learner

part one
THE PRELIMINARIES

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and overview:
The creation of a confident profession

Malcolm Griffiths and Hywel Coleman

1   Introduction

A series of British Council projects, which had as their objective the development of teacher education in the field of English language teaching in the Czech Republic, took place between 1991 and 2001. Some of these projects were large in scope and lasted for several years; others were much smaller in scale. This volume is the final report on an evaluation of these projects.

The impetus for this evaluation resulted from two separate but related factors. On the one hand, in 2000 the staff of the British Council in the Czech Republic identified the need to capture the impact of ten years of quite intensive activity. This was because the projects were about to come to an end in their present form and structure of delivery. The British Council hoped that an evaluation at this stage would provide useful indications to inform future planning. At the same time, British Council headquarters was beginning to pay considerable attention to the evaluation processes employed throughout the organisation globally. As part of this effort, ELT Group, based in the London headquarters, committed itself to conducting an annual series of evaluations of ELT projects with a particular focus on activity in East and Central Europe.

With the encouragement of the Evaluations Manager in the ELT group in the British Council in London and the support of the Director of the British Council in the Czech Republic, the ELT team in Prague decided that the first step towards conducting an evaluation would be to consult key stakeholders to identify what kind of evaluation should be conducted, what purposes it should serve, what aspects of the projects should be evaluated and what methodology should be employed.

The outcome of this consultation, carried out in spring 2001, with Hywel Coleman from the University of Leeds acting as external consultant, was the evaluation project. This is described in some detail and its findings are presented in this volume. A key feature which emerged from the initial consultation with stakeholders was that the evaluation should be conducted by 'insiders'. In this case, this meant teacher educators who had been involved in one or more of the projects. External input was to be provided in the form of a consultant, who would give advice on evaluation methodology and support the evaluation team; and an advisory board, who would not take an active part in the study but would provide an independent perspective.

The evaluation as reported here focuses on selected aspects of project activity. Seven individual studies – Chapters 4 to 10 – form the core of the volume. These studies were all conducted and written by teacher educators. The three chapters preceding the core studies comprise, in addition to this introduction, a description of the rationale and methodology employed in carrying out the evaluation (Chapter 2) and a brief description of the projects in the Czech Republic during the period under investigation (Chapter 3).

Following this introductory section, Section 2 of this overview chapter briefly summarises each of the nine other chapters in the volume. Sections 3 and 4 then present some general observations by the two co-editors. Firstly, Hywel Coleman discusses highlights from his own standpoint as consultant to the evaluation project. Next, Malcolm Griffiths, the Manager of the British Council's ELT projects in the Czech Republic, identifies findings which, from his perspective, are particularly significant.

2   The evaluations

Chapters 2 and 3 explore aspects of the background to the evaluation. The methodology employed by the evaluation team is described by Coleman in Chapter 2. He notes that the evaluation process possessed three particular features. Firstly, it was undertaken by a team rather than by an individual; secondly, evaluation team members had themselves been involved in the teacher development activities which were being evaluated; and thirdly, it looked back over a whole decade of work. Each of these characteristics presented particular challenges to the members of the evaluation team.

Griffiths then sets the scene, in Chapter 3, by describing the two major phases of British Council project activity, from 1991 to 1996 and from 1996 to 2001 respectively. During the second of these stages, funding was at a more modest level than had been the case previously; inevitably, this had implications for the design of project activities.

The evaluation reports proper are found in Chapters 4 to 9.

Chapter 4, an analysis of the British Council's support for PRESETT in the Czech Republic, is the most substantial chapter in the volume. The three authors – Věra Bitljanová of the Technical University of Liberec, Irena Kubrychtová of the University of Pardubice, and Jane Nolan, formerly one of the British Council's ELT coordinators – have adopted an innovative and challenging approach to their task. They begin with a meticulously documented description of the British Council's policies and practice in the PRESETT area over a period of ten years. Set beside this historical survey are two case studies from the Universities of Liberec and Pardubice. The case studies give us in-depth pictures of two university departments responsible for initial teacher education which benefited from British Council support. In this way, the authors enable us to make a detailed comparison between British Council policy (with its fluctuations over the years) and the reality on the ground.

In Chapter 5, Marta Šigutová of the University of Ostrava examines the impact of Masters courses on the professional development of teacher educators from Czech universities. The focus of her attention is a group of trainers who undertook Masters training at universities in the UK with the support of the British Council. She concludes that the impact of the UK training on the trainers, both personally and professionally, was significant. Unfortunately, though, she notes that recognition of foreign Masters degrees in the Czech Republic is still problematic. If this problem could be resolved, then the long-term sustainability of the British Council's contribution would be stronger.

Jana Jílková from ICV, Kutná Hora, considers the development of the British Council's INSETT programme in Chapter 6. The group of more than 60 INSETT trainers who have been trained believe that their competence in English, their skills as trainers and their self-confidence have all improved. Other stakeholders share this perception. However, the trainers feel that their new skills have not been given recognition by the Czech authorities.

Ludmila Havriljuková, who teaches at the State Language School in Plzen, reviews in Chapter 7 the British Council's former summer schools programme for English teachers. She concludes that there is substantial evidence that the programme achieved sustainability because of the fact that 'post-British Council' summer schools now run independently.

In Chapter 8, Alena Literová examines two parallel training programmes in the fields of teaching English to young learners and teaching English to heterogeneous classes. Literová, who teaches at Jiří Orten School in Kutná Hora, identifies a number of issues that emerge from her analysis. These include collaboration between pre-service and in-service trainers (who in other circumstances rarely have any contact with each other) and the course participants' growing self-confidence.

Daniela Bísková, from the Masaryk Institute of Advanced Studies, Czech Technical University in Prague, is the author of Chapter

9. She investigates the impact of training for university teachers of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and concludes that teachers can identify a number of advantages to be gained from the training. Nevertheless, it is not easy to find direct evidence of a link between training and changes in teaching practice.

The final chapter in the volume is Marcela Malá's discussion of the role of the British Council's ELT journal *Perspectives*. Malá, from the Technical University of Liberec, finds that *Perspectives* was well-regarded. Having an article published in the journal had a positive impact on the author's future professional writing. Unfortunately, the sustainability of the journal has not been assured and *Perspectives* is no longer published.

3 The evaluator's perspective

In addition to my role as consultant to the evaluation project – and unlike the other contributors to this volume – I (HC) approach the British Council's teacher development activities in the Czech Republic as an outsider. This of course has some potential advantage in terms of neutrality. At the same time, though, as Chapter 2 highlights, it means that I lack the rich contextual understanding which all the other contributors bring with them to the evaluation process. The outsider perspective which has conventionally been so highly prized in evaluations is also a weakness.

The comments which follow, then, must be interpreted appropriately. They are balanced by the observations of the former Project Manager, which follow in Section 4. To some extent our comments overlap and to some extent they contrast. To some degree, also, we have picked out quite different issues for discussion.

3.1 Institutional memory

It appears to be a characteristic of all large organisations – or, more precisely perhaps, of large Western organisations in whatever part of the world they operate – that 'institutional memory' is fairly short. Policies may be well documented, reviews may be undertaken and written up, decisions may be carefully recorded. But subtle shifts in organisational thinking still take place, rather like the unseen seismic shifts which occur beneath the earth's surface even while the gentle landscape on the surface seems to remain unchanged. As we learn from several of the contributions to this collection of studies (particularly Chapter 4), significant shifts in the direction or activities of an organisation may take place although there may be little documentary record of or explanation for these changes. But the opposite may also be true; the documentary record may indicate that decisions have been taken, a new policy introduced, yet other forms of evidence tell us that the real behaviour of the organisation continues unchanged.

So documents exist but the actual behaviour of the organisation shifts gradually; over time there is slippage between policy statements and practice. But which moves faster? In the rapidly developing situation in the Czech Republic which is recorded here, practice seems to have outpaced formally documented policy. In other contexts, by contrast, the lag may be the other way round, between a slow moving or static world of practice and a rhetoric of change.

The importance of this discovery is that it reminds us that over-reliance on a single type of data alone is insufficient. This is particularly the case in a retrospective evaluation covering an extended period of time, where the documentary record may initially appear to be the most reliable source of information.

3.2 Archiving

A separate issue, but still related to the question of 'institutional memory', concerns the maintenance of archives. It seems a truism to say that if organisational archives are worth keeping, then they are worth keeping systematically. Many members of the evaluation team experienced difficulty in making use of archival data as they were trying to piece together the history of the projects which they were evaluating. From this experience we began to understand the somewhat random nature of the written material which organisations store for future reference. In consequence, even after a period of only ten years, there may be considerable difficulty in reconstructing a sequence of events and the thinking that underlay those events.

Now, if this is the case, then how much more difficult must it be to achieve an understanding of organisations with much longer histories – ancient universities, for example, or European colonising organisations in Asia? Did organisations maintain their archives more systematically in the past than do contemporary ones? Or do historians possess skills which are not immediately

accessible to qualitative researchers such as ourselves? These questions may become more acute in the future as the proportion of organisational correspondence which is undertaken by e-mail increases. It is likely that retrospective project evaluators of the future will find even larger holes in the archive as e-mail records will have disappeared into the ether.

3.3 Skirting the complex

It is not unknown in development projects for energy and resources to be invested in areas which generate rapidly visible results whilst more fundamental – and more complex – issues are left unattended to. The risk, when this happens, is that once the project comes to an end, the underlying systematic difficulties re-assert themselves and swallow up the innovation. There is evidence in several chapters in this volume, but particularly in Chapter 5, that one of the most difficult structural issues faced in developing a cadre of teacher educators – the question of equivalence of qualifications – was never satisfactorily resolved. Would it be an exaggeration to say that a highly skilled, deeply committed and (by UK standards) highly qualified cadre of trainers has been created – yet at the same time a cadre which is *frustrated* because of lack of recognition at home? Even if this is an over-statement of the case, the phenomenon of highly successful project achievement which does not quite fit into its context is one which occurs repeatedly.

Why does this happen? The answer is precisely because it is the fundamental difficulties – the ones which are skirted around – which are most complex. In the early years of a project all parties are keen to establish goodwill and to demonstrate a willingness to collaborate with each other. Tackling the most complex issues at an early stage might be counterproductive when high value is attached to the creation of harmonious working relationships. Then, once the external agency and the host organisation have found ways in which they can work together which bring mutual satisfaction, the fundamental structural issues may be forgotten or ignored or avoided for fear of damaging the relationships which have developed.

My outsider (and therefore incomplete) understanding of what happened in the Czech case is that in the early years after 1989, the Czech Ministry of Education – preoccupied with a host of other issues – was probably content to allow the British Council to get on with the task of developing English language teaching, whilst the British Council busied itself with its training programme. Neither party wished to scratch away too vigorously at complicated or sensitive issues and consequently both parties allowed these issues to be neglected benignly.

3.4 Evaluation or celebration?

One of the most striking impressions which I, as an evaluator, take from my experience of working with the Czech evaluation team, is of the extraordinary 'loyalty' which team members demonstrate to the achievements of British Council project activity between 1991 and 2001. (A member of the Advisory Board asked, on one occasion, 'Is this an evaluation or a celebration?') At first, I interpreted this as difficulty in achieving distance (the stance of 'standing back' which is explored in Chapter 2), but later I came to appreciate this as one of the strongest pieces of evidence of the achievement of the project. The loyalty of the evaluation team can be attributed to the fact that these people – and their colleagues – have made very substantial contributions to the project and are among the biggest beneficiaries of project activity. For them, the impact of the project is lived and experienced every day.

3.5 A confident profession

Even the most casual reader will not fail to notice that 'confidence' is a theme which recurs throughout the seven core chapters: authors of articles in *Perspectives* become more confident professionals as a result of seeing themselves in print (Chapter 10); INSETT trainers feel themselves to be more confident – as do other stakeholders who have dealings with them (Chapter 5); trainers of teachers of English to young learners report growing self-confidence, as do their colleagues who train teachers of heterogeneous classes (Chapter 8). And so the story continues.

It would be unrealistic to expect a neat set of conclusions to emerge from an evaluation of a whole decade of activity, especially when the activity has been as multi-stranded as have these teacher development projects. The value of adopting a qualitative approach (as we argue in more detail in Chapter 2) is that it has permitted a series of rich pictures to be drawn.

4   The project manager's perspective

In this section, as someone who was involved in implementation in many different aspects of the projects throughout the ten-year period under review, I (MG) present my own perspective on the findings of the evaluation. Having taken a range of roles in the projects during this period – from teacher trainer to project manager with decision making and budgetary duties from April 1997 – my views will definitely be those of an insider. It has been particularly interesting, therefore, for me to see the projects from another set of insider perspectives. I hope that this discussion will contrast productively with the impressions of my co-editor Hywel Coleman (above). I hope also that these comments will help to 'round out' the picture presented by the core studies in Chapters 4 to 10.

What I attempt here is to present some of the key issues which have struck me as I read through the studies, which together seem to paint some of the brightest colours in what Coleman refers to as 'rich pictures'. All of theses issues relate closely to the processes employed or developed in the projects. The first set of issues concerns the extent to which personal development and professional development come across as being mutually connected. This then leads on to a discussion of the impact that the projects may have had on teacher education and issues surrounding the sustainability of such impact. This leads me to an argument for which, I feel, the evaluation provides justification: that provision of trainer training/professional development programmes specifically for teacher trainers is an extremely important component within the field of teacher education as a whole and may warrant special attention. Finally, I pick out two specific aspects of process in professional development programmes which seem to be highlighted in the studies: these are experiential learning on the one hand and, on the other, sharing, networking and dissemination of innovation and best practice. Although certainly not new or ignored in our projects (or, necessarily, anyone else's) the evaluation suggests experiential learning and dissemination add considerable value to projects and thus appear to call for considerable emphasis in planning.

Thus, these issues can be considered as 'lessons to be learned' which have emerged from the evaluation, even though they may not necessarily be new ones. They are significant indicators – perhaps the term *reminders* is appropriate here – of where and how emphasis can and should be given.

4.1 Professional and personal development

A feature of the findings which I find quite striking is the extent to which processes of personal and affective development within professional development run like a thread through many of the chapters. There are significant numbers of references to such concepts as confidence, self-esteem, motivation, challenge, feeling of being supported and team spirit. It was interesting enough in itself, that, in designing their studies, the researchers frequently decided to focus on these issues, but – perhaps even more interesting – is the frequency with which these issues emerge in the data collected from participants on the projects and the extent to which they are valued. This might seem to suggest that many of the teacher educators who took part in the project – and who later carried out the evaluation studies – hold an assumption that these factors are just as much an essential part of professional development as acquiring academic and professional skills. Thus, if ever evidence were needed that these aspects should not be left to chance or compromised when designing teacher education, it may be that this evaluation will provide a good source.

4.2 Overall impact of the projects

Naturally, for a project manager, it is pleasing to note the frequency with which those who took part in the projects perceive the impact on them as being positive. *To up-grade* and *to enhance* are key terms which were stated often in the project objectives back in 1991. If, as suggested by many respondents, the level of their own professional expertise has been raised and they are drawing extensively on this expertise in their professional practice, then it may be appropriate to state that the provision of teacher education has indeed been enhanced.

From the point of view of accountability, the question may well be asked: would this have happened without the British Council's activities? The researchers undertaking this evaluation did not try to tackle the question of cause and effect directly; instead, they tended to look at what achievements had been made or were perceived to have been made in areas where the British Council had directly intervened through the projects. I feel that what we can say with at least some degree of certainty is that the projects were run in areas that have shown signs of positive impact and where innovation is perceived to have occurred. For example, there are PRESETT departments such as the two described in Chapter 4 which have undergone

tremendous transformation. Meanwhile, in the field of INSETT, there is now a cadre of skilled and active Czech school-based trainers, whereas before there was hardly even a handful of people who could be described in such a manner.

Another question of accountability which may legitimately be asked and used to gauge the effectiveness of the projects is almost the reverse of the previous one: now that the projects are finished, what will happen to the expertise and networks that have been developed? Again, this is not a question that is easy to answer directly from the evidence gathered here. One question which occurs immediately is whether new trainers and teacher educators – in all sectors – will continue to be trained and receive professional development. Or is there a real danger that the expertise base built up so far will gradually fade away as teacher educators retire (something which is certainly imminent in the next ten years or so) or move away from the profession for other reasons? With luck, AMATE, the professional body of teacher educators, will be able to tackle this issue. However, several other issues are raised which are also linked to sustainability and thus the long-term impact of the projects. Again, these are issues that appear with considerable frequency across the whole evaluation: the effectiveness of dissemination, the functioning of independent networks, cooperation between different sectors of teacher education, conditions for recognition of foreign qualifications and the official status of teacher educators.

4.3 Conditions for sustainability

It is significant that respondents to several of the surveys reported here have expressed their concern that, with some of these conditions not yet fully in place, there is indeed a threat to long-term sustainability. Have the British Council's projects actually impacted on the system and infrastructure of teacher education? Or, on the other hand, are some of the changes and hoped for benefits unsustainable because of factors within the existing system which have not been changed and which are unlikely to change? For example, will university departments feel the threat of being unable to continue, without compromise, with their present staffing or innovative approaches, because they lack the qualifications and research profile required to satisfy accreditation committees? Or will INSETT trainers burn out through being required to provide INSETT training in their spare time because they cannot be granted official trainer status and the reduced load of regular teaching duties which would be appropriate for such a role? This issue seems to have implications for the role of consultation and development of partnerships in setting up projects: there is a need for clear negotiation of expectations and thorough feasibility planning. Not that these failed to take place, but perhaps the lesson illustrated here is that partnerships can take a long time to build up.

These are difficult questions. However, there does appear to be a bottom line where, at least from the evidence of these studies, significant development has occurred. Furthermore, there has been a high level of activity on the part of project participants which has had considerable impact at other levels. For example, over an eight-year period, we know of hundreds of teachers annually who received training through INSETT summer schools and thousands who attended year-round seminars led by British Council INSETT trainers. The chances are that, given the conditions and demand for language teaching at the time, some of this activity would have happened anyway. But to go back to my earlier point, there is, it seems, evidence that the quality of this training was considerably enhanced by the project. And eight years of enhanced training during a crucial stage in the development of language teaching would seem to be of high value in itself. Readers may of course think 'well, he would say that, he was the project manager', but my own perception is that the investments of time, resources and professional development have been worthwhile. Even though, in official terms, the final seals have not yet been attached – official recognition of the status of INSETT trainers or of the UK-awarded Masters degree are not currently possible – significant steps forward have been taken. An example is the success achieved by AMATE in gaining initial approval from the Ministry of Education to hold a contract to develop INSETT frameworks.

An important lesson that the British Council can learn here is the importance of managing expectations properly. A recommendation would thus be that, if the only benefits of participation which can be guaranteed are those which come through the intrinsic benefits of professional development, then participants must be made aware of this at the outset.

4.4 Value of trainer training

Let us turn now from the role of projects in supporting systems and return to the lessons learned which are intrinsic to professional development as such. I think the studies in this volume can offer some interesting and useful evidence of the value of trainer training through formal programmes of professional development and support. It may seem strange, even unnecessary, to suggest that the training of trainers ('trainer education' or 'formal professional development' for trainers) needs to be justified. However, taking into account my own personal impression of how little of it actually seems to go on

(certainly in the Czech Republic and, as far as I know, in many other countries as well), perhaps it is not so inappropriate. For example, in the Czech Republic, because of constraints such as limited time and resources, the training of trainers, where it takes place at all, has to be squeezed into a few odd days and, at the most, a few whole weeks. This is clearly on a different scale to the time that is generally available (and, indeed, is often a legal requirement) for teacher education. Although I am not suggesting that four-year courses are required to train trainers, nevertheless it does strike me that, given the high value which appears to be placed on professional development for trainers and teacher educators, it may be important to persuade more institutions to consider their own situation and needs in this area. It is true that we have no control group data which would permit a systematic comparison between trained and untrained trainers. However, from the studies in this volume, we can see ample evidence of enhancement in the quality of trainers – resulting from their participation in trainer training programmes – appearing to go hand-in-hand with increased self-confidence, self-esteem and positive perceptions of the teacher training which they deliver.

4.5 Experiential approaches to trainer training

As well as pointing to the value of the professional development opportunities for teacher educators, the studies also reveal the value of the *processes* which were employed during the projects (i.e. in addition to the *outputs*). Experiential learning was a significant aspect of project design. By *experiential learning* I mean long-term development programmes where input was directly and explicitly linked to practical experience; examples include the INSETT and ESP summer courses or participants' own individual investigations. The studies in this volume refer frequently to the extent to which such approaches are valued and credited with the significant advances in professional development which questionnaire respondents cite.

Apart from the project designers' preference for experiential and reflective models of professional development, time constraints were also partly a spur to employing these modes of work. Periods of training were inevitably interspersed with periods of practice when participants had to be back in their normal working environment. This alternation of experiences thus created ideal conditions for experiential learning and reflection on practice. This was certainly exploited extensively; nevertheless, it is probably true to say that in many cases these opportunities could have been exploited even further. Even where time constraints were not so rigid, a recommendation for future programmes of professional development of all kinds would still be that inputs should be spread out over an extended period of time, with opportunities for experiential learning and reflection formally integrated.

4.6 Sharing and dissemination

The final area to which I should like to draw attention is the considerable emphasis in the studies on the important role played by sharing and dissemination of experience and expertise. As I suggested in the section on overall impact above, networks and dissemination play an important role in carrying and sustaining the impact of projects. At various points in the studies, respondents provide substantial evidence of the value they place on networks, on opportunities to share best practice and to develop it together, and on opportunities to disseminate innovation (and to be disseminated to!). Clearly, these features are important in actually carrying professional development forward. I read into this an implication that such aspects are not merely desirable optional extras, but are probably essential. This can be perceived from several angles – sustainability, affective development, and as a powerful source of learning input. The evaluation emphasises the values and the significant role played by building teams, networks and communities and thus I would strongly recommend that full consideration should be given to providing opportunities for networks within future projects.

Fortunately the projects brought professionals together from different institutions and backgrounds quite early on. The central function of networking in supporting the PRESETT Fast-track programme later made it clear that this was indeed a valuable resource to be exploited by those of us responsible for planning activities. From then on we built a lot of activities around the issue of networking. The clear success, if perhaps unpredicted, of the cooperation and excellent working relationships which grew up between INSETT and PRESETT teacher educators also suggests that we (the British Council ELT team) may have been more tentative than we needed to be in building this cross-sectoral cooperation into project structures. Perhaps this was something which we could have exploited at an earlier stage; certainly it is something that should prove to be of great value in future planning.

The same might apply to cooperation between ESP trainers and those working in other sectors. Although this is something which does not explicitly emerge from the evaluation data (because there never were any projects where ESP trainers worked

in collaboration with other trainers), the studies in this volume do reveal that ESP trainers have similarities with others, particularly with INSETT trainers, for instance in the way that they perceive aspects of their training work. I would therefore strongly recommend that INSETT and ESP trainers, perhaps through the forum of AMATE, should investigate future avenues of cooperation.

4.7 *Perspectives* and dissemination

A similar lesson can be learned from the study of the journal *Perspectives*. Had the role and value of the journal been investigated at an earlier stage, it might have been possible to exploit it more fully and more explicitly, not just as a forum for dissemination but also as a motivational force in professional development. If the dual benefits of the journal – the impact of dissemination as well as the impact on professional development – had been assessed earlier, we might have decided to integrate it more formally into the various projects. This in turn might have led to *Perspectives* being included in plans for sustainability, for example by handing over ownership of it to Czech professionals. Unfortunately, time constraints and other pressures led to *Perspectives* not being given the priority which perhaps it deserved. However, the real value of building a forum for dissemination into professional development programmes has now been demonstrated in the Czech context and it seems that interest in taking it forward does indeed exist.

5   Conclusions

From this evaluation we can gain insights into those aspects of professional development projects which deserve emphasis. Or, to turn the concept round the other way, the evaluation studies warn us about those aspects which we should be wary of. The importance of attending to *process* – communications, partnership building, team and network building, personal growth as well as training methodology – at least as much as *product* comes through very clearly. Affective aspects of professional development, such as the role of confidence-building, stand out very strongly. Moreover, the evaluation has brought home to us the responsibility which lies on project providers to assess fully the likely conditions for sustainability. Furthermore, in the light of the affective engagement on the part of participants, project providers have the responsibility to manage expectations appropriately. The evaluation makes a case for trainer training to be promoted as a key professional development activity, with systematic approaches and more time given to it. Finally, the studies shed light on the importance of certain aspects of process in professional development, i.e. the value of experiential approaches and of sharing and dissemination when integrated into trainer training as well as other professional development.

CHAPTER 2

Standing back and looking back: Doing a participatory evaluation retrospectively[1]

Hywel Coleman

The process of evaluation is explored in this chapter. The Czech evaluation was characterised by three features: it was carried out by a team of nine people, not by an individual evaluator; it was participatory in that it was undertaken by people who had been involved in the activities under review; and it was retrospective in that it covered activities which had started a decade earlier. The five stages through which the evaluation passed are described and major issues arising at each stage are identified. The chapter concludes by highlighting communication as a particularly significant aspect of the evaluation process. The impact on members of the evaluation team of their involvement in the evaluation is also discussed.

Introduction

This chapter discusses the process by which an evaluation of British Council support for the training of English teachers in the Czech Republic was carried out. The evaluation was performed post hoc, just at the point when intensive British Council support – which had been in place for ten years – was being substantially reduced. It was undertaken by an Evaluation Team consisting of nine teacher trainers and trainer trainers who had themselves been involved in the activities which were being evaluated. The challenge for the Evaluation Team Members (ETMs), then, was to perform a participatory evaluation and at the same time to do it retrospectively. This meant that, firstly, they needed to find ways of standing back from the training work in which they had been involved, in an effort to achieve distance from it. Achieving distance is one of the mechanisms which Lincoln and Guba (1985: 42–43) recommend for guaranteeing the 'trustworthiness' of accounts based on qualitative data. Simultaneously, the ETMs needed to look back in an effort to describe their own and others' previous experience (Clandinin and Connelly 1998).

In this chapter I draw on a number of sources, including the five consultancy reports which I wrote at two-monthly intervals during my involvement with the evaluation process, correspondence between the British Council and myself, minutes of the Evaluation Project's Advisory Board meetings, and the ETMs' anonymous feedback at the end of each evaluation workshop

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and team meeting. The most important data source, however, is a corpus of over 500 e-mail messages exchanged among ETMs and between members of the Team and myself.

Five stages in the evaluation process can be identified: opening the debate, finding the focus, collecting data, processing and analysing data, and writing. The nine individual investigators did not all join the Evaluation Team at the same time, and individual ETMs worked at their own pace as circumstances allowed. They were not, therefore, moving through the evaluation process in lockstep.

The objectives of this chapter are to describe the five principal stages in the evaluation process, to record the ETMs' responses to the process which they were experiencing, to discuss issues arising (particularly dissemination), and to identify lessons which can be learnt from this experience. This account provides the methodological context for Chapters 4 to 10 in this volume. In addition, it may be of interest in other evaluation situations where a participatory approach is being adopted.

Stage 1: Opening the debate

The British Council's teacher education activities in the Czech Republic between 1991 and 2001 were wide-ranging and complex. They were organised through 12 distinct sectors[2]. Chapter 3 in this volume discusses the whole programme in detail. Bearing in mind the range of the British Council's involvement, and in view of the extended period of time over which that involvement occurred, it would have been inappropriate to expect an outsider to undertake the evaluation. This pragmatic imperative coincides with the inherent desirability of insider involvement in evaluation, as we are reminded by the OECD's *Best Practice Guidelines for Evaluation: 'Participatory evaluation methods can be used to create consensus and ownership for change process'* (OECD 1999:8; see also Alderson and Scott 1992 and Weir 1995). My own role as consultant to the evaluation, then, was not to perform the evaluation myself but rather to facilitate the process.

As the nine ETMs were scattered across the Czech Republic and I was based in Leeds, the issue of communication was crucially important. We were able to meet each other for six weekend workshops, but otherwise all of our contact with each other was by e-mail.

A preliminary workshop considered how a retrospective evaluation of the Council's activities in the field might be undertaken. Participation was open to a wide constituency of teacher trainers and others who had contributed to and participated in the British Council's activities. Thirty self-selected people attended.

According to the terms of reference for the workshop, the overall aim was '*… to facilitate production of a project design that will effectively evaluate previous BC involvement in teacher education in the Czech Republic*' (British Council 2001). Meanwhile, the specific objectives of the meeting were: '*… to raise or consolidate participants' awareness of key principles in evaluation; to begin the design process by eliciting the aims and objectives, scope, likely project activities and initial action planning from the … participants; to define the specific context for evaluation; and to set up a Czech/BC working party to finalise the design and write the project document.*'

From this brief, it is clear that there was already an expectation that the evaluation would be carried out by a local team rather than by an external evaluator.

A supplementary objective of the first meeting was to raise awareness regarding the scope of British Council activity in the Czech Republic, so as to help participants see where their own particular project fitted in and how it related to the broader picture. Attention was also given to a range of ideas regarding project evaluation, with the intention of encouraging participants to identify the feasibility of these ideas in the context of the British Council's projects in the Czech Republic. The workshop concluded that:

- As British Council activity had been so diverse, the evaluation should have a coordinated overall plan but should be constructed around a number of separate components focusing on specific areas of activity.
- It would not be possible to evaluate everything; a selection of certain specific areas of activity would be necessary, therefore.

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2   PRESETT General; PRESETT Research and Development 1998–2001; INSETT General; INSETT Trainer Training/Summer Courses; INSETT Course Development 1999–2000; ESP Support to Technical Universities 1991–1996; ESP Trainer Training Project 1997–2001; British Studies in Universities 1991–1999; British Studies INSETT; Teaching English in Heterogeneous Classes; Teaching English to Young Learners; Drama in ELT.

- The dissemination of findings should be achieved through a 'master report' (i.e. this volume) followed by other manifestations appropriate to the requirements of different stakeholders.
- All members of the British Council's network of Czech teacher trainers should be given the opportunity of joining the Evaluation Team. It was predicted that no more than a dozen people would want to be actively involved; in the event nine people joined the Team.
- The evaluation process should be coordinated by the British Council.
- There should be a non-executive 'Advisory Board' which would provide an independent overview of the evaluation process.
- The evaluation should be able to contribute to the ongoing development of ELT teacher education in the Czech Republic. It would therefore be a summative evaluation within the context of the British Council projects but, at the same time, it would be formative within the wider context of teacher education in the Czech Republic.

The workshop considered a number of approaches to project evaluation:

Tabulating activities
A tabulation or census of activities over the previous ten years would provide the narrative background against which a particular evaluation activity could be placed. It would be a constant reminder of the need to adopt a global perspective as a counterbalance to any sectoral or localising tendency which might emerge.

Measuring outcomes against objectives
Archival work would be needed in order to identify what statements of objectives exist, relating *both* to the overall British Council presence in the Czech Republic since about 1991 *and* to the setting up of individual projects and sectoral activities. The value of carrying out this procedure would lie in revealing the extent to which the initial objectives had retained or lost their relevance (bearing in mind the tendency for project objectives and project practice to gradually drift apart; cf. Coleman 1992).

Comparing achievements to baseline data
Since no detailed baseline studies were available, it would be necessary to seek out alternative forms of *baseline data*, especially documents.

Measuring impact
It was felt that a series of impact studies should focus on two groups of stakeholders: teachers and teacher trainers. A central concern should be with the 'professional development' of these two groups of people. (In attempting to measure outcomes against initial objectives we are interested in the initial statement of purpose. In looking at developments in relation to baseline data we begin by examining a situation as it was at a particular point in the past. In undertaking an impact study, however, we can adopt a much broader perspective; cf. Coleman 2002.)

Studying processes
The possibility of *deliberately* collecting process data from throughout the lifetime of the project (e.g. evidence of decision making, changes of direction, responses to external pressures) was of course no longer available, because ten years of activity had already taken place. Nevertheless, it should still be possible to capture the *process of the evaluation* (which is what this chapter is attempting to do).

In their comments at the end of the initial workshop, many participants noted that they had discovered for the first time just how diverse the British Council's involvement in teacher education had been:
I've realised that [my project] is only a tiny fraction of the BC projects. It was extremely interesting to meet people from different projects and to hear other views. (Respondent 1)
There was also keen interest to become involved in the Evaluation Team:
I decided to get involved, and have changed my original intention not to get involved in any extra activity. (Respondent 12)
By the end of Stage 1, then, trainers had become aware of the complexity of the activities which were to be evaluated. They had also produced a number of recommendations regarding ways in which the evaluation might be carried out.

Stage 2: Finding the focus

The second stage in the evaluation process involved the formation of an Evaluation Team, the identification of precise areas of activity on which the evaluation would focus, the adoption of an overall approach to the evaluation, and the creation of an Advisory Board.

Nine trainers volunteered to join the Team. Eight of them were Czech citizens; the ninth is British but had been resident in the Czech Republic for a number of years. All nine had been deeply involved in the British Council's teacher training activities.

During the focusing workshop which took place during this stage, the nine Team members identified seven sectors (or cross-sectoral fields) on which they planned to concentrate. The seven areas of focus which were identified are directly reflected in Chapters 4 to 10 later in this volume. The selection of sectors for evaluation was related to the particular interests and experiences of the individual Team members. The decision by ETMs to focus on the project in which they had most experience actually contributed to the strength of the evaluation process by satisfying the requirement for 'prolonged engagement' in the context which is being investigated, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290–331) as a means of increasing the 'credibility' of a highly qualitative investigation.

The Team rejected a crude input-output approach to their evaluation task. They believed that it would not be possible to measure outputs and correlate them meaningfully to the input which the British Council had provided. Instead, they determined to create a series of seven 'rich pictures'. These highly qualitative studies would provide readers with insights into the feelings and the thinking of important categories of stakeholders. These seven 'pictures' would reveal whether and in what ways the professional lives of stakeholders such as teachers and trainers had been touched by the work of the British Council. ETMs also agreed that they would not depend solely on one source of data. By using both a questionnaire and an interview, for instance, they would be triangulating their sources and so would be in a position to double check their findings. Triangulation is another procedure which helps to increase the 'credibility' of qualitative evaluations.

From the beginning, ETMs were encouraged to maintain detailed records at every stage of the evaluation process, including notes on their own thinking and their interim hypotheses as they worked with the data which they were collecting. The idea here was that the process which the evaluators were employing would be able to stand up to scrutiny by outsiders, if necessary. In this way, the evaluation process was strengthening its claim to be consistent (its 'dependability', to use the term employed by Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Similarly, ETMs agreed from the beginning that they would archive all the research material which they gathered. Individual Team members maintained their own records whilst two master sets, in electronic form, were also kept, one at the British Council in Prague and one in Leeds. The purpose here was to ensure that it would be possible for a third party to check or confirm the *conclusions* which were being drawn from the data. Thus the study would be in a strong position to claim to possess 'confirmability' (Lincoln and Guba 1985)[3].

Except in the case of the PRESETT study reported in Chapter 4, Team members elected to work individually. In order to minimise any sense of isolation and to increase collegiality, it was agreed that each person should have access to a 'critical friend'. This was organised in a reciprocal manner, so that if Principal Researcher A had B as her Critical Friend, then Principal Researcher B had A as her Critical Friend.

By the end of the second stage, then, the Evaluation Team had achieved progress in identifying the sectors of British Council activity which it wished to evaluate, finding a focus for the individual evaluation studies, and identifying a broad approach or methodology for its work.

Stage 3: Collecting data

The third stage of the evaluation process was principally concerned with data collection, critically reviewing the data collection process, developing ways of working which would help ETMs keep up to date on each others' progress, and starting to consider procedures for the processing and analysis of data. The third evaluation workshop took place during this stage.

With regard to communication, it had already been agreed during Stage 2 that the ETMs would e-mail each other regularly

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3   Recently, Robson (2002:170) – who now calls himself a 'critical realist' – has questioned the naturalistic or social constructivist thinking behind this approach. It is worth noting, nevertheless, that Robson (2002: 171–177) recommends the adoption of almost all of the 'trustworthiness' procedures to increase the credibility, dependability and confirmability of qualitative investigations which Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed.

with news of the progress which they were making and with questions or problems which they were facing. Typical of the sort of issue which was being raised at this stage is the following report from one ETM about the response which she had received to her questionnaire:

Most of the questionnaires have been returned by e-mail, few by post. I will bring all of them with me [to the next workshop]. I hope to receive a couple more as … I have sent second reminders. … I am not sure why some people responded so briefly. In some questionnaires they mention lack of time and difficulty to recall anything specific suitable to the question. (ETM 1, 10–12–2001)

It soon became clear that members of the Team were not all doing this with equal frequency. For example, in one period of four months, one person sent just four e-mail enquiries to her fellow Team members, whilst during the same period another sent 24 questions. This variation seemed to reflect different contexts, different types of study and – above all – different working styles.

Occasionally, Team members provided feedback on each other's work, as in the following example:

Dear [ETM 2], Thank you for your comment re my questionnaire. I have eventually managed to read yours. In my opinion, it is not necessary to point out that section A deals with the period before, section B during and section C after the … courses because it is obvious from the questions you ask. The questionnaire seems very thoughtful. Good luck. (ETM 3, 06–11–2002)

However, this did not occur frequently. In fact, the copying of correspondence to all members of the Team proved to be unpopular because members soon found that their mailboxes were clogging up with large numbers of messages which they did not have time to read. In the light of this experience, procedures were modified and copying messages to all fellow members was to be done only when strictly necessary. Nevertheless, it was still necessary for everyone to keep the broader picture in mind and not forget that their own individual study was but one component in a larger evaluation. For this reason, it became especially important to allocate time during workshops for members to catch up on each other's progress.

An issue which attracted much attention during the data gathering stage was that of sampling. ETMs agreed that, working in a richly qualitative mode as they were, the concept of random sampling was inappropriate. They were not endeavouring to generate a statistically-based picture which was representative of a wider population. Rather, their intention was to gain an understanding of the thinking and behaviour of a particular group of stakeholders. To do this, the Team members needed to collect data which might at first be confusing and incomplete. After initial attempts to make sense of the data, they would often discover that they required further data – or different sorts of data – to help them to complete the picture. Thus the researchers needed to keep the data collection process under constant review, developing initial hypotheses, noticing striking and interesting features, and then reconsidering the collection of data again, in an iterative process. ETM 7 described this as being similar to doing a jigsaw puzzle; significantly, she highlighted the importance of *'work[ing] out what I still need'*:

I have carried on collecting data – unfortunately very little of it is in easily managed form. The raw data is there but it's like trying to put together a jigsaw puzzle, which makes it very time consuming. So far, I have concentrated on trying to collate the data in a form [where] I can 'see' what I've got, and I've had to check it all over and over again. I still have gaps and confusions in the basic facts which hopefully there will be time to talk through with Malcolm at the weekend to clarify some of this and work out what I still need to get. (ETM 7, 29–03–2002)

Forcing oneself not to be too readily satisfied with the first round of fieldwork is a challenging process and requires great discipline[4].

At this stage, ETMs began to appreciate the value of storing all their data and associated research material in a systematic manner. The importance of good record keeping became clear to one member when she found that there was an error in her work:

As I have been thinking about the project I realised that we are really a special group because we do the evaluation in our 'spare' time, which means that it is not easy for me (us) to think about it day and night and generate thoughts and notes. This may be a reason why my data seems to me as an impenetrable jungle. … I must have made a mistake when summarising the

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4   The process described by Team Member 7 – attempting an initial interpretation of data and then collecting further data in order to clarify issues which remain unclear – is known variously as *purposive* or *purposeful sampling* (Lincoln and Guba 1985:199–202 and 102–103 respectively) or *theoretical sampling* (Glaser and Strauss 1967:48).

questionnaires and I don't understand how it could happen. I must have copied one questionnaire twice, once as number Q06 and then as Q11. It seems that I'll have to re-do it. This is quite a nuisance, it is time and paper consuming. (ETM 2, 09–01–2002)

Another member of the Team made a similar discovery, as she reported a few days later:

As I started working with the data, I realised that I had made several mistakes. One of them was a bit chaotic system in collecting. No system actually. I am aware of the reasons: poor command of ICT and lack of experience in a research. … all my life I have been fighting with myself in order to learn how to keep things in order. Now I simply can't do the research if I don't use system and order, etc. I just wanted to tell you that though I am scared and not certain of myself, I am still happy to participate in the research. (ETM 4, 15–01–2002)

These experiences confirmed earlier discussions in Stage 1 about the importance of good archiving of data and of individual accounts of the research process for purposes of achieving dependability and confirmability.

By the end of Stage 3, then, ETMs had completed the design, piloting and revision of their data collection instruments. They had also started to collect data and were becoming aware of the need for systematic recording and storage of the material which they were collecting.

Stage 4: Analysing data

During this stage, the collecting of data was gradually phased out and analysis came to predominate. At this period, Team members adopted a procedure which led them first to identify conceptual categories which seemed to emerge from their data, then to check or compare these categories against the whole of their corpus of data, and to compare every category against all other categories. In this way, the conceptual categories were gradually refined; some categories which initially seemed appealing at an early stage turned out to be unsustainable and had to be dropped; and hierarchical relationships between some categories became apparent.

As the researchers proceeded, they sometimes discovered that further information was required to fill gaps, or that further sampling or further triangulation were needed. If more data was collected, then the whole process had to be repeated, again checking each conceptual category against all the data[5].

This process continues until it is possible to go no further. We can tell when this position has been reached when the system of categories which emerges is as simple and streamlined as possible, with no overlap between categories, and when we can see that no further modifications to the system are needed to accommodate any new data which may be received.

Team members' struggles to derive conceptual categories from their data during this stage led to a sudden flowering of debate in the e-mail discussion group. This can be illustrated by the following extracts from an exchange between three members of the Team who were working in closely related fields. The discussion took place over a four-day period:

Dear [ETM 5] and critical friends, I have started to formulate concepts from ss [students'] questionnaires and I have got a dilemma. When I put down all the concepts emerging from the questionnaires [in]to two columns – contributed and did not contribute (to the ss development as prospective teachers) – and tried to divide them into content and process categories, I found out that some of them overlapped/covered both areas. … Before I start to sort them out further I need to decide about focusing. I can see four possibilities. … [ETM 4], how did you approach the students' questionnaires? What is your experience of working with the data from students? Have you used the discussion recordings at all? Were they useful? What do you think? (ETM 6, 04–03–2002)

Hi [ETM 6], How's it going? Isn't it sort of a combination of 3 and 4? i.e. try to cross-relate/triangulate concepts as they come out of the data from the teacher trainers and then see if there's anything interesting from the students left over after that? Does that sound right? Anyway I'd be interested in other opinions. The students' responses are probably very interesting from the current departmental point of view though. Any chance your colleagues might like to process the data for departmental use if you think there is something useful there? (ETM 7, 05–03–2002)

[ETM 6], we have already agreed we seem to have similar problems with the division into process and content categories – for me it still looks more feasible to keep the 'contributed' and 'did not contribute' division and cover both categories, though what [ETM 7] suggests, the combination of 3 and 4, might also be possible, maybe more for you than for me since you have much

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5   The process of constantly or repeatedly checking emergent categories against each other and against the available data is known as the *constant comparative* method (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Lincoln and Guba 1985:339–334; Robson 2002:190–193 and 492–497).

more data from [the student questionnaire] than I could collect from all those 17 last year students I could get in touch with. What is your decision? (ETM 5, 07–03–2002)

A few weeks later, ETM 6 – who had initiated this discussion – reported to the whole Team that she was still struggling with her data:

Dear all, I am in the middle of the analysing process, maybe in one quarter, and I would like to use the opportunity of contacting many people at a time. My main problem at the moment is the richness of data collected from students, trainers and the dean. What I am attaching is the result of the 1st analysis of 11 questionnaires completed by … final year students, 2 questionnaires completed by … teacher trainers and 1 questionnaire and follow up interview with a teacher trainer, a bit of an interview with the dean and 3 documents. I feel overwhelmed by the richness and amount of data and emerging concepts and subconcepts. I will be thankful for any comment. (ETM 6, 28-03-2002)

A significant moment for several ETMs came when they realised that in identifying emergent categories they would have to break away from and leave behind the conceptual framework which they had employed when designing their data collection instruments. This is the struggle which Holliday (2002:106) describes:

It is easy after the event to see the sense and indeed simplicity of a thematic structure. However, for many researchers, the process of arriving at a thematic structure is very difficult if not painful. This is because the thematic structure is very different to the structure which governed data collection, which they may well have been working with for a considerable time.

By the end of Stage 4, then, members of the Evaluation Team were deeply involved in the processing and analysis of their data. Lively and productive e-mail discussion was taking place as Team members struggled with the derivation of conceptual frameworks.

Stage 5: Writing

The 'writing' process, of course, cannot be easily demarcated from the stage of 'processing and analysing data'. Gradually, as members of the Evaluation Team clarified the conceptual frameworks which were emerging from their data, they began to write up their findings. This process continued to be iterative in nature, with frequent reconsideration of conceptual categories and even some last-minute collection of supplementary data.

During this period, we began to understand that a number of common findings were emerging in several different components of the evaluation. These included evidence of the growing confidence of the ELT profession in the Czech Republic, questions about the role and contributions of native speakers, and the unresolved problem of official recognition of foreign qualifications. The writing stage was another period of quite intense e-mail activity as Team members shared their feelings with each other. The following two e-mail messages from ETM 4, written during a period of one week, illustrate vividly what she was experiencing as she was writing. The first of these messages was a general expression of the stress which she was going through in attempting to complete the draft on time:

Dear ALL,
It is really a fight.
I am late the draft is not ready yet.
The findings are very raw, besides there [are] too many words.
I keep struggling. (ETM 4, 13–05–2002)

Two days later, ETM 4 wrote again to report the new finding that some of her informants appeared to be unaware of the role that the British Council had played in the in-service training from which they had benefited. She described how she had decided to deal with this unexpected discovery:

Another important thing which happened: I had to stop writing and start reading questionnaires again, as suddenly I noticed that nobody besides Teacher Trainers were … speaking about the British Council's part in their responses. In fact, they were not aware of the great job that had been done before. So what I have realised [is] that Background is extremely important, where I have to say everything about the British Council's job in this area. And here is a problem, suddenly I was horrified that I would not do it in a proper way. (ETM 4, 15–05–2002)

ETM 4 was perhaps unusual in the frequency and the detail with which she described her experiences while writing her evaluation report, but those experiences were undoubtedly being shared by the other members of the Team.

Gradually, the final drafts of chapters were received. The observations which Team members made in the e-mail messages accompanying their final and near-final manuscripts were revealing. ETM 7, for example, seemed to have little affection for what she had written:

I've said all I want to say … I can't see the wood for the trees at the moment and am heartily sick of the whole thing. (ETM 7, 19–06–2002)

There were also expressions of relief tinged by sadness at the end of writing. ETM 3 noted the irony that what had started by being 'a nightmare' had turned into something enjoyable just at the point when there was no more time to work on it:

It is a pity that once you start liking what you are doing and it stops being a nightmare, you have to move to other nightmares. In other words I want to say that I would like to continue working on [my chapter], but at the moment I have to do something else. (ETM 3, 16–05–2002)

For ETM 8 the experience was very similar:

Hello everyone, I am sending what I've got – I always find it difficult to start, and then to let go … (fortunately there are deadlines). So, I will appreciate your opinion of what I've stopped seeing. (ETM 8, 10–05–2002)

ETM 6 fondly likened the appearance of the final draft of her report to the birth of a chubby baby, but still she felt that she could have done with more time:

Here you are my plump child. Tomorrow I will send appendices. I am not terribly satisfied with the result. I feel it would have needed a longer revision process. (ETM 6, 18–06–2002)

The frustrations and mixed feelings reported by these ETMs as they approached the end of the writing process bear many similarities to the experiences of writers in other contexts, as reported by Clark and Ivanič (1997). Indeed even the most experienced of writers sometimes claim never to be satisfied with their writing. The playwright Trevor Griffiths, for instance, talks of the 'sense of fear' that accompanies the completion of the final draft of anything that he writes:

… because you've killed, you've slaughtered a thousand other possibilities. In order to make that one you have to kill off a lot of things and now you'll never work around that notion or around that subject … again. (Clark and Ivanič 1997:102)

It appears, then, that some of the ambiguous feelings about their writing that members of the Czech Evaluation Team experienced and recorded can be found not only among relatively less experienced writers but also among professional writers. The evidence, then, seems to indicate that similar sentiments are expressed by writers across different cultures and occur regardless of the genre in which the writer is working.

A further observation can be made regarding the process of writing as experienced by the ETMs. This relates to the issue of personal identity. In the e-mail which accompanied her draft report, ETM 4 stood back from the whole process of writing and analysed the significance of her involvement in the evaluation project. Despite her initial apprehensions, the fact that she had been able to get this far proved to be a boost to ETM 4's professional self-confidence:

When I was writing I had two very strong feelings: on one hand I loved it, on the other I hated it, nothing in the middle. But it started making sense!!! The whole thing seems to be doable for me!!! From the very beginning I was horrified of the final writing, now when I have done first unfinished draft I feel that I am able to do something else in my life. I was so excited … it [is] evidence of GROWTH of confidence!!!!! I can't believe it!! I know, in Ukrainian there is a proverb: don't say 'hop' until you have jumped over. (ETM 4, 19–05–2002)

According to Clark and Ivanič, *'acts of writing in themselves constitute an on-going struggle over possible identities'* (1997:158). For ETM 4, her participation in the evaluation activity and in particular her achievement at having completed a major writing task (which now constitutes one of the chapters in this volume) carried major significance for her. On a separate occasion, ETM 4 explained to me that, through no fault of her own, she had experienced serious disappointments in her academic ambitions earlier in her life, to such an extent that she had started to lose confidence in her own abilities; as Clark and Ivanič observe, *'people bring with them to the act of writing a "self" that has been shaped by their life-history up to that moment'* (1997:159).

Now, though, ETM 4 had discovered that, for her, academic writing was 'doable'; she realised that she was now 'able to do something else' in life; in other words there had been a positive impact on her self-confidence. This exemplifies Clark and Ivanič's suggestion that *'writers participate in the process of their own on-going identity construction in each new act of writing'* (1997:159).

Conclusion

This survey of the process of the Czech evaluation during 2001–2002 notes that the training activities which were to be evaluated were so broad and so complex that the evaluation task could be undertaken only by a team of people. The nine members of the team worked mainly as individuals (and also in a group of three) and were geographically distant from each other with relatively few opportunities to meet. Consequently, communication was of major importance to them: to minimise the risk of isolation, to seek out and to provide 'critical friendship', to check emerging interpretations of data with their peers, and so on. For these purposes, e-mail was invaluable. Fortuitously, e-mail communication also creates its own instant archive and so it became possible to track the evaluation process as it occurred.

Next, in this chapter we have observed that the evaluation process passed through five stages, from the moment of launching a debate about the possibility of undertaking an evaluation, through identifying precisely which aspects of activity were to be evaluated, collecting data, analysing data and ending with writing. We noted that the frequency and nature of communication between members of the team varied from stage to stage.

This chapter has shown that two further features of the evaluation were particularly significant: the training activities had taken place over a decade and the members of the evaluation team themselves had all been centrally involved in the training activities which were being evaluated. These aspects of the evaluation required team members to find ways of looking back, of creating a meaningful picture, when systematic baseline data was unavailable. The participatory nature of the evaluation also required the nine team members to stand back from their earlier involvement and to adopt procedures which would enable them to create a meaningful picture which could be defended against charges of bias or partiality.

The solution to both of these challenges required team members to make efforts to guarantee the credibility, dependability and confirmability of their work. In concrete terms, this meant collecting richly qualitative material from different groups of stakeholders, employing triangulation, checking back emergent hypotheses with stakeholders and colleagues, documenting every stage in the evaluation process, and meticulously archiving data.

Finally, this chapter has revealed that members of the Evaluation Team talked about their writing in ways which were very similar to those which have been recorded by other writers in very different contexts.

There has not been space here to discuss other important issues which arose during the evaluation. Questions concerning dissemination, for example, were frequently discussed by the Evaluation Team and the Advisory Board. These questions included: to whom should the findings of the evaluation be communicated? at what stages should the work of the Evaluation Team be disseminated? should different dissemination formats be adopted for communicating with different audiences? and, more generally, in what ways can stakeholders be involved in the evaluation?

A related issue which had to be addressed during the evaluation process but which it has not been possible to explore here is the reconciliation of the tension between evaluation for accountability purposes and evaluation for learning. One stakeholder expressed this tension starkly in terms of needing to choose between 'evaluation for research purposes' and 'evaluation for policy change' (evaluating for the future, in other words).

Finally, the role of the Advisory Board and its relationship with the Evaluation Team are matters which were debated from time to time during the evaluation process (and which were resolved in a highly productive manner). But again it has not been possible to examine these matters in this chapter.

The methodological and managerial lessons which can be drawn from the Czech evaluation include the following:

- **Communication** between ETMs is of central importance in cases where an evaluation is being carried out by a team. Team members must feel comfortable about sharing issues with each other.
- **Communication** between evaluators and stakeholders must be open and ongoing throughout the evaluation process.
- The **meaningfulness** of the evaluation must be given priority, even if this necessitates the adoption of complex qualitative data collection procedures.
- From an early stage, safety checks must be built into the evaluation so as to guarantee the **trustworthiness** of the process and of its findings.
- We need to bear in mind that involvement in an evaluation may be an **intense experience** for team members, especially in a participatory evaluation.

As an illustration of the final point, we conclude with another observation from our articulate and thoughtful member of the Evaluation Team, ETM 4:

I am planning to write you a long personal letter to summarise my perception of the last year's work [on evaluation]. It was extremely important experience to me. I am still not able to understand deeper meaning of the evaluation experience, for sure it was evaluation for future and evaluation for life. (ETM 4, 08-09–2002)

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CHAPTER 3

Ten years of ELT projects: An overview of the British Council's teacher education inputs

Malcolm Griffiths

This chapter sets the scene for the evaluations presented in succeeding chapters. It begins by describing the political changes in the Czech Republic which led to the establishment of British Council ELT projects from 1991. The British Council's inputs are described in terms of two major phases, from 1991 to 1996 and from 1996 to 2001. The second of these phases saw funding being made available on a more restricted scale than had been the case in the preceding period, with consequent implications for the design of project objectives. A period of 'transition' and transfer characterised the final months of the second phase.

1 Background to setting up the projects

1.1 Political background – allocation of funding

In 1990, a strong case was made for the UK to provide assistance to the emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. Major political upheavals had resulted in the end of totalitarian regimes and included the so-called Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, which led to the resignation of the communist government and the establishment of democracy. This period saw many of the countries in the region ready for major institutional reforms and possibly open to outside assistance in achieving them. In particular the need to develop English Language Teaching expertise was seen as a priority in most of the countries concerned, and this is an area in which the UK saw itself as well placed to demonstrate that it was a willing and able partner to these countries. ELT provided *'immediate opportunities for the British Council to achieve impact by working across the system'* (BC Doc 1).

Thus in November 1990, the British government announced that it was allocating to the British Council, the sum of GBP 5 million per year for five years to be put towards ELT development in the region. These *'substantial resources'* were to be devoted to *'large-scale high-impact work that our sponsors and top management require'* – large-scale projects, preferably with an impact on the system as a whole. According to documents from the time, three or four such projects were typically to be expected in each of the countries involved (BC Doc 1).

The British Council's role in ELT development was intended to be *'that of participant rather then a directive one in the changes to be brought about through the projects'*. National solutions were to be worked out with Ministries and key stakeholders in each of the countries. Indeed, high levels of matching funds were to be sought (BC Doc 1), and were found in the form of local salary contributions, accommodation and other benefits to UK-appointed staff. These national solutions were to contain maximum

flexibility for development of country implementation plans. There was generally no time to conduct extensive baseline studies as the response was required to be rapid. In the case of Czechoslovakia, the total annual cost of ELT activities was GBP1,337,662, of which 750,000 was directly allocated to the new ELT initiatives (BC Doc 1).

1.2 Initial objectives

After several months of visits to, and discussions with stakeholders, the British Council in Czechoslovakia was ready, in spring 1991, to announce its major new projects, which were designed to strengthen and extend the impact of existing British Council lecturer posts teaching in technical universities, pedagogical and philosophical faculties (BC Doc 2). These projects had five main objectives covering the areas of English for Science and Technology (ESP), Pre-service Education and Teacher Training (PRESETT), In-service Education and Teacher Training (INSETT) and British Studies. The Resource Centres for Teachers initiative underpinned work in all these areas.

Table 1 shows the specific objectives and the annual allocations towards each of them (BC Doc 3).

Table 1 Project objectives and budget allocations 1991–1996

Project objectives	Annual allocation in GBP
To improve PRESETT for English teachers through the pedagogical faculties; to support necessary structural change to meet teacher demand	238,000
To re-establish the in-service structure for teachers of English in primary and secondary schools	50,000
To upgrade the teaching of ESP in the technical universities and allied institutions by the provision of UK expertise, resources and training	121,500
To develop British Studies programmes in the philosophical faculties; to improve PRESETT for English teachers for the secondary sector from these faculties	72,500
To meet demand from practising teachers and trainers for access to teaching resources; to increase information on and awareness of Britain	255,000

Some changes were made to these statements of aims in subsequent years: in 1992 the PRESETT project was extended specifically to support a new large-scale accelerated training initiative announced subsequently by the Czech Ministry of Education.

1.3 Focus on teacher training/teacher education

If, as stated in the Project Manager's report of April 1992, the resource centres project was seen as *'the flagship of the New Money projects, capturing the imagination of the ELT community, the municipalities, cultural institutions of other countries and government alike'* (BC Doc 4), the principal thrust of the initiatives in terms of inputs was concentrated into teacher training and was very much in line with the 70% figure quoted for the region as a whole. In a report of December 1991 the Director of the British Council's ELT Division, referring to the region as a whole, stated that this was due to the fact that changes of emphasis in ministry policy were moving towards training of future and existing teachers of English. Support in developing new methodology and working with new materials was needed since staff were unaccustomed to the greater emphasis placed on methodology. This became a key focus for INSETT as well as PRESETT (BC Doc 5).

Prior to 1991, the British Council's inputs to ELT in Czechoslovakia had consisted of the provision of nine UK-appointed lecturers, support to in-country summer schools and support for teachers to attend courses in the UK. All of these inputs were now to be incorporated into the 'New Money projects'. UK training and in-country summer schools began to be aimed at supporting the specific project objectives. In effect, this meant that selection of participants and content was now to be specifically targeted to the institutions and areas of development supported through projects.

2   Inputs 1991–1996 Phase 1 activities

2.1 Types of activities

The whole period from 1991–2001 can be divided into two main phases. 1991–1996 was an era that saw large amounts of funding and relatively large numbers of UK-appointed staff, mostly working in localised geographical areas and within individual institutions. The second phase, 1996–2001, was characterised by more restricted funding and levels of staffing. However, activities were now mostly focused on national level and aimed to consolidate and extend the previous activity. In fact, within the individual projects carried out during this second period, a third phase, (or perhaps this is better called a 'Phase 2b') can also be identified, although the division line between phases varies from project to project.

To go back to 1991, as shown above, the new funding was allocated to the five main projects outlined in Table 1: PRESETT, INSETT, ESP, British Studies and Resource Centres.

During the initial period, Phase 1, the British Council inputs in the first four areas were concentrated in three principal groups of activities:

1 Provision of professional specialists to targeted institutions

2 Professional development for staff of those institutions, provided either in the UK or Czechoslovakia and later in the Czech Republic (after the 1993 division of the country into two states)

3 Provision of material resources.

Table 2 (on page 32) supplies a summary of British Council support to ELT teacher education activities in the Czech Republic.

2.2 Provision of specialists

The professional specialists were recruited through the British Council's Overseas Educational Appointments Service. They were UK-qualified professionals, EU citizens, who were expected to be appropriately qualified and experienced in the particular area they were recruited to work in. There were 31 such posts from September 1991. (This number included nine existing posts, which remained or were adapted to fit within the new projects.) Of these 31, 21 were in the Czech Lands and ten in Slovakia. There were small changes to the number and location of posts in each of the subsequent following years up to 1996, according to changing needs. Moreover, in line with the division of Czechoslovakia into the Czech and Slovak Republics, the British Council officially separated its operations into two separate country operations for each of the new states: thus budgets and management of all ELT activities became totally separate for each state too.

The duties attached to these posts varied according to the nature of the projects and the results of negotiations, according to their needs, between the British Council and lecturers on one side and the individual institutions on the other. Typically, the British Council-appointed lecturer's role would include advising on and contributing to work on curriculum development, development of systems such as mentoring and mentor training, and setting up self-access systems and resource rooms, examinations and assessment systems. The number of tuition hours directly provided by the specialist varied.

As a general rule, the British Council lecturers in PRESETT and INSETT institutions were involved predominantly in methodological areas of teacher training, whereas ESP and British Studies lecturers also had a considerable load of direct teaching; in the case of ESP this was often delivered to staff and post-graduate students.

More detailed discussion of the lecturers' roles during the period 1991–1996 can be found in Chapter 4, PRESETT, and Chapter 6, INSETT.

In addition to their direct involvement in curriculum planning and tuition, the lecturers also had considerable involvement in the other two main areas of input mentioned above: professional development of institutional staff and provision of resources.

Table 2 British Council support to ELT Teacher Education activities

Activity	BC input	Project	Partners	Years
Curriculum development in departments • Development of specialised course, e.g. methodology, study skills, discourse	• BC-appointed lecturers working in department • Materials and equipment: • Self-access/resource centres: • Advisory role to MoE (Fast-track coordinators)	PRESETT ESP British Studies	• Pedagogical faculties • Philosophical faculties: • Technical universities • Fast-track three-year one-subject TE	1991–1996
Professional development for university staff • Mentors' professional development • Departmental staff development	• Short study trips to UK • MA/MEd courses with UK institutions • Intensive courses • BC lecturers	PRESETT ESP British Studies	• Pedagogical faculties: • Philosophical faculties: • Technical universities • Fast-track	1991–1996
Professional development for practising teachers • Methodology· • Language • Life and institutions	• BC-appointed lecturers (short- and long-term) • Regular short refresher methodology courses	INSETT	• Pedagogical centres • MoE	1988–1996
Professional development for practising teachers • Methodology· • Language • Life and institutions	• Intensive courses (short- and long-term) • BC-appointed lecturers	INSETT	• Pedagogical centres • MoE	?–1994
Professional development for INSETT trainers • Training skills • Course development and management skills • Practical experience on summer courses	• UK + Czech Republic trainer training courses • Trainer support programmer (including Regional groups)	INSETT	• Individual school-based trainers • Pedagogical centres • MoE	1993–2001
Curriculum development for INSETT • CATS module pilot project	• UK consultants • Module writing support	INSETT	• Individual school-based trainers • Pedagogical centres • MoE	
Professional development for ESP trainers • Training skills • Course development and management skills • Practical experience on summer courses	• UK + Czech Republic trainer training courses • Trainer support programmer (including Regional groups)	ESP	• Individual tertiary-level ESP trainers • ESP departments	1997–2001
Professional development for PRESETT and INSETT trainers • Young Learners and Heterogeneous Classes • British Studies • Drama in ELT	• Input sessions • UK consultants • Action research project • Support in running courses and workshops • Support to networks	YL HC BSS Drama	Individual trainers	1999–2001
Networking and dissemination All areas of ELT	• Annual networking conference • Research and development grants • *Perspectives* journal • Support to teachers' and trainers' associations			

2.3 Professional development

Provision of professional development took a range of forms. In the initial years, staff were provided with training in the UK in the particular specialist area they would be involved in. On average, each person selected was sent on a three-week course, either tailor-made with an institution specialising in that area or through the British Council's international annual summer school and international seminar programme, also based at major institutions.

In the case of ESP, PRESETT and British Studies, staff from those institutions where the British Council-recruited lecturers were based were selected to attend the training jointly by heads of department and British Council lecturers. A smaller group of PRESETT lecturers, who were generally methodology specialists, also attended a ten-week course in 1994. (Chapter 4 gives more details of these inputs in the case of PRESETT.) With regard to longer-term inputs, a selected number of staff were targeted to receive support to study for post-graduate degrees at UK higher education institutions on a modular or non-residential basis.

Twenty-three PRESETT staff from various institutions were sponsored by the British Council to study for Masters degrees in the field of ELT or ELT management, and seven for Masters degrees in the field of British Studies or Cultural Studies (see Chapter 5).

In the case of INSETT, departments and training institutions had far fewer staff, if any at all, responsible for ELT INSETT provision (and indeed several of the existing INSETTT provider institutions had been closed and the system which had existed prior to the Velvet Revolution was, to a large part, dismantled). Thus, in the first year of the project, participants for UK training were targeted in cooperation between the British Council, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport and the association of teachers of English of the Czech Republic and Moravian/Silesian Association of teachers of English from among the local coordinator teams. From 1993 the selection of participants to attend UK INSETT training was directly linked to the summer school INSETT programmes, with participants going on to work as tutors, gaining supported experience on summer schools (see Chapters 6 and 7).

2.4 Provision of resources

An extensive range of resources was made available for the teachers of English through the network of Resource Centres.

In addition, between 1991 and 1996 resources presentations were made to all departments which hosted a British Council lecturer. Books and other pedagogical materials were selected by consultation between the department, lecturer, and British Council office, and the Council presented these for institutional libraries, self-access and staff resource collections. In some cases, where feasibility proved positive, the institutions established new student self-access or student resource centres in cooperation with the British Council.

2.5 *Perspectives*: dissemination

From 1993 onwards the British Council Czech Republic published a professional journal with the title *Perspectives*. It aimed to support the ELT projects by providing a forum for dissemination of expertise developed through them. British Council-appointed lecturers as well as Czech and Slovak ELT professionals contributed the articles. Later the range of contributors widened to include other countries in East and Central Europe (see Chapter 10). A professional editor, based in the Prague British Council office, edited all 12 issues of the journal between 1993 and 2001, and British Council Resource Centre members received free copies, as did other British Council country operations and a range of other institutions and contacts abroad.

2.6 Networks

The establishment of networking in order to develop working relations, sharing of best practice and work on mutually beneficial activities between and across individual institutions and project participants was to become a central focus of the projects after 1996. In fact it had its beginning during this first phase. Counterparts were invited to join lecturers at project networking meetings, meetings of trainers were called at national and regional level and, in the case of PRESETT, departmental representatives often met on a regular basis over two years to share best practice in the context of curriculum development for Fast-track.

3 1996–2001

3.1 New structure – National projects and ELT coordinators

IN 1994 the British Council commissioned a large-scale evaluation of its ELT projects in East and Central Europe. The principal recommendation was that the projects should continue after the original end date of 1996, albeit with lower levels of funding (BC Doc 6). During 1995–1996, the last academic year planned for the projects in the form described above, the British Council, led by the Deputy Director, Czech Republic, who also had overall responsibility for ELT, carried out an extensive series of consultations with partners as to the possible extension of the projects. As a result of this consultation, in September 1996, the British Council implemented a new structure for management and delivery of ELT projects: the in-country ELT specialist team was reduced to six regionally-based coordinators and one national coordinator, working from the Prague office. Initially, these posts were affiliated to selected institutions which had previously hosted lecturers under PRESETT or INSETT projects. At first, the coordinator role consisted of wide-scale familiarisation with activities in ELT across individual regions. At monthly meetings of the whole team, they reported back on the situation regarding all institutions in PRESETT, INSETT and ESP. They limited the amount of direct professional inputs which they undertook personally to professional consultation with institutions on curriculum issues (see Chapter 4) and occasional inputs such as at INSETT trainer support groups (see Chapter 6). However, at the same time the coordinators very often traveled around a whole region meeting new contacts and had responsibility for formulating British Council strategy in the three areas of INSETT, PRESETT and ESP. The regionally-based coordinators made a policy of widening contacts to include institutions not supported under the previous projects: this particularly applied to ESP. Gradually, through these consultations and monitoring, they identified areas of need and assessed the feasibility of ways in which the British Council could make a contribution towards the further development of ELT through new projects (BC Doc 7). On the basis of this initial consultation, between 1997 and 1999 national-level projects and initiatives were designed and set in motion which addressed target groups from around the country and from as wide a range of institutions as possible. The projects were structured so as to have one overall project with a single budget – 'ELT'. This was composed of the following sub-projects: 'INSETT trainer training and networking', 'ESP', 'PRESETT Research and Development' and 'PRESETT networking', and the coordinators were involved to some degree in all of them. The projects were now exclusively targeted on the field of teacher education (BC Doc 8).

3.2 Priorities

A major priority was the consolidation and extension of the existing levels of expertise that had been developed during the first five-year period of the INSETT, ESP and PRESETT projects. Intense consultation both between the British Council team, the partner institutions and the individuals, and also within the coordinator team itself, concentrated on looking for ways of ensuring long-term sustainability: to ensure that conditions were in place whereby ELT expertise would continue to develop independently without the British Council. Thus the projects which emerged after the 1996–97 consultation focused on increasing the numbers of INSETT and ESP trainers, building functioning networks and developing quality systems (BC Doc 8, BC Doc 9).

3.2.1 INSETT

For INSETT, the initial focus after 1996 was on strengthening regional and national networks of INSETT teacher educators and on extending the number of trainers so as to meet the increasing demand for trained and experienced trainers. Thus in 1998, the INSETT project selected and trained 26 new INSETT trainers (see Chapter 6). Despite the changes in project management structure in 1996 outlined above, there was no break in the annual provision of support to INSETT summer courses. Since 1993 these provided an important forum for the British Council-trained INSETT trainers to develop their experience and skills as trainers. In fact, in 1999, these summer schools became the main focus of the British Council's INSETT project. The coordinator team provided professional development input to the trainer cadre in the area of 'quality in course development and management'. They linked this to a system of grants to the trainers to run summer schools in 1999–2000: the trainers were required to submit detailed proposals for funding according to criteria linked to the previous professional development. The British Council applied these criteria rigorously in selecting or rejecting proposals for funding and provided detailed feedback to applicants (see Chapters 6 and 7).

3.2.2 PRESETT

In the PRESETT field, a research and development support project and a complementary networking project aimed to encourage ongoing development of expertise which either drew on or shared UK models of best practice. It did this by offering grants for research and development according to rigorously applied criteria. It also invited department members from across the country to come together to discuss and plan common strategy on a range of issues (see Chapter 4).

3.2.3 ESP

In ESP, a survey of needs, consultation with various stakeholders and a study of an analogous British Council project in Slovakia led to a focus on trainer training. The ESP project from 1998 onwards concentrated on developing a cadre of 17 teacher educators specialising in ESP. The aim was to service the needs of a large number of teachers of ESP at the tertiary level who were seen to lack support in terms of specialist methodology (see Chapter 9).

The period of familiarisation and identification of needs described in Section 3.1 also led to the design of specialised sub-projects. These aimed to contribute a qualitative enhancement to ELT teacher education by developing specialist areas of expertise not previously covered in any detail but identified as being needed. The ELT team designed projects that combined specialist input with support to participants in working on their own individual research, thus developing a body of expertise that would be appropriate to the Czech context. Two of these sub-projects, Teaching English to Heterogeneous classes (TEHC) and Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL), drew participants from both British Council INSETT and PRESETT projects (see Chapter 8). British Studies for secondary schools addressed only INSETT trainers.

4   Transition

In February 2000 the coordinators agreed with the British Council Czech Republic Director that the UK-appointed ELT professional posts would be withdrawn with effect from August 2001. This was to coincide with the planned end of the current projects. This decision was the result of considerable discussion, both internally and in consultation with partners (BC Doc 10). Key factors in the decision were firstly, the perception held by the British Council and its Czech partners, of the high level of competence and confidence in the ELT community, and secondly, the fact that British Council operations in the East and Central European region could not be expected to continue with similar levels of funding for much longer.

This was indicated by global discussions within the British Council and policy statements from 1998 onwards. In fact no definite date for substantial cut-backs in funding was given at this stage and country operations had been largely left to devise their own solutions.

In preparation for the planned withdrawal of personnel and the potential reduction in funding after 2001, the coordinator team planned a series of activities aimed at developing a new paradigm for British Council ELT projects and to ensure a smooth transition to that paradigm. British Council representatives presented and discussed the rationale for the planned changes with project partners, particularly at networking meetings and project workshops and encouraged current partners – the teacher educators engaged in projects – to investigate ways of identifying their own needs for future development and for ensuring that networks remained strong and functioning (BC Doc 11). In November 2000, the teacher educators who had received professional development through British Council projects, voted to form themselves into a professional body of teacher educators and elected a steering committee to set this up. As the final stages of the INSETT, PRESETT and ESP projects, one of the ELT coordinators had the task of supporting this steering committee, providing support where required, particularly in issues of governance and management process, and facilitating awareness-raising of possible functions of such a body. All decisions were made by the steering committee itself. In June 2001, AMATE (Asociace Metodiku/Association of Teacher Educators) was officially launched as a legally-constituted entity (BC Doc 12). Further details of the aims of AMATE are given in Chapter 6. From the British Council's point of view, AMATE offered the potential for long-term sustainability of the expertise and activity developed over the previous ten years through its projects. AMATE also had the potential to act as a partner in possible future projects, both in identifying and implementing them.

The ELT team's transition plans also included two other major activities for the period 2001–2002. One of these was the ten-year evaluation project which is the source of the present study, the other was the Transitional Skills for ELT (TRANSKELT),

which provided professional development input in areas beyond ELT to support teacher educators in carrying out projects of their own. What both the evaluation and TRANSKELT projects had in common was that they provided opportunities for participants to identify and implement initiatives that were priorities and met the needs of their own contexts. With the evaluation project, this meant the individual members of the team choosing an area of focus and carrying out all stages of the research themselves. In the case of TRANSKELT, the teacher educators chose to run projects that disseminated recently-gained expertise, much of it linked to recent British Council projects (professional development projects at national or regional level) and developed professional networks in terms of communication systems. (See Chapter 2 of the present volume for further background to the rationale of the evaluation project, and Chapter 6 for background to TRANSKELT.)

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part two
THE EVALUATIONS

CHAPTER 4

Pre-service teacher education

Věra Bitljanová, Irena Kubrychtová and Jane Nolan

This chapter analyses the British Council's support for pre-service teacher education in the Czech Republic. It has three major components. The first is a very detailed description, based primarily on documentary sources, of the British Council's policies and activities in the PRESETT area over a period of ten years. Following this are two case studies from the Universities of Liberec and Pardubice. The case studies give us in-depth pictures of two university departments which are responsible for delivering pre-service training and which benefited from British Council support. In this way, the chapter aims to facilitate a detailed comparison between British Council policy and practice in participating institutions.

Section A: Introduction

This joint study aims to provide a critical description of British Council activity in pre-service teacher education (PRESETT) in the Czech Republic over the past ten years and, at the same time, to analyse the present state of PRESETT in two different universities.

The study has seven sections, the first of which is this brief introduction. Section B identifies the aims and objectives of the British Council PRESETT project, principally by drawing on documentary evidence. It describes the kind of input which was provided and the perceived impact of this input from the perspective of the British Council.

Section B thus provides a background framework for two case studies carried out at the English Department, Faculty of Pedagogy, Technical University of Liberec and at the Department of British and American Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pardubice. These case studies are presented in Sections C–E. Section C provides the background to the case studies, with information about the two institutional contexts and the methodology which was employed in the two parallel studies. The focus was placed on two main areas: the training process and teacher trainers' professional thinking.

The principal findings of the case studies in Liberec and Pardubice are presented in Sections D and E respectively. In order to characterise the training process, the development of the curricula and their aims and content were investigated. To find out about teacher trainers' perceptions of their work and professional development, qualitative research instruments were used. It was expected that the impact of British Council activities on the development of PRESETT in individual departments would emerge from the data obtained. The case studies provide pictures of PRESETT in two different departments; they cannot of course claim to be representative of English Language Teacher Education (ELTE) in the Czech Republic as a whole.

The findings from the two case studies are discussed and their implications are explored in Section F. Finally, in Section G, a number of recommendations are examined.

Section B: British Council PRESETT projects, 1991–2001

B.1 Introduction

This detailed document-based examination of the British Council's work in the area of PRESETT begins in Section B.2 with a brief discussion of the methodology employed in the study, paying particular attention to document sources. Section B.3, the heart of the study, undertakes a detailed discussion of PRESETT project activity in the five-year period from 1991 to 1996. The succeeding five-year period, 1996 to 2001, is examined in Section B.4, in somewhat less detail, and then a concluding discussion appears in Section B.5.

B.2 Methodology

The main focus of Section B is a critical description of British Council activity in PRESETT in the Czech Republic between 1991 and 2001, and its perceived impact, the idea being to try to capture a picture of 'the past' in PRESETT departments to lay alongside the two case studies of 'the present', which appear in Sections C and D below.

The study draws primarily on data collected from documents in British Council archives in both Prague and London, backed up where necessary with interviews with the British Council's ELT National Coordinator in the Czech Republic.

Before any data was collected, the following questions were identified:

- What were the aims of British Council input/activities in PRESETT departments between 1991 and 2001?
- How were these aims identified?
- How did these aims translate into concrete input/activity over time?
- What was the perceived impact of this input from the perspective of the British Council?

The sheer level of British Council activity in the early 1990s (when, for example, eight British Council Resource Centres were being established in the regions), combined with the emphasis on financial accountability and reporting to the UK, means that documentation of actual activity of the PRESETT project and how it was perceived by the Council at the time, was generally limited to one paragraph in an annual report, at most. The following picture of the years 1991–1996, has therefore been put together, rather like a jigsaw puzzle, from many sources: project guides, annual reports, internal and external British Council correspondence with e.g. the Ministry of Education, reports from consultants and visitors, internal and external British Council evaluations and PRESETT lecturers' annual reports and meeting minutes, as well as some articles in the Council's journal, *Perspectives*, published in the Czech Republic (see also Chapter 10 in this volume).

From 1996–2001 the PRESETT project working documents and papers are extensive, and become more like a patchwork than a jigsaw, with many documents overlapping, not always clearly. The limitations of working with documents whether too few or too many, ambiguous or not clearly trustworthy, were therefore made apparent. All the documents examined were of course produced for purposes other than this evaluation, and all facts and information included here had to be carefully evaluated in terms of their source, and where possible had to be cross-referenced from more than one angle to improve accuracy.

Very many documents were examined; some may have been overlooked or their significance missed, but every attempt has been made to keep this account as reliable as possible. My own role, as someone who worked for the British Council throughout all these years and was based in a PRESETT department, should be acknowledged here. My aim was to make the story ring as true as it could for all key participants, whether from the British Council, members of PRESETT departments or the Ministry of Education. To do this I attempted (successfully, I believe) to distance myself from my own involvement. Other interpretations, using the same data, however, cannot be discounted. For this reason, all the source documents used are available at the British Council office in Prague.

Ironically, the one area where a report of this length cannot do total justice, is in documenting in full detail the scale of British Council input into PRESETT departments, particularly in terms of books and equipment. The accounts were simply too detailed to repay investigation quickly, and so figures given in the report refer to the budgets for materials and equipment given to individual departments. This may be an under-estimate but not significantly so. Gifts of books to departments where no British Council lecturer was based are not included here.

All documents made use of here refer to British Council PRESETT activity in the Czech lands in Czechoslovakia or – post-1993 – in the Czech Republic and not in Slovakia, unless otherwise stated. Dates given in the report for documents refer to academic years, although they may have been cross-referenced with documents that refer to financial years[1].

B.3 Projects in the period 1991–1996

We come now to the central section of this study of the British Council's PRESETT projects. This detailed examination of projects in the 1991–1996 period starts by looking at the educational background to the innovations. It considers the objectives of the projects and the institutional context in which the projects operated. The activities and input in the 1992–1994 period are then described in detail. This is followed by a look at the situation in 1995–1996, and the section ends with a general discussion.

B.3.1 Background

In 1990–1991 the British government allocated 25 million GBP, and then 5 million GBP annually from 1991–1996, to the British Council for the development of English language teaching in East and Central Europe (BC Docs 1, 2, 3). Planning and consultation for the PRESETT project in Czechoslovakia then began. This planning needs to be set against the very rapid change that had already been happening in language teacher education in Czechoslovakia, following the 'Velvet Revolution' of 1989.

The Czechoslovak Education Act of 1990 had given schools and universities a new level of autonomy in curriculum design and choice of teaching materials and had encouraged the use of a variety of teaching approaches. Foreign language education was seen as a key area of need for communication in such fields as science, economics and politics and *'to anchor the country more firmly to European integration processes'* (Cink 1991). Virtually overnight, the first non-communist Minister of Education abolished Russian as a compulsory subject and offered pupils a range of foreign languages to choose from (Burešová 1996). This precipitated something of a crisis in teacher supply as there was a severe shortage of qualified teachers of modern foreign languages, which were previously mainly only taught at secondary level (post-14 education). The situation was especially acute in 'basic schools' (compulsory education from age 6–14/15) where most schools had only taught Russian. The local authority in Liberec, for example, estimated that there were only five qualified teachers of English in 1990 at this level, in a city with 27 basic schools (Burešová 1996).

As 'secondary school' teachers had been prepared in philosophical faculties (faculties of arts) and 'basic school' teachers in pedagogical faculties (faculties of education), there was an urgent need to open and expand modern language departments in pedagogical faculties where previously few had existed. From 1990, the number of foreign language departments, teaching English and German, more than doubled, from 11 to 27 (Cink 1991). In both types of faculty, however, in the past, the emphasis, to different degrees, had been on accumulating specialist subject knowledge, with teacher education considered to be *a by-product of subject study … The teaching related subjects had a very limited time allocation in the programmes'* and focused on theory (Burešová 1996). *'The result is a highly theoretical form of course which has nothing in common with the language classroom practice … Methodology of a foreign language is often a marginal subject, sometimes ignored completely.'* (Pospíšil 1992). This did not necessarily change post-1989, with some new departments establishing curricula very much based on traditional philosophical faculty models. Previous history also meant that the English language level of the students entering these new departments was relatively low.

The British Council, planning its support to ELT across the region of Central and Eastern Europe in 1990 and 1991, correspondingly gave priority to the *'redesign of teacher supply and support systems to meet immediate and future needs'*,

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1 The following codes are used to refer to documents:

BC Docs x = any single British Council document, e.g. letter, report, referenced by number

CJP96 or 97 = Coordinators' job plans from those years

CR96–8 = Coordinators' monthly reports from those years

LR92, LR94 etc. = British Council PRESETT lecturers' annual reports, which have been numbered and summarised i.e. LR94–2,5,6 indicates which specific reports data has been found in

LI93 = Impact questionnaire completed by lecturers, numbered as above

NCR96 = National Coordinators' annual report and year

All references are listed at the end of the chapter.

particularly in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia (BC Docs 3, 4). They also, however, stressed the importance of negotiating a portfolio of focused projects locally with partners in each country, sensitive to local priorities and conditions, while using *'a wide range of the best of UK resources for best results to showcase UK capability and create future opportunity'* (BC Docs 3, 5). Teacher education and approaches to teaching and training were evidently perceived to be one of those strengths (BC Docs 3, 5).

The Council's PRESETT project was agreed *'in consultation with the Ministry of Education early '91'* (BC Doc 6) following consultation with heads of English departments and deans of faculty (BC Docs 5, 7) and announced at a large ELT conference in Brno in May 1991 (BC Doc 5).

B.3.2 Initial objectives

The British Council English teaching initiative for Eastern and Central Europe was intended to support the expansion of English language teaching through the provision of the following, all of which were to be sourced from the UK:

- Staff – teachers, trainers, advisors
- Resources – books, audio-visual materials, equipment
- Training – courses and exchanges
- Links – cooperation between academic institutions (BC Doc 8)

The PRESETT project in Czechoslovakia, as it was in 1991, aimed to upgrade and expand initial teacher training for teachers of English (see Table 1) and included all four of these elements. This can be seen from the project's statement of 'immediate objectives':

1 to provide course development and training specialists in ten key faculties

2 to provide resource collections in ten faculties

3 to provide short- and long-term training for faculty staff

4 to set up links with UK analogues (BC Doc 9)

Table 1 Project framework

Project objectives	Indicators of achievement	How assessed	Assumptions, risks, conditions
1 to improve PRESETT for English teachers through the pedagogical faculties	Number of teachers qualifying Government support	Government statistics; annual evaluation	New school approaches require different teacher profiles
2 To support necessary structural change to meet teacher demand	Introduction of new programmes	University reports	Government invites and accepts e.g. World Bank and other agendas for structural development

Although not explicitly stated in the project framework, correspondence between the British Council and the Ministry of Education in the early 1990s suggests a perceived need for *'reform in the pedagogical faculties'* training English language teachers, to *'strengthen a distinct "educational", as opposed to subject specialist role'* (BC Doc 10). The key to this was seen to be the professional training element and *'development of the methodology curriculum'* (BC Doc 11). Therefore, the UK teacher training specialists recruited to Czechoslovakia were expected to be *'heavily involved in the methodology components of courses … as well as in direct language teaching'* in pedagogical faculties (BC Doc 12a).

The project-based approach was intended, in partnership with local institutions, *'to be evolutionary and designed to respond flexibly to changing needs over the five-year period'* (BC Docs 5, 8), eventually envisaging *'a gradual process of skills transfer from advisor to local counterpart'* as *'a standard part of project methodology'* (BC Doc 3).

The project framework planning documents remained largely unchanged over the five years of the project 1991–1996, although they *'gradually underwent revision and development … in response to new conditions'* (BC Doc 2), such as an official

Ministry of Education request for British Council support for new teacher supply initiatives (Cink 1992a) and the splitting of Czechoslovakia into two countries in 1993 (BC Docs 13, 14, 15).

'Control, coordination and professional advice' for Central and Eastern European projects, were however maintained centrally by the British Council in the UK (BC Doc 3) and projects were closely monitored (BC Docs 1, 4). *'The provision of this new money [was] accompanied by a very high level of accountability for its expenditure'* (BC Doc 4) and extensive reporting to London was required on a three-monthly basis as well as regular visits and evaluations made from the UK to check project implementation (BC Docs 15, 7, 16, 17, 3).

B.3.3 The institutional context

In September 1991, ten UK-recruited British Council PRESETT lecturers joined the newly established departments in pedagogical faculties, seven of these in what would become the Czech Republic. Most had an MA in ELT and teacher training experience (BC Docs 19, 20). Their job descriptions covered the teaching, coordination and development of the methodology and teaching practice components of teacher education programmes and in-service workshops for primary and secondary teachers (BC Docs 12, 13, 14).

Many departments were more than 50% staffed by native speakers from foreign agencies who had rushed to the ex-communist countries post-1989, e.g. Peace Corps volunteers, EEP, USIS (LR92 1, 2, 3, 4). They were coping with a big increase in student intakes in 1991–1992 (LR92 1, 2, 4, 6, Cink 1991) and large numbers of teachers of Russian studying part-time to requalify as English teachers. Despite this, however, there was still a severe shortage of places for studying English, so most students wanted a qualification in the language, rather than having any desire to become teachers (LR92 1, 2, 3). The language level of students and teachers was quite low, or at best mixed; learning a language was often seen as a matter of translating or rote-learning grammar and vocabulary, and students were weak in the skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing (LR92 1–6).

In 1991, all the departments offered four- or five-year full-time programmes for future basic school and/or secondary teachers, and required the study of two subjects for students to graduate with a 'Magister' degree. Beyond this, however, it is very difficult to generalise. According to the British Council lecturers, many programmes, particularly in the 'older' universities, echoed 'traditional' philosophical faculty curricula and focused on philology and subject knowledge, e.g. history of English language, literature, linguistics (LR92 1, 2, 3, 6) with little emphasis on teacher education. A low professional image and status was attached to the teaching of language and methodology and supervision of teaching practice, and correspondingly high status was given to subject knowledge specialists (LR92 1, 2, 6). An additional problem in many of these departments was the lack of a tradition of communication between members of staff. *'People work in narrow areas and do not share'* (LR92 1, 2, 3, 4). Other departments, however, particularly those in 'new' universities and staffed with ex-secondary teachers, were less bound by tradition and a fruitful sharing of ideas and approaches between Czech and native speaker members of departments, took root (LR92 4, 6).

Forces for change were also coming from above. As previously mentioned, despite a large increase in quotas for student recruitment, Ministry figures, published mid-1991, still estimated a shortfall of over 7,000 teachers of English in primary and secondary schools and a similar number for German (Cink 1991). The Ministry therefore proposed to establish temporary centres, starting in September 1992 (and partially funded by PHARE), to offer a three-year single subject teaching qualification for basic school teachers of English or German (ibid.). Similar programmes had already been established in Hungary and Poland and strongly influenced developments in the Czech Republic (BC Docs 7, 21).

A Ministry working group was set up with Czech specialists from English, French and German departments as well as the Ministry's ELT advisor, the British Council's INSETT advisor, and similar representatives for other foreign languages, to specify curriculum guidelines for the new three-year language teacher training programme (BC Doc 22). When published in January 1992 these focused on boosting students' language levels quickly through intensive language improvement and emphasised professional skills for teaching through putting methodology at the core of the curriculum and systematically integrating extensive periods of teaching practice and school experience, with subject knowledge *in more of a "supportive" role than was traditionally the case'* (BC Docs 25, 23).

During 1992, ten centres tendered for participation in the three-year programme and nine were accepted, mostly in new centres attached to pedagogical faculties, or in two cases to philosophical faculties, although one in a chemical university had no faculty attachment at that time (Cink 1992a, BC Doc 24).

Correspondence between the British Council Deputy Director and the Ministry of Education 1991–1992 (BC Doc 10, Cink 1992a, b) outlines discussions on how the Council could best support the setting up of the new centres. A consultancy visit by Mike Wallace in 1991 provided recommendations for a possible framework for ELT teacher education based on visits to Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia (BC Doc 21). The British Council INSETT advisor, Malcolm Griffiths, was seconded to work 50% on behalf of the Ministry as an advisor developing the three-year programme and monitoring its progress (Cink 1992a), and negotiations with heads of departments recommended that a substantial proportion of Council lecturers' duties be transferred to the new programmes (BC Doc 12b). Centres were also provided with an initial bank of books and materials (Cink 1992c).

1991–1992, therefore, saw the stated main role of the BC lecturers, apart from a considerable amount of language teaching and INSETT work, as preparing new three- or five-year teacher education curricula to start in 1992:

- working with colleagues on new initiatives, e.g. new curriculum and entrance exams (LR92 2, 3, 4, 6)
- design/planning of methodology courses and TP supervision (LR92 3, 6)
- building contacts between faculty and schools (LR92 2, 3, 5, 6)
- advising on/building resources/resource rooms and resource banks (LR92 1, 2, 4, 6)
- developing assessment methods (LR92 1, 3, 4, 6).

B.3.4 Activities and input, 1992–1994

This section describes the activities which took place and the input which was provided between 1992 and 1994. The initial impact of these activities is discussed.

Activities

The main focus in the years 1992–1994 for departmental members was the establishment of the new programme, year on year, for the new intake of students on the three-year programme, which rapidly became known as 'Fast-track' (LR94 6, 5, 2, 1), and for British Council lecturers especially, the introduction and then consolidation of the methodology and 'school experience' components of both the three- and four/five-year programmes (LR94 6, 3, 4, 2, 1, 5). Another important role for the Council lecturer was in building up numbers and training 'mentors', teachers who supervise trainees in schools, in the regions (LR94 6, 3, 4, 1).

Between November 1993 and November 1994, 11 one- to two-day mini-conferences and meetings were held to support the development of the Fast-track programme and coordinate its introduction (BC Doc 25). These meetings grew out of five specialised working groups for English language, linguistics, literature, pedagogy and cultural studies established by the Ministry of Education in April 1992 (BC Doc 24). Each focused on separate areas of the curriculum as they were being introduced, e.g. teaching practice and observation, methodology, language proficiency testing, academic writing and final projects, with members of the departments sharing their experiences and issues, and exchanging syllabuses and best practice (BC Docs 25–29).

British Council PRESETT lecturers' annual reports (LR94) and Fast-track meeting minutes (BC Docs 26–29) clearly document the enormous energy and enthusiasm being put into the year-on-year implementation and development of the new three- (and in some places five-year) curricula in departments, with changes and improvements being made organically and dynamically, according to the constraints of the local situation. Adjectives used to describe this era of the beginnings of Fast-track, such as *'pioneering'*, *'challenging'*, *'exciting'* (Píšová 2001) were certainly echoed by British Council lecturers.

Input

Input was of three types: staff, the provision of training and networking opportunities, and resources.

i) Staff

In 1992–1993, two additional Council PRESETT lecturers were recruited to support the three-year Fast-track programme in two new centres, and in 1993 a final lecturer was recruited to the project, making a total of ten throughout the Czech Republic. Where both existed, lecturers worked across both the traditional four to five-year programmes and the Fast-track (BC Docs 13,14).

ii) Training and networking

Also in 1992 and 1993, a total of 32 members of pedagogical faculty staff (in what became the Czech Republic) attended three-week courses on ELT methodology in the UK, and 15 attended courses in British Cultural studies. In the same years 39 PRESETT members of staff attended British Council summer schools in the UK and 25 received British Council or ELTECS funding to attend international conferences (BC Doc 13). A networking meeting of all Czech and Slovak heads of departments was also held in Brno in November 1992, attended by Henry Widdowson (BC Doc 30).

In 1994, UK training became more specialised, with nine PRESETT pedagogical faculty members of staff attending a ten-week course on the Development and Management of English Language Education at Lancaster University, two the first module of an MA in British Studies at Warwick and five others the first module of an MA in TEFL at Reading University (BC Doc 13). Twelve PRESETT members were also funded to attend international conferences in 1994.

On a national level, nearly 80 mentors attended introductory courses in the Czech Republic in the summers of 1993 and 1994, and 30 follow-up training, including 15 in the UK who were awarded a Certificate in Teaching Practice Supervision by Leicester University (BC Docs 30, 31).

iii) Resources

Departments also chose and received books, journals and equipment each year (mostly tape recorders, computers and photocopiers) to a budget of 4,000 GBP in 1991–1992, and 2,000 GBP in each of the years 1992–1993 and 1994–1995.

Initial impact

It would be fair to say that some of the input in the early years had an immediate and visible impact, particularly the provision of books and equipment, and indirectly the opening of the British Council Resource Centres. According to British Council lecturers in 1993, who were specifically questioned on changes in departments, the new books provided for professional development, allowing the introduction of new courses, the opening of self-access centres, departmental libraries and changes to teaching (LI93 9, 8, 10, 7, 5, 3). Representative comments include the following. *'There were virtually no materials or resources, so the Council's contribution in providing relevant up-to-date books, materials and equipment has been essential for the department and the professional development of teachers'* (5). *'The BC books were vital for the introduction of the new curriculum and provided the coursebooks and supplementary materials for all new courses'* (7).

According to the lecturers, the short-courses for PRESETT members of staff in the UK also often contributed to a change in attitudes to language teaching and generally created a climate more open to new ideas (LI93 9, 10, 7, 6, 5). As one lecturer said, there was a greater *'willingness to discuss change, initiate ideas and discuss ideas in general'* (10).

Comments from lecturers highlight the balance between the material side (books, technology, access to resource centres and UK visits) with academic *'staff development and skills transfer'*. One Slovakia-based lecturer produced a diagram, reproduced in *Figure 1*, suggesting that *'the various levels of support'* interacted, making the whole *'greater than the sum of the parts'* (LISL 1).

Figure 1 A model of British Council support
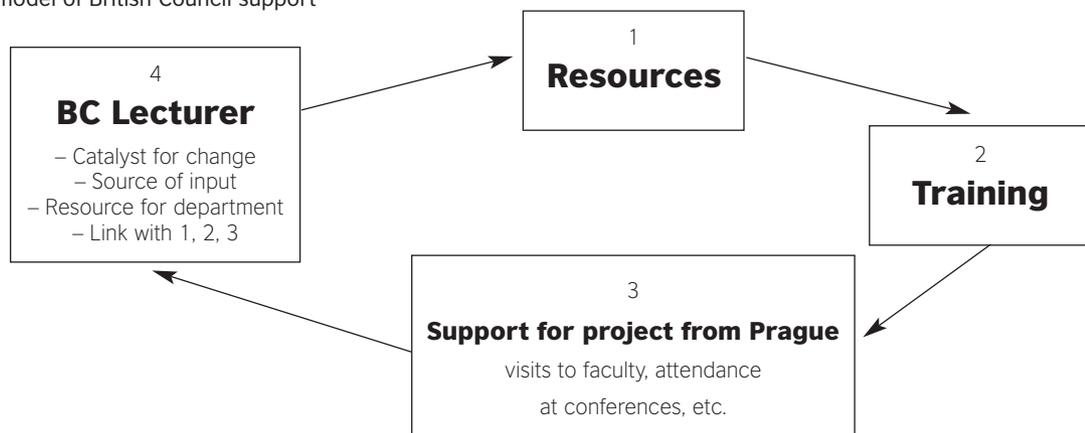
That being said, relationships between lecturers and departments obviously varied considerably, from *'excellent'* (6) to *'difficult'* (2), with the majority being somewhere positive in between (LR92). More communication, teamwork and sharing of ideas is documented by lecturers in many departments (LI93 3, 5, 7, 10) as well as an overall change in the balance of the curriculum towards more importance for methodology, more observation and teaching practice (LI93 10, 9, 7, 5, 8, 3). By 1994 lecturers mention feedback beginning to come from students, e.g. in their fourth year methodology exam, *'students are sounding professional and confident about their teaching'* (LR94 6), and *'perhaps the greatest achievement so far in the dept. is the quality of the teaching that is being done by our trainees in the schools'* (LR94 5). According to a draft article for *Perspectives* by the British Council INSETT advisor (BC Docs 25), following an internal evaluation of the Fast-track programme in 1994, while the initial impetus for curriculum change had come from above in some places, most of the actual development and professionalisation of teacher education was driven by the departments and those working on the ground. As previously mentioned, this often included both Council lecturers and other native-speaker teachers working and sharing ideas with their Czech colleagues to develop courses across the whole curriculum. The same article also points to the value not only of teamwork in the departments but also of the networking around curriculum development that took place between departments at Fast-track meetings (BC Doc 25).

It seems, however, that even by academic year 1993–1994, although in a number of cases British Council lecturers were working closely with Czech counterparts on the 'professional' aspects of the curriculum and some departments had always had a tradition of working in teams (LI93 3, 5, 8, 10), in others pressures on staffing meant there was simply no one for the Council lecturers to counterpart with, and they were still solely responsible for methodology and teaching practice, including organising observation and micro-teaching (LI93 6, 7, LR92 9): *'I'm the only one teaching methodology on both the five- and three-year programmes'* (LI93 6); *'Teaching Practice has become peculiarly "mine" as my colleagues would rather not have to go to school'* (LR92 9).

As the last comment maybe indicates, in a very small number of departments members of staff were resistant to change (LI93 4, 9). One lecturer noted, *'my colleagues are still reeling from the shock of all the changes'* (9). In fact, at the end of 1993–1994, one PRESETT lecturer post was closed and another was transferred wholly to Fast-track (LR94 2, 4).

B.3.5 The final picture, 1995–1996

From the British Council perspective, these years saw the emphasis shift to the *'consolidation and completion'* of the PRESETT project to achieve a *'transfer of skills through a variety of training initiatives, counterparting and resource provision coupled with intensive in-country networking'* (BC Docs 32). January 1995, therefore, saw the start of a Distance MA in TESOL at Moray House, Edinburgh for a group of 12 PRESETT *'selected key personnel',* bringing the total studying a UK MA in ELT methodology, applied linguistics or management to 19, the logic being that *'concentrating training on a small number'* allowed for high quality training and potentially *'wider impact'* (BC Doc 33).

Four PRESETT members of staff completed their second and third ELT MA modules in Reading and Birmingham over the spring and summer of 1995 and 1996 (with one finishing later), and two British Studies MA modules in Warwick. Two also took modules in Educational Management at Nottingham University in summer 1995. Thirteen PRESETT members of staff were also funded to attend British Council seminars in the UK and four other UK courses in 1995 and 1996. Forty also attended international conferences in the same years. Also in 1995–1996, 13 Self-access Centres were established (BC Docs 34, 35) and British Council lecturers were given a budget of 3,000 GBP in each academic year to consolidate other resource provision within the departments. In 1995–1996, a second group of school-based mentors completed a Certificate of Teaching Practice Supervision at Leicester University.

With the first graduates of Fast-track coming in 1995 and the whole programme in operation, these years also saw further consolidation and development of the Fast-track curriculum (LR95 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) in terms of assessment procedures and academic standards, e.g. greater depth and analysis, balance of theory and practice in state exam and others (LR96 1, 2, 4, 7), development of academic writing courses, procedures and criteria for final papers (LR96 2, 4, 5, 8) as well as developments in language practice curricula (LR96 2) and Cultural Studies (LR96 6) in response to the ever-improving language level at each intake and corresponding *'changing level, needs and expectations of the students'* (2). In fact, as the first graduates from Fast-track were going into the schools, some centres were already beginning to run down their programmes, with no new intakes after 1994–1995 (BC Doc 25). Some innovative aspects of Fast-track were, however, being transferred to four/five-year programmes, and the following are mentioned by lecturers (LR96 9,4,1,8): a more integrated programme (9), more time on the curriculum for methodology (4), more time given to Teaching Practice (1, 8), more comprehensive guidelines for students' final papers (4).

From 1994–1996, emphasis was placed on monitoring the number of students going into teaching. Indicators of numbers of students planning to go into teaching were *'quite encouraging'* (BC Docs 33, LR95 8, 6, 2) – 76% who answered a survey in one centre (LR95 9). A characteristic comment by Council lecturers is as follows, *'I have seen the attitudes of many of these students toward teaching change drastically, the majority now take teaching seriously, some even enjoy it! This is so different to my memories of these students: all so dismissive of the idea of teaching, all saying more or less openly that they were only interested in language'* (LR96 5). This in itself is a major indicator of achievement (LR96 7) if, as the National British Council Coordinator states, *'the generally positive attitudes [of the students] towards the profession are at least partly attributable to the high quality of the curriculum offered by the centres'* (NCR96).

British Council lecturers' final reports for 1995–1996 pointed to successful handover of the teaching of methodology and the supervision of teaching practice (LR96 4, 5, 6). New staff had been found to teach it in some places (LR96 7, 8). This contrasts with a mixed picture of success in counterparting previously mentioned. Overall, issues of the balance and integration of theory and practice were ones that still came up frequently in British Council lecturers' reports, which were, it must be said, critical of the length and timing of the school experience component on some four/five-year programmes and even in some cases of Fast-track (LR95 9, 8, 3). Institutional and financial constraints surrounding the organisation and payment for teaching practice, as well as the difficulties of finding and training willing school-based mentors, were a source of frustration for many lecturers (LR95 3, 8, 9, 7, 6, 4).

B.3.6 Discussion

Three issues demand our attention here as we look back over the 1991–1996 phase in the development of PRESETT: the structure and recognition of teacher education, curricula for English language teacher education and research in English language teacher education.

Structure and recognition of teacher education

'A new key element' according to the British Council ELT plan for 1995–1996 was the Czech Republic's *'rapid progress towards entry into the European Union'* (BC Doc 34) and a corresponding focus on credit systems and transferability of qualifications. In this context the three-year Fast-track programme was seen by the Council as a *'major innovation in a country where the five-year Magister degree is the norm for a first degree'*, a potential future model *'with a particular eye on integration into the European Union'* (BC Doc 39).

As Wallace had presciently pointed out, however, in his consultancy report in 1991, *'one of the main disadvantages of [the three-year accelerated programmes] is that they are in a sense 'alien' entities, since they don't fit easily into traditional forms of academic professional training'* (BC Doc 21). This was certainly the case in the Czech Republic, where the three-year single subject programme remained controversial as a full teaching qualification with the university sector. With the Fast-track programme due to finish in 1997, the belated announcement that Fast-track students would graduate as 'Bachelors', rather than fully-qualified (as was believed had been previously stated by the Ministry), caused some anger among both students and staff (LR95 9, 1, 2). There was also an urgent need for decisions on possible follow-up courses for students to gain full qualification (LR95 8, 6). In addition, many departments were being unsuccessful in or having difficulties gaining accreditation for their four/five-year programmes; this led to even greater uncertainty (LR95 4, 3, 9, 8). An associated problem was that English department staff were often perceived to be under-qualified because of a lack of recognition of British MAs as post-graduate qualifications and channels to do Czech PhDs in methodology or applied language learning (BC Doc 40, LR95 9, 8).

All the above factors illustrate some of the uncertainties involved in working in 'partnership' with institutions in times of rapid change when continuous re-structuring and rapid turnover of responsible staff can make formal contact and continuity problematic (NCR96, BC Doc 50). Additional complications can be also caused when local institutions are not working in consensus. A lesson certainly seems to be that sensitivity to questions of structure and recognition of qualifications should never be underestimated.

Curricula for English language teacher education

The new English language teacher education curricula put far more emphasis on the professional development of teachers than traditional curricula, which focused on subject specialisation. This aroused some hostility against English departments in some institutions because of a *'different approach to teacher-training'* (LR95 7, 8, 2). This perception was not necessarily

helped by the fact that the new approaches and changes were sometimes described rather crudely as developing *'more practically based courses'* (BC Doc 36) as opposed to *'academic'* ones (BC Doc 17) *'in line with more recent western developments in teacher training and curriculum design'* (BC Doc 37).

The true challenge for British Council lecturers and departments was in fact not a dichotomy between 'practical' or 'academic' courses, but an integrated balance of theory and practice for 'reflective' teacher education within the Czech context, or as Widdowson pointed out after he attended the departmental networking meeting in 1992, *'there is bound to be the risk that the Fast-track course will provide relatively superficial immediate payoff training'* (BC Doc 38). Just how far this challenge was tackled head-on is maybe only beginning to be fully documented publicly in the last few years, as articles in the final editions of *Perspectives* (e.g. Černá and Zderadickova 1999, Píšová, 2001, Malá, 2001) and the case studies from Liberec and Pardubice later in this chapter can testify.

Research in English language teacher education

As Malcolm Griffiths in a *Perspectives* article from 1995 (BC Doc 25) suggested, there were opportunities and *'rich material'* for valuable research into different aspects and modes of ELT teacher education during these years of the PRESETT project, which could have usefully fed into future British Council projects and ELTE as a whole. There is probably a combination of reasons as to why these opportunities for research were not fully taken advantage of (although substantial evaluation and monitoring were carried out by the Council as was noted in Section B.3.2).

A 1993 internal British Council evaluation quotes the Deputy Director on the difficulties of monitoring project quality systematically given the *'pace of reform in the country and speed with which projects have been launched'* (BC Doc 17). Griffiths also points out that research focused on methodology and teacher education was difficult for Czechs to carry out as it is *'apparently deemed unsuitable by academic authorities'*. It is of note, however, that the British Council Czech Republic decided in 1992 not to take part in the Council's East and Central Europe ELT Projects Evaluation Support Scheme, which might have given support and a useful 'outsider eye' for just such work (BC Docs 41, 42, 43) and a research-driven edge to the PRESETT project could conceivably have added to its wider impact and status.

There seem to have been different attitudes to evaluation in different parts of the British Council at the time. As an Evaluation Unit report says, *'for some evaluation is clearly characterised as judgemental and threatening rather than as the means by which developments in projects systematically take place'* (BC Doc 43) and there was some concern among the British Council Czech Republic Country Directors following the 1994 Central European regional evaluation (BC Doc 3) that the report was too *'downbeat'* and did not provide an unambiguous *'positive endorsement'* of the work being done (BC Doc 44). The Assistant Director observed, *'Perhaps I am being partisan but I feel that what **has** been achieved across the region is **quite** remarkable'* (BC Doc 45).

Within this very thorough examination of the 1991 to 1996 period, then, we have been able to identify three stages: the initial setting up stage, the activities during 1992 to 1994, and what might be thought of as a stage of 'maturity' in 1995–1996. In the following section, we will move forward to consider the 1996–2001 period.

B.4 Projects in the period 1996–2001

This examination of the five years between 1996 and 2001 begins by considering planning activities in B.4.1. Next, in B.4.2, we look at the institutional context in which project activity was taking place. Section B.4.3 then describes two types of new project. The issue of sustainability is examined in the next section and finally the survey ends with a discussion.

B.4.1 Planning

Following the summer of 1994, the publication of the Review of British Council ELT activity in Central and Eastern Europe 1991–4 (BC Doc 3), and confirmation that there would be continuation of Council projects post-1996, focus shifted to planning *'two further three-year cycles of consolidation … in consultation with the Czech and UK constituencies'* (BC Doc 32).

There were, however, major constraints on planning at this point. As the Assistant Director stated *'it was of critical benefit to know in 1991 that we had funding secure for five years and were thereby able to forward plan to tackle the enormous need for English Language training and resources throughout the Czech Republic'* (BC Doc 34), but in 1994–1995 the financial future was very uncertain, with substantial reductions in funding expected but the exact level unknown (BC Doc 2). Plans focused on *'the phased withdrawal of up to half of the UK lecturer posts by 1998/9'* (BC Doc 32).

During 1995–1996 negotiations were undertaken with departments and institutions to restructure the British Council lecturer cadre, reducing it from 16 (INSETT, PRESETT and ESP) lecturers to six regional ELT coordinator posts based in PRESETT departments from September 1996, plus a national ELT coordinator (BC Doc 35). British Studies lecturer posts remained as they were. The project objective for this next phase was *'to build upon the achievements of the first five-year phase of the ELT projects by designing and implementing a second three-year phase, emphasising regional coordination and the handing over to Czech counterparts'* (BC Doc 43), with the idea that the coordinators would work across the whole range of ELT work such as PRESETT, INSETT and ESP in a region *'rather than service single institutions'* (ibid.).

The precise role of the coordinators was rather vague at this point, the main ELT objective for 1996–1997 being *'to implement a new phase of ELT projects based on six regional coordinators'* (BC Doc 46). The first year, therefore, saw the main focus of the team, as defining and establishing their role as coordinators (CJP96) *'working alongside but not instead of Czech counterparts'*, rather than directly delivering training as in the past (BC Doc 47). Other priorities included drawing up a plan for handover to a team of Czech personnel entitled 'Countdown to counterparting' (BC Doc 48) and in conducting a review of all ELT projects to ascertain needs and focus for redesigned projects (BC Docs 49, 50). It should also be noted that the post of Deputy, later Assistant Director, Czech Republic which had held responsibility for managing ELT from 1991–1996, was closed at the end of financial year 1996–1997, and in April 1997, management of the ELT project passed to Malcolm Griffiths, National ELT Coordinator (BC Doc 47).

As the role and scope of the coordinator team's work became defined and developed, earlier plans for an accelerated handover to Czech counterparts by September 1999 (BC Doc 48), put together with the previous ELT manager (BC Doc 51), were effectively put on hold a year later, the time scale being considered over-optimistic by the team (BC Doc 52): *'The considerable development (maturity) which has taken place in the field of ELT teacher education in the previous project has brought with it awareness of certain new issues not previously covered by mainstream PRESETT and INSETT programmes. Needs analysis currently proposed may highlight the necessity for a limited amount of further training and development in particular areas such as SpLD, management, YL and ICT to consolidate the existing skills base'* (BC Doc 33).

The new focus was on ensuring the *'sustainability of expertise developed in the previous project period'* through an emphasis on *'creating teams of free standing professionals competent to train future generations of trainers'* (PRESETT, INSETT, ESP) and the creation of *'sustainable systems – project planning, fund raising, etc.'* to maintain development (ibid.)

B.4.2 Context

Initially, coordinators continued to provide substantial assistance to PRESETT departments in their regions, according to agreed priorities (BC Docs 47, 54), confirmed by coordinators' reports from the period (CR96 8). These included particularly curriculum development, mentor training, and the development of self-access centres.

Other objectives for PRESETT included promoting networking between departments and with other countries (BC Doc 54). A two-day networking meeting for 25 PRESETT departmental staff including heads was held in November 1997, with heads being involved in identifying needs for self-access training and specialist input at the next networking meeting planned for 1998 (BC Doc 54). Twenty PRESETT teachers attended the three-day workshop on self-access centre development in January 1998, and 25 the eventual one-day workshop on dyslexia in ELT in October, 1998. Departments also bid for and were awarded 14 Departmental Development Grants between 1996 and 1998 and in the same period 46 PRESETT participants were supported to attend ELTECS international teacher education conferences and other international conferences (BC Doc 55).

The ELT report at the end of 1996–7 comments that *'in most cases the transition from the Council providing a full-time lecturer to support divided between other outside institutions has gone relatively smoothly'* and *'departments mostly expressed satisfaction'* although there had been some *'difficulties with university authorities arising from the fact that they were employing a Council coordinator who was not officially teaching'* (BC Doc 47). These pressures increased as the amount of PRESETT input by coordinators gradually decreased (CJP97,CR96 8), as the ELT project emphasis shifted to national-level project implementation, developing ESP and INSETT trainer cadres (BC Doc 52). Changes in the university law made the non-teaching role in the departments untenable (BC Doc 56) and, from September 1999, coordinators were no longer directly affiliated to departments, although they continued to work with PRESETT partners in ten major cities (BC Doc 57).

B.4.3 New projects

From January 1998, the coordinator team had also been intent on reframing ELT projects according to a tighter framework being introduced by the British Council worldwide (BC Doc 58). This exercise attempted to identify the major skills and systems required for Council 'exit strategies' from the PRESETT project. Two issues – networking and research and development – thus became the focal points of two new PRESETT projects.

Networking

The PRESETT networking project aimed *'to develop sustainable systems where Czech ELT departments take responsibility and ownership for continued networking in PRESETT'* (BC Doc 61). While initially the coordinator team was prepared to support getting a tradition of networking established (BC Doc 62) by actually organising PRESETT networking events, such as those in autumn 1997 and 1998, the long-term aim was for the British Council *'to reduce the degree to which they take responsibility for organising events'* (BC Doc 58). In fact, following the October 1998 networking meeting, coordinators' minutes note that they should support no further 'PRESETT only' meetings although they will continue to organise 'inter-project' (PRESETT/INSETT) meetings (BC Doc 63).

A discussion was held with PRESETT heads and departmental members in January 1999 (at the PRESETT Funding Forum) on ways of organising and sustaining a PRESETT network (with an intimation that the British Council would no longer do so). This raised many issues, but as the minutes state *'there was some feeling that participants, in general, wished the British Council to continue organising networking, although this was not explicitly stated'* (BC Doc 68).

By May/June 1999 when a review of PRESETT strategy was done, plans for the 'new' joint PRESETT/INSETT projects in Teaching English to Young Learners and Teaching Heterogeneous Classes were well advanced. A discussion document (BC Doc 71) suggested that *'hopefully some degree of inter-departmental linking will be built up'* through the collaborative cross-project groups envisaged for the new projects. *'Exclusively PRESETT special interest groups in e.g. British studies, Management'* were also suggested.

At the first British Council ELT AGM in November 1999, which brought both PRESETT and INSETT project partners together for networking purposes and the launch of the new joint projects, however, a PRESETT networking session suggested that departments felt both a lack of time and the pressure of other concerns for *'exclusively PRESETT'* groups or management training (BC Docs 72, 57) although *'there was a keenness to meet nationally, together with INSETT when and if the necessity is felt'* (BC Doc 57).

Research and Development

The Research and Development project provided for a system of bidding for limited grants for research and development with the aim of supporting PRESETT departments in identifying their research and development needs, and gaining success in acquiring funding for the same, as well as forging academic links on research and development projects relating to PRESETT needs within the Czech Republic. Coordinators' meeting minutes in September 1998 describe this as *'a "way stage" before BC pulls out completely and departments find alternative funding'* (BC Doc 59).

At the Council PRESETT networking meeting of heads and members of departments in October 1998, participants shared their experiences in applying for funding and worked together to identify future needs of departments in terms of professional development, curriculum and research and development. Minutes from the meeting again stress the issue of the need for *'higher degrees'* in departments (BC Doc 64). The earliest PRESETT Research and Development project documents from 1998 also highlight the problem of the lack of status and recognition of qualifications of members of staff in English departments. The project document includes *'possible financial support'* for *'suitable qualification and training opportunities for a limited number of identified individuals to begin 1999, e.g. management, … PhDs acceptable to Czech Ministry of Education and accreditation committees'* alongside the setting up of a *'formalised system of bidding for BC financial support'* for research and development projects (BC Doc 60).

The PRESETT Funding Forum took place in January 1999, attended by 21 heads, members of departments and representatives of funding organisations, to discuss procedures for bidding for support from Council and non-Council sources and criteria for making successful bids (BC Docs 68, 69). Further input on applying for Socrates funding was given in November 1999 at the ELT AGM (BC Doc 72).

Four rounds of PRESETT bidding were held in all. In the first round of bidding in May 1999, only one bid out of seven was accepted, and detailed feedback was given on each application. *'None of the present bids have any element of inter-*

departmental networking in them' (BC Docs 71), a key stated criteria for acceptance. In a second round of bidding in autumn 1999, four out of five bids were accepted, all fostering *'direct links with other departments in the Czech Republic'* (BC Doc 57). Two also included a PRESETT networking element, a workshop on data-driven learning, held in Usti nad Labem in March 2000, and a conference on 'Syllabus Development based on Research and Development' held in Liberec, May 2000, (BC Doc 73). Two further rounds of PRESETT bidding were held in 2000, which among other activities led to the Pardubice conference 'Promoting Reflection: Personal Theories in Teaching/Learning English as a Foreign Language' in February 2001 (BC Doc 75). In fact, there were only a small number of bids presented in the 2000 rounds, and some indications that departments were being successful in applying for funding from other agencies, where larger sums of money were available (BC Doc 75).

A report (BC Doc 65) and coordinators' minutes (BC Doc 66) outline steps taken by the coordinator team to obtain recognition for UK MAs and to investigate possibilities for PhDs both regionally in Central Europe and in the UK, for example through joint Czech/British accreditation. It is not clear how far recognition of UK MAs was expected to be problematic when PRESETT staff started them in the early and mid-90s, although the 1996–1997 ELT Project Logframe includes the development of recognition of UK qualifications as a risk factor (BC Doc 67). Recognition of non-Czech ELT degrees, however, was hampered by continuing Central European traditions of subject specialisation and the fact that each autonomous university senate recognises post-graduate degrees in different ways. Major stumbling blocks stated for embarking on PhDs appear to have been cost and residence requirements in the UK, and complications involved in joint accreditation (BC Doc 65). Later PRESETT Research and Development project documents, e.g. 1999–2000, only briefly mention the need for higher qualifications.

B.4.4 Towards sustainability

With the disbanding of the coordinator team planned for summer 2001, the emphasis was on developing trainer expertise through the new projects in Young Learners and Heterogeneous Classes (see Chapter 8 in this volume) and planning for the sustainable development of expertise in the future.

The need was identified for *'an organisation, which would offer expertise and services in ELTE'* or *'existing links might dissolve and the teacher education expertise built up over the past decade may not be readily available for consultation by the Ministry. A teacher educator body would be a key player in ensuring sustainability of the BC ELT development work that has gone on in the past decade, 1991–2001, developing it and taking the work forward in the future'* (BC Doc 74).

At the British Council AGM in Brno in November 2000, partners from all the Council ELT projects decided that this could best be done by forming an independent professional body of ELT teacher educators. A steering committee of 11 members (five INSETT, four PRESETT, two ESP) was elected with the job of setting up the body, and AMATE was launched in June 2001. A major focus of the organisation is *'ensuring quality in teacher education with the professional development of its members as a main aim as well as the development of a coherent national quality system of PRESETT and INSETT training'* (BC Docs 74, 76). Raising the profile of the teacher education profession is also a key aim.

In Section B.4, then, we have seen how the planning of projects in the 1996–2001 period was carried out and we have looked at aspects of the broader context in which the projects were located. Research and development and networking were identified as central themes of projects during this period as a means of encouraging the sustainability of PRESETT expertise developed in the previous project from 1991–1996.

B.5 Summary and discussion

Early input – training and resources

This section has outlined British Council ELT PRESETT projects over two periods, 1991–1996 and 1996–2001. The first period documents the major British Council input, in terms of UK-recruited teacher trainers based in departments, resources and training for departmental staff in order to support the up-grading and expansion of initial teacher training for teachers of English. An initiative by the Ministry of Education to increase teacher numbers quickly through the establishment of temporary centres offering three-year single subject English teacher training programmes was also supported by the British Council and coordinated through the post of the Council INSETT advisor. With the PRESETT English departments newly established in pedagogical faculties in the early-1990s, the imperative had been to establish curricula with a new emphasis on the professional development of future teachers and boost the skills and expertise of members of staff in those areas of the curriculum.

The early input of books and materials paved the way for new courses, and teamwork between British Council lecturers, Czech staff and others both within and between departments seems to have been a significant factor influencing the development of new reflective teacher education curricula that balanced and integrated both theory and practice. The three-year programme, however, did not sit easily with traditional Czech teacher education structures and with the end of Fast-track in 1997, some of its innovation was transferred to more traditional four- or five-year programmes. The final outcomes and achievement can be seen in the two PRESETT department case studies that follow this section.

Incremental development/sustainable expertise

The second period from 1996 onwards saw the end of the first five-year British Council PRESETT project and the gradual withdrawal of an active British Council teaching and developmental role in the departments, alongside the initiation of new projects dictated by needs in the departments with the aim of making the expertise already developed, sustainable in the long term. Out of this grew not only joint INSETT/PRESETT projects in the Teaching of English to Young Learners and Heterogeneous Classes, but also support for PRESETT Research and Development and Networking projects.

Evidence of the outcomes of these British Council supported Research and Development projects in, e.g. syllabus development through research, developing reflection in teachers, using children's literature in the primary classroom (BC Docs 73, 75), would seem to suggest that English language PRESETT departments are well-positioned to take forward the vision of the Ministry of Education for the 'basic schools' of the future contained in the latest White Paper (MŠMT 2001), with its emphasis on respecting learners and individual difference, developing communication and interpersonal skills, creativity and problem-solving, developing skills for the information society and life-long learning. The existence of a professional association of teacher educators, AMATE, also suggests a potential channel for the systematic professional development of teachers both pre-service and in-service, in support of these aims.

Status and recognition

Despite this considerable achievement, however, several major issues remain, perhaps the greatest being that teacher education is still not seen as an academic discipline in the Czech Republic. The main imperative for PRESETT departments from 1996–2001, was often to establish their own academic credibility, especially when it came to gaining accreditation for their programmes. This, as was recognised by the British Council PRESETT Research and Development project, required appropriate 'higher degrees', research and publications acceptable to Czech institutions. Barriers to the recognition of British MAs have been outlined here and in some of the other sections. A related issue is also the lack of recognition of applied research into teacher education, which has given little incentive for the valuable research and publications that might have made the impact of the PRESETT project on the wider ELT and teacher education communities, both within the Czech Republic and beyond, greater than it has been.

The question of the acceptability and recognition of academic disciplines, research and qualifications within local structures and contexts is obviously a sensitive one and very little progress seems to have been made on this, not only in the Czech Republic but on a Europe-wide level, as witnessed by statements by the UK Education Secretary in May 2002, that recognition of qualifications is still a *'priority'* (THES, 2002). Where recognition lies in the hands of autonomous university senates, it is hard to know where to tackle the problem. The need for local in-depth knowledge, genuine consultation and partnerships when planning projects is also suggested.

Section C: Background to the two case studies

We move now to the case studies which illustrate in concrete terms the development of PRESETT in the Czech Republic. This section provides the institutional background by describing, in Sections C.1 and C.3 respectively, the establishment and development of two new university departments: the Department of English at the Technical University of Liberec and the Department of British and American Studies at the University of Pardubice. In Section C.3 the methodology employed in the case studies is discussed. The detailed findings from the two institutions are then presented in Sections D and E.

C.1 Liberec: the context

In the 1990s, the history of the development of the English department at the Technical University of Liberec was a story of the fruitful combination of Czech staff classroom experience and teacher training vision, massive international support and space for development provided by the institution in the context of dramatic social and historical changes in Czechoslovakia after 1989. The establishment of the pedagogical faculty in Liberec reflected the situation in the country and met the need of the region for new teachers. It was founded in summer 1990 as the third faculty of the Vysoká škola strojní a textilní (School of Machinery and Textile Engineering), which then became the Technical University of Liberec in 1995. Besides departments transferred from the Vysoká škola strojní a textilní, e.g. mathematics and physical education, a new department of humanities and social sciences was established. Under its umbrella several sections – the future departments of English, German, Czech, history, pedagogy and psychology, civics and also languages for special purposes – were created. The division into departments was completed in May 1992.

The role of the English department has always been a dual one. The first and major role has been its participation in the initial teacher training of basic school teachers of two major subjects. In 1999 a new foreign language module was added to the primary teacher education programme and the department has been providing a teaching English to young learners course since. The second role has been the provision of complete PRESETT and INSETT programmes. In connection with PRESETT, a Fast-track programme was run by the department in 1992–1996, whilst a three-year qualification extension INSETT course for Russian teachers was offered in 1990–1995 and a similar INSETT course for primary teachers started in 2000.

The students of the department in the pre-service programme are secondary school graduates, mostly without any working experience. They pass entrance exams in both of the subjects which they intend to study. The number of students accepted for English has grown from 20 to 65, and the number of graduates from ten to 45 over the 1990–2001 period.

The beginning of the English section, later on the English department, was very modest – a couple of experienced language school teachers as staff, a list of prescribed subjects for year one as a study programme, and apart from a few textbooks, no teaching materials as resources. The development priorities were identified in three areas, i.e. EFL trainer training, TEFL resources and study programme. The trainers' professional development had a range of sources, i.e. Czech classroom experience, experience and expertise of native speakers working with the department since its establishment under various programmes, i.e. the British Council, Peace Corps, USIS and East European Partnership. Between 1990 and 2001 the trainers were also offered numerous opportunities to participate in a variety of short- and long-term teacher training focused courses, five of them in MA and MEd degree courses. Most of them, with the exception of the MEd course supported by the university, were provided by international organisations (see Section B above).

The development process also included informal sharing and reflection on teaching with all colleagues and discussions about the content and methods of training, as well as materials. The trainers also experienced a shared development of new courses where foreign expertise and Czech knowledge of educational context and classroom experience were mixed, e.g. writing or diploma thesis course. Also resource development was mostly supported by the above listed international organisations and some foundations, i.e. the Prague Spring Foundation, the Jan Hus Educational Foundation. Providing textbooks and teacher training materials, fiction, qualitative research, higher education and general learning and teaching materials, they enabled the department to develop a departmental resource centre. In 1994 the centre became a teacher training focused English section of the University Library. Besides educational materials, the organisations also provided some technology, such as tape recorders, video players, copiers, a video camera and computers.

The design of the curriculum became the ultimate goal for the new English section and an ongoing task. Two factors contributed significantly to the process. First there was no history and tradition of teacher training at the technical school, which provided some space for innovations. Second, the staff were former classroom teachers and native speakers, which brought along a classroom practice focus and international TEFL know-how. The curriculum development has had four phases:

- traditional programme adaptation
- foreign models adaptation
- research based programme
- ongoing evaluation and development.

In the first phase the primary goal was to establish the sequence, progression and content of individual courses. Traditional programmes were used as a basis. The first diversions from the tradition of linguistics and literature focus were practice-

oriented classroom activities, while the content and structure remained unchanged. The introduction of a continuous assessment system at the end of 1991 was another significant change.

In the second phase an important breakthrough occurred. All trainers had a chance to participate in a variety of international programmes, e.g. the British Council PRESETT project (see Section B) and the European TEMPUS scheme. They learned the basics of course design and also experienced some programmes for educating teachers of English as a foreign language. Various models were used and adapted for the departmental needs. Courses of English language studies, cultural background and methodology were designed. The foreign expertise and influence appeared to be significant especially for the design of methodology and teaching practice elements as well as for the introduction of structured and academic writing and student research tutoring. Specifications of the subjects in terms of goals, contents and assessment were completed in October 1992.

The growing experience and expertise of the staff shaped the third phase as they gradually created a need to re-design the curriculum and reflect the learning needs of students. An action research curriculum development project was proposed in 1993 and completed in 1996 at UEA, Norwich. Its goal was to investigate *'what the needs of teacher students with the learning experience in a centrally controlled educational system are, and how they will be reflected in the design of the teacher education programme in order to enable the student teachers to develop teaching skills and acquire theoretical knowledge needed for the reflective practice in classrooms'* (Burešová 1996, p. 35).

The suggestions based on the findings of the study focused on the practice-theory connection development, the integration within subjects and across subjects and the development of independently thinking student teachers. The outcome of the study was a coherent, theory and practice-balanced, classroom practice-focused curriculum description. The actual process of action research brought to the operation of the department significant features – intensive shared reflecting and teamwork. The ongoing process of continuous programme evaluation was triggered and has been a source of change needs formulation ever since.

The dynamic development of the department over the first six years of its existence has changed from building up substantial teacher training foundations in terms of staff qualification, resources and curriculum, to focusing on quality of training and learning as at present. An investigation of the present state of training at the English department is the goal of this study. A qualitative research project was designed to complete it. The specific goals and processes used to collect data are discussed in Section C.3.

C.2 Pardubice: the context

The University of Pardubice is one of the major higher education institutions in East Bohemia that prepares students for careers in the fields of science, engineering, economics and social sciences. It was established in 1950 as the Institute of Chemical Technology to answer the needs of a region that had a highly developed chemical industry, yet lacked professionally trained specialists. Since March 31st 1994, the original institute has become the University of Pardubice with four faculties: the Faculty of Chemical Technology, the Faculty of Economics and Administration, the Faculty of Humanities and the Jan Perner Transport Faculty.

The Faculty of Humanities, established in January 2001, has developed from the Institute of Languages and Humanities. The educational and research activities of the faculty are mainly focused on interdisciplinary and arts programmes.

It was in 1992 when, together with the establishment of the former Institute of Foreign Languages, the first ELT programme, Fast-track, was launched. Pardubice at that time differed considerably from the other centres where this programme was offered. There was no established pedagogical faculty, there were hardly any human resources except for a few experienced teachers of English from secondary schools who were recruited. On the other hand, there was no burden of traditional curriculum and approaches, which finally proved to be an advantage for launching the project. When the first students of the programme graduated, the Institute succeeded in getting a two-year part-time follow-up study accredited, which made it possible for the graduates to gain full, acknowledged qualification for teaching. However, the Institute had to face quite a lot of problems. Píšová has written about the struggle for sustainability and institutionalisation and about the curriculum development (Píšová 2001).

In 2001 the original ELT programme was transformed and accredited as a five-year Magister course.

Within the last three years the offer of different curricula has expanded, and several Bachelor-degree courses have been introduced, e.g. cultural history, socio-cultural studies, social anthropology, religious studies and English and German for specialists.

Six departments have been established to provide for the different programmes offered by the faculty: the Department of British and American Studies, the Department of Foreign Languages, the Department of Educational Sciences, the Department of History, the Department of Sociology and the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy. The Department of British and American Studies has developed from the former English section, which consisted not only of teacher trainers, but also of EFL teachers, who were mostly involved in ESP provided for other faculties within the university. They are now, together with other language teachers, members of the Department of Foreign Languages. The Department of British and American Studies is responsible for the provision of complete PRESETT and INSETT programmes and from 2002 on the newly accredited Bachelor programme English for specialists. There are 11 members, two of them working part-time. All teacher trainers are fully qualified, there is one 'docent' working part-time, two PhD degrees. Three teacher trainers finished their MA studies in Great Britain, all department members without a recognised and required academic qualification are currently studying for PhD degrees in different areas (pedagogy, linguistics, philology, cultural studies). Two department members are former Fast-track and the two-year follow-up graduates with three years' teaching experience at secondary or basic schools; they are now involved in ELT methodology and linguistics respectively. Four teacher trainers have up to 15 years of secondary school language teaching experience.

The average teaching load of the staff is 14 lessons (lectures and seminars) a week. However, not all of these are included within the PRESETT or INSETT programmes since the department members are also involved in language teaching in the other curricula offered by the faculty. The department members' activities further include publishing, presenting at conferences, submitting grant proposals, research, and involvement in professional associations and special interest groups. The evidence of these activities can be found in the teacher trainers' curricula vitae and departmental documents. Professional development of teacher trainers is encouraged by guaranteeing one day a week without teaching, which they are expected to devote to further study or research. Most of the teacher trainers have some extra duties, e.g. as members of the faculty and university senate, different university committees and boards, etc.

Every year the number of applicants for the ELT programme greatly exceeds the number of those admitted, though the number of applications is affected by advertising. For example, in 2001 the future of the ELT programme at the faculty was uncertain because the accreditation of the programme had expired. The original curriculum (Fast-track) lost its justification because the Bachelor degree was not recognised as a sufficient qualification for teaching at schools. A new five-year Magister programme had to be designed and approved by the accreditation committee. However, the legislative procedure took some time, the offer could not be advertised until too late, and, consequently, the choice of candidates was much smaller than in the previous years. Student intake has been around 40 in the last few years, usually two parallel seminars are offered in most subjects every academic year. The total number of students enrolled in the first to the fifth years of study in the ELT programme averages 160.

The overall aim of the five-year Magister degree ELT programme is *'to prepare fully qualified professionals – teachers of English, who are capable of reflection, anticipation and flexible teaching accordingly'* (Accreditation materials).

The basis of the professional preparation of the graduates is their excellent command of English: they have adequate linguistic, literary, cultural and psychology knowledge and teaching and social skills. In the course of their study the students have to meet all the requirements of the obligatory subjects, pass the language proficiency and progress exam, gain 300 credit points, defend their diploma thesis and pass the final state exam, which consists of linguistic, literature and professional components. The current curriculum has a modular arrangement, each module representing individual components of a pre-graduate ELT programme. The subject matter component is reflected in the communicative, linguistic and cultural modules, the professional component in the module of professional development, teaching practice runs through the professional and 'clinical year' modules, whereas general educational courses are grouped in the general and optional modules. The highest level of innovation in the sense of integration, reflection and cooperation has been achieved in the professional development module, which is divided into four blocks: the pedagogical, the psychological and didactic ones and teaching practice. Moreover, some interdisciplinary courses are offered. They include, e.g. multimedia for teachers and concordancing for ELT, social skills, introduction to research methods, gender studies, etc. The students are encouraged to choose additional courses either from the optional module, which is common for all the different curricula offered at the faculty, or they can sign on for any course from the other curricula according to their interest, provided there is enough capacity. In the course of their study, the students have to complete all the obligatory subjects, for which they can gain about 250 credit points. This means that they have enough freedom to choose from the range of courses to reach the required total of 300.

In 2001–2002 a new model of teaching practice was piloted. This model comprises a one-year internship at a basic school during the fourth year of study. In the last year of the programme the trainees return to the university. Descriptions of this 'clinical year' are provided by Píšová and Černá (see for example Píšová 2000, 2001, Píšová and Černá 2002).

The evaluation of students is carried out using different assessment methods. There are several examinations on multidisciplinary knowledge, e.g. the language proficiency exam, the integral exam of cultural studies and writing skills (both a written project and its oral presentation at a students' conference are evaluated separately for individual courses), or the progress exam, testing knowledge across the modules and including linguistics (phonology, morphology and syntax), literature and teaching proficiency (an integral exam on pedagogy, psychology, didactics and ELT methodology). The format of exams is both written and oral, both continuous and end of term assessment.

Individual teachers are responsible for subject exams, whereas the content and level of multidisciplinary exams are negotiated by all particular subject teachers and finally approved by the head of the department. The chairman of the final examination committee bears responsibility for the content and procedure of the final state exam.

C.3 Methodology

The main objective of the case studies is to provide in-depth analyses of the operation of the two university departments described in Sections C.1 and C.2 above. The hope is that the case studies will facilitate understanding of the present state of PRESETT in these departments.

There are two principal research questions:

- What is the training process like in the two institutions in terms of goals, content, process and format?
- How do the teacher trainers work and what makes them work that way?

The areas of focus are trainers' professional thinking and its development as well as trainers' perceptions of their own work, training processes and curriculum. Both the focus and the research instruments are identical in the two case studies.

The following sub-sections describe the research instruments and the main characteristics of the informants in the two institutions.

C.3.1 Instruments

To collect the data needed for the investigation the following instruments were designed:

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was focused on teacher trainers' professional thinking and training processes in the department. Specific questions were aimed at the teacher trainers' perceptions of their understanding of teacher training, the development of their professional confidence, their professional practice and of the curriculum. As the focus of the investigation was a reflection on a very broad issue, it was decided to use the questionnaire to provide the teacher trainers with an opportunity to reflect before the interview. Another reason was the time limit of the study and the format of the questionnaire, which allowed the researcher to reach all the staff.

Semi-structured follow-up interview (recorded)

This was designed to provide deeper insight into a range of issues raised in the questionnaire and to clarify some perceptions.

Group questionnaire

To gain students' perceptions of the effects of training, a group questionnaire was designed. Final year students forming groups of three to five were asked to discuss and agree on the answers. The questionnaire focused on the aspects of the curriculum that contributed and did not contribute to the students' development as prospective teachers.

Semi-structured interview with a senior member of the faculty (recorded)

To find out about the perceptions of the role of the departments and their curricula and the professional development of the staff, a senior member of the administration was interviewed.

Documents

The sources of factual data were numerous, e.g. the curriculum description, curricula vitae, teaching practice evaluation of students by basic school teachers, staff dissertations, publications, accreditation materials, MSMT web pages, graduate profile description, description of different exams, diploma thesis, instructions, syllabi and course requirements, etc. Further data was found in published articles.

Recorded group discussion

One group discussion was audio-recorded in Pardubice.

C.3.2 Informants

In Liberec, the informants included five trainers, 50 fourth-year students and a senior member of the pedagogical faculty[2].

Teacher trainers

Five of the six trainers who had been working for the department full time for at least two years (i.e. all except the investigator) responded to the questionnaire. One of them is a graduate of the Liberec INSETT qualification extension programme, two are Liberec English department graduates, and the remaining two are former language school teachers and former and current heads of the English department. Three teacher trainers representing different components of the curriculum, i.e. English studies, culture studies and methodology teaching practice, were interviewed. All interviews were recorded.

Students

Fifty fourth-year students of the Magister degree double major subject programme, currently finishing their last study year, answered the questionnaire. At the time of investigation they had completed their final teaching practice and the last but one semester of the programme.

Senior member of the faculty

This person is a specialist and scholar in mathematics. He has worked in the pedagogical faculty administration since 1992. The interview was recorded.

In Pardubice, informants consisted of seven teacher trainers, 17 students and one senior member of the faculty[3].

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2   The following codes are used for the Liberec study:

QT1–5 = questionnaire for trainers 1–5

IT2, 4, 5 = interviews with trainers 2, 4 and 5

QS1–11 = interview with senior member of faculty

ES1–3 = evaluation of students in final teaching practice by basic school teachers

Other documentary sources are specified separately in the text.

*= responses which were given in Czech and have been translated; all other responses were made in English.

3   The following codes are used for the Pardubice study:

Qtt1–9 (/I–V indicates the number of question) = questionnaires for teacher trainers 1–9

Intt 1–3 = follow-up interviews 1–3

Qss1–5 (/1–5 marks the year of study, +/- contributed/did not contribute) = group questionnaires 1–5

Insgd = group discussion

Indean = semi-structured interwiew with the Dean

CV1–9 = curricula vitae of 9 department members.

Teacher trainers

Seven department members (two of them graduates of the Fast-track and follow-up programme) completed the questionnaires; three teacher trainers representing different components of the curriculum were interviewed. Interviews were carried out in Czech and transcribed, parts used as data were translated.

One of the interviews was not recorded successfully, so after the transcription was made with lots of gaps, the respondent was asked to complete it and confirm her actual words.

Students

Seventeen graduates from the original Fast-track programme, currently finishing the two-year follow-up Magister programme, answered the questionnaire. They are employed as full-time or part-time teachers at schools (100 hours of teaching load per semester is required as a prerequisite for the methodology exam) and meet at seminars and tutorials every month. The informants, however, began their Bachelor studies in different years; moreover, some of them studied part-time. Accordingly, their answers reflect different curricula, different processes and teaching staff. After graduating as Bachelors, some of them either began their teaching career at schools, or started various other jobs, and only after several years did they enrol again for further study. The group whose discussion was recorded consisted of students beginning their studies in 1992–1993, 1993–1994 and 1994–1995. Their evaluation differs significantly from that provided by younger students.

Dean

The dean of the faculty is a distinguished scholar with the highest academic degree, a historian. She has been in office since 1999.

Transcribed responses were coded before analysis began.

Section D: Findings from the Liberec case study

A substantial body of data was generated by the case study in Liberec and a wide range of issues emerged from the analysis. There is space here to permit discussion only of the major findings. These can be categorised as the complex nature of the teacher training profession, the development of trainers' professional confidence, perceptions of curriculum design, the professional thinking of trainers and its manifestation in training processes, and finally external recognition of professional achievements.

D.1 Complex nature of the teacher training profession

A quality teacher training profession as it is perceived by the department trainers and in some aspects also by students has two major areas, i.e. teaching and teacher training. All the trainers in the survey referred to issues of teaching performance, subject knowledge and methodology, mastery of the target language, research and publishing and life-long learning when they were asked to discuss their professional confidence. In this way they were able to articulate their understanding of the profession and its goals.

Teaching performance

Teaching performance in classes is considered a key aspect of the profession by most trainers (QT1, 2, 4, 5). Discussing specifications they consider a whole range of areas covering planning, reflection, materials, innovations, evaluation and assessment, rapport and tutoring individual students. Effective long-term planning requires adaptations of the syllabus to meet student learning needs, ability to choose appropriate methodology and finally reflection on teaching performance. Trainer 2 discusses the issue: '… *effective lessons that would both comply with the requirements of syllabus and students' needs [require] quite good knowledge of all the rules, methods, approaches as well as techniques of teaching …[and also] the conclusions from my own self-reflections on the teaching/learning processes*' (QT2). Creative work with materials and their design is believed to be another feature of effective teaching (QT5).

Testing and assessment are further bits of the classroom performance mosaic. Trainer 5 specifies the range: '… *besides classroom tests and end of semester exams they also include preparing entrance exams and participating in the work of final exam teams*' (QT5).

Learning supportive rapport between students and trainers is considered to be another prerequisite of effective teaching (QT2, 3, 4). Trainer 2 points out two characteristics of a working relationship – an overall interactive approach and individual support – when she says: *'… conducting lessons in an interactive way so that the students cooperate with the teacher and work on their own … and … helping students with their problems …'* (QT2). Work with individual students outside the classroom finishes a long list of teaching activities expected from trainers *'while tutoring the final theses and monitoring and assessing students' results achieved during their teaching placement'* (QT5).

Subject knowledge and methodology
Profound knowledge of the subject and methodology of teaching is believed to be an important condition and characteristic of quality training performance by all trainers. It enables them to help students create connections between single issues, as well as deliver the information effectively (QT1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Trainer 2 claims: *'… a better understanding of different theoretical principles gives a teacher a different view (complete) on the subject matter and thus helps him or her choose appropriate methods/strategies for transferring information to students'* (QT2). Connected to this appears to be a good orientation in exploitation of resources (QT4).
Another aspect of quality classroom performance is the necessity to follow latest developments in the field of TEFL and reflect them in classroom performance (QT2, 4).

Target language mastery
Part of the TEFL training that the department trainers felt strongly about was mastering the target language at a very advanced level because *'the teacher is a model for students; therefore she should be a model in terms of language'* (QT2). Trainers 2, 3 and 4 articulate this as an aspect needing development.

Research and publishing
Research and experience and expertise sharing are perceived by most trainers (QT1, 2, 4, 5) to be important parts of the profession, in addition to training related aspects. Trainer 5 provides examples: *'a study or project connected with the subject (conference presentation, article or another type of publication, etc.)'* (QT5).

Life-long learning
The above discussed characteristics of the profession have one common feature and it is their ongoing development through life-long learning – *'…if one wants to become a professional, they must work on it all the time'* (QT4).

The range of processes which constitute the trainers' work and demonstrate their understanding of what the teacher training profession means has been discussed in this section. Professional confidence underlying the participants' views and the processes by which this develops are the focus of the following section.

D.2 Professional confidence of trainers
The professional confidence of trainers underlying their understanding of the profession has been developing over the years. A variety of learning processes happening both inside and outside the department have been the source of its growth. The issues discussed here are trainers' classroom experience, participation in long- and short-term courses, sharing and networking and publishing.

Classroom experience
The enormous value of the experience for professional growth and consequently for the effectiveness of learning was articulated by all respondents. Classroom teaching and reflection on it, which were discussed in the previous section as key factors of the teacher training profession, are also believed to be a major source of confidence by all five trainers (QT1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The process is considered to lead to quality improvement (T2, 4). Trainer 2 describes the process: *'… when I started [teaching writing] I read the book and said it in the class. After every lesson, every year I realised what was not the way and changed it …'* (IT2*). Another confidence development aspect is building up a certain routine. For example, effective student work evaluation techniques and supportive strategies develop as the trainer works on plenty of student products. Trainer 2

comments that *'... you need to correct, read and teach, loads of essays and writing assignments to get a certain routine in reading, evaluating and commenting ...Today I know what to point out, what it is that does not work'* (IT2*).

Courses

A variety of courses both long- and short-term, provided mainly by the British Council and other international organisations (see Section B), were valued by all the trainers for their focus on the training profession and because they allowed them to feel at home within the profession (T1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The most significant influence appears to have been the participation in and completion of the British Council supported MA courses. All participating trainers (T1, 2, 4, 5) admitted the profound effect the course had had on the growth of their confidence in a variety of areas from the chance to succeed in an international environment and meet foreign criteria, through methodology development, to suggestions for innovations, syllabus construction, and assessment (QT5, IT4, IT2). Some trainers specify: *'... I could succeed at a British university, ... I could do it in a team of international students, without any serious problem'* (IT5); *'... I keep using the [methodology] ideas all the time'* (IT4*). Several trainers (T2, 4, 5) also refer to the contributions of short-term courses which helped them improve their knowledge and teaching strategies relating to the areas either neglected or underdeveloped in the Czech educational context, e.g. the British Council course on heterogeneous classes (QT5) or the Open Society Fund course on critical thinking development (QT2). The course effects can be traced in the design of new courses for the training programme, e.g. Alternative teaching forms, Writing course. They help bridge the existing gaps in teacher education, e.g. teaching a foreign language to dyslexic children or structured writing (Accreditation materials-CVs).

Sharing and networking

Sharing experiences and cooperation within the department support confidence growth on a daily basis. It helps trainers understand their experience, make connections to other people's work and find and specify their own teaching style (IT2, QT5, IT4). Trainer 2 recalls her experience: *'Even if each member of the department contributed with his or her own individual style, the mutual support and understanding of the aims of the department led me towards finding my own strategy'* (QT2). Another trainer appreciates opportunities to discuss and clarify issues arising in the classroom as well as effective teaching strategies saying: *'... possibilities to discuss it [teaching] with a colleague ... are really good ...'* (QT5).

Networking and participation at conferences has provided space for professional discussions, articulation, specification and clarification of shared issues and contributed thus to the personal professional development of the department trainers as well as other English departments. One of the trainers recalls: *'Discussions with colleagues from similarly oriented departments in the country and abroad plus the fact that no genuine training for English teachers had existed in the country and the whole thing had to be designed and discussed thoroughly ...'* (QT5). Trainers' participation at conferences, national and international, was almost entirely supported by the British Council (see Section B).

The growth in confidence in the English department trainers is demonstrated also in their active organisation or participation in the organisation of a whole range of conferences and seminars both for teachers of English and for foreign language teacher trainers. For example, Liberec seminar 1993–9, ATECR conferences 1995, 1998, 2002, A Graduate Profile Conference, 2001, etc. Several members of the department also actively work in national professional organisations like ATECR and AMATE (Accreditation materials, CVs).

Publishing

Publishing is considered to be a significant source and demonstration of trainers' confidence. Most department trainers (T1, 2, 4, 5) agreed upon this. Trainer 5 expressed the need to publish saying *'Whatever, article, conference presentation, textbooks, teaching materials ... I really mean articles and something that could be published'* (IT5). Publications of the department members include EFL teacher training materials and articles focused either on issues of teaching English at schools or of teacher training in the Czech educational context (Accreditation materials, CVs).

This section gives us an idea of the sources of the growth in trainers' professional confidence and indicates how each of the processes affects the trainers' performance. In the following section we will consider how the curriculum reflects both the trainers' beliefs and students' needs.

D.3 Curriculum: a reflection of trainers' beliefs and students' needs

Curriculum design has been an ongoing process influenced by the development of trainers' confidence and beliefs, their growing training experience, reflection on training processes and student feedback from classes and teaching practice. Our analysis of the data enables us to identify the general characteristics of the curriculum, the overall goals of the programme, its vertical and horizontal coherence and also provides students' perceptions.

General characteristics

The curriculum covers the areas the English department is responsible for in the overall study programme of pre-service teacher training. These areas are English and culture studies, methodology of EFL, teaching practice in semesters 5, 6 and 7 and a range of electives. The content, processes, assessment and format have been designed to achieve the goal of theory and practice-balanced teacher education. The ultimate goal then is to meet the subject, language and professional learning needs of students. All trainers indicated that they believed the curriculum provided a sound basis for professional growth (QT1, 2, 3, 4, 5). One of them summarises the view saying *'The trainees get a balance of relevant theory and practice in the EFL field, they have some relevant materials available, they can test and verify various bits and pieces of theory in the real classrooms and can reflect upon it'* (QT5).

Training goals

The overall goals of teacher training at the department have been formulated, agreed upon and articulated in the principles of the course and they reflect the trainers' understanding of the aims of their training activities. The course is expected to:

- provide students with the ability to plan, teach and evaluate effective learning of basic school pupils in the English language.
- be relevant to the educational and professional needs of the target population and to the needs of the basic schools in which they will serve as teachers.
- be educative and professional, ensuring the students' personal intellectual and professional development.
- lead students to increasing independence, and ability to make connections between theory, EFL methodology and practice.
- be culturally broadening and provide students with a wider understanding of the culture of the English-speaking countries.
- provide students with the tools for their further professional development in the field.

(Pre-service Four-year Study Programme, 2000)

Coherence

One of the intentions of the department staff has been the development of links within one-subject courses, e.g. Grammar 1–4, and also across courses, e.g. Writing and Methodology. The coherence was carefully considered while planning the individual semester and year courses and is believed to enable students to develop their language and teaching competencies and realise and use connections between subjects for their professional growth. Both students (SQ1, 3, 4, 9, 6) and trainers refer to this programme characteristic. Trainer 2 expresses her view saying *'The subjects are linked as well as interlinked and also the requirements for accomplishing the courses support a gradual development of a proficient teacher'* (QT2).

Student needs reflection

The students' view of the programme expresses their perceptions of how it has met their needs in terms of professional and language development. They name aspects in which they understand the programme positively affects their learning, i.e. content of the course, attitude towards theory and opportunities they are offered. They appreciate that the programme provides relevant general knowledge (QS1, 2, 5, 7, 8). They understand theory input is useful if it is related to teaching (QS5, 6, 8, 10), saying that they are *'gaining theoretical knowledge appropriate and important for practice'* (QS8). They discuss some aspects that help them make the theory-practice link, e.g. *'... some activities can be used at basic schools'* (QS6), and also mention professional growth opportunities for *'development of critical thinking, professional self-confidence, techniques of classroom research'* (QS7).

Curriculum design is one way in which trainers' professional thinking is manifested. Now we move to another one, i.e. training processes.

D.4 Training processes

Training is implemented in two environments – faculty classrooms and basic school classrooms during teaching practice. It has several key characteristics that influence significantly the effectiveness of the whole process. Those identified and discussed here are the qualities of the trainer, involvement of students, development of students' awareness of learning processes, the formation of links between theory and practice, and the role of teaching practice.

Trainers' personal and professional qualities

The investigation has shown that the qualities of the trainer are one of the key factors in effective training. Many students make a direct link between a course quality and a trainer, saying, for instance: *'The quality of the course depends on qualities of the teacher [personal and professional]'* (QS7). One of these qualities is the ability to establish a positive classroom atmosphere. It appears to be crucial as it affects the feelings and consequently the learning. Many students (QS4, 6, 7, 10) refer to this: *'the atmosphere strict but fair'* (QS6), *'relaxed, friendly … teacher did not demonstrate his superiority'* (QS4), *'… sometimes really stressful'* (QS10). Another quality is the ability of the trainer to practise what she preaches. Both trainers (IT2, 5) and students (QS3, 4, 10) believe that an effective teacher trainer should be a model of quality teaching. Trainer 2 says: *'I think it is the most difficult part of trainer's work. To apply the ideals in her lessons. It is extremely difficult and demanding. It means if I want them to reflect, I must reflect in classes, and to reflect in classes I need to prepare very carefully … Speaking about something is different from doing it'* (IT2*). Students often refer to their negative experience as if they only noticed the absence of this quality in the trainer: *'… sometimes we have been taught in the ways that are not expected from us'* (QS10).

The structure of the teaching also has a significant impact on learning, and almost all students emphasise this (QS1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10). They report on *'… lessons carefully thought through, … a clear structure of lessons and activities'* (QS5).

Involvement of students

A second factor influencing the effectiveness of the training appears to be the involvement of students in the classroom processes, and a chance to put into practise what they have been taught. Most students discuss some opportunities which enabled them to learn both language and teaching skills, e.g. presenting information and activities by students (SQ1, 10), learning by doing (SQ4, 6, 8, 9, 10) and peer assessment (SQ2, 6, 9). They specify some learning effects: *'speaking – fluency improvement'* (QS6), *'self-expression'* (SQ2, 10), *'development of study skills'* (SQ4), *'through portfolios we learned what we do well'* (QS6). Also trainers demonstrate their belief in student involvement (IT2, 4). For instance, *'… they will learn most when they are involved in the process of teaching and learning, if they experience it, then they will know how to teach it to children …'* (IT2*).

Learning awareness raising

The third factor is raising the awareness of teaching issues in the process of students' learning. Trainers (IT2, 4) believe students need to experience the effects of TEFL theories to be able to use them effectively as teachers. Respondents discuss two of the strategies, i.e. special activities and model teaching. Trainer 2 describes her technique: *'… when they finish the activity I ask them, … how they would adapt it for children at basic schools … because I feel that what they are learning, the facts, knowledge, cover the way of getting to it, I want … to remind them … what we did and why we did it'* (IT2*). Almost all students (QS3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) realise the connections between the activities in the process of their learning and possible adaptations for their classroom teaching. They say: *'… some activities can be helpful in the classes (e.g. minimal pairs, tongue twisters)'* (QS2), *'grammar exercises – good ideas'* (QS5), *'interesting ideas to introduce history'* (QS1), *'… a lot of materials, motivating techniques'* (QS6).

Connecting theory and practice

The fourth factor in the effective training process is the creation of a link between theory and practice. It appears to be the key learning issue for all students (QS1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). Students mostly refer to what the courses helped them develop rather then how: *'… [course] most needed for teaching practice, led to practical teaching skills'* (QS7), *'… after passing this course – easier to explain'* (QS5), *'… ability to evaluate the pupil using marks and also words, develop his strengths, motivate'* (QS9). If the course does not enable them to see the theory-practice link, they call it *'too academic, not connected with teaching children'* (QS4), or they think *'the lessons needed to be more focused on practical use'* (QS1). Also most trainers (QT1, 2, 4, 5) consider the theory-practice connection to be a crucial factor in the training process. Trainer 5 summarises: *'Well the*

theory, the wonderful theory you present to them is not connected with practice, so, most probably, the theory is wasted on many of them … so the quality of the teacher training is lower …' (IT5).

Teaching practice

Teaching practice is perceived to be another crucial part of the process. Its impact is enormous in several respects, e.g. in fostering the theory and practice link, development of students' confidence, reinforcement of teaching skills and real-life experience. In semester 5 the students spend one morning a week in schools observing, micro teaching or team teaching, and in semester 6 teaching whole lessons. In semester 7 they are at one school for four weeks, observing and teaching their two subjects for at least 12 hours a week.

Trainer 5 understands the role of teaching practice to be fundamental for the whole process of teacher training: *'… theory is important for understanding teaching placement and teaching placement is important for understanding theory. Without each you can't really prepare teachers …'* (IT5). The students (QS7, 8, 6) confirm this viewpoint: *'… we could try in practice and verify all the skills we had gained. Good for our self-confidence'* (QS7). Entering basic school classrooms in the role of teachers can be a frustrating experience for many students (QS7, 8) and their confidence can grow only in the classroom. As one trainer points out: *'… we know that teacher training is also about their own confidence, so when they have a feeling that they have not seen enough of schools, they will not believe in their own skills …'* (IT5).

Shared reflection on teaching practice contributes to the understanding of classroom processes and also provides advice and support. Students appreciate *'sharing the experience, learning from each other, the help and opinion of your colleagues'* (QS9). Another benefit of teaching practice is that it is a real-life experience and a test of their teaching skills, with all its ups and downs. Most students (QS1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11) value teaching practice for this particular aspect and provide many specific examples. They can experience *'how to treat pupils, face the class'*, and they have a chance to *'understand profession in the school on the whole'* (QS2); they can get feedback and learn *'whether we taught the children something or not'* (QS11), and *'how to examine, assess, evaluate, to improvise, to deal with children and parents'* (QS9).

The curriculum, as a work plan, and training processes emphasising the development of good professional classroom practice and competence of the trainees are the priorities of the department staff. The achievements attained and the quality of work are the subject of evaluation for various evaluators, both academic and practical. In the discussion which follows, issues of evaluation and recognition are fundamental but controversial.

D.5 External recognition: misunderstanding of the profession

The work of the English department is the subject of evaluation by a range of evaluators. Official evaluation is done once in a five-year period by the Accreditation Committee of the Ministry of Education. Unofficially it is evaluated by faculty colleagues from other departments, school administrations and school teachers and head teachers evaluating practice teaching students. The evaluators' expectations and criteria vary and are often controversial.

The evaluation of the Accreditation Committee and its verdict are of vital importance as by law they confirm the sustainability of the programme. In spring 2001 the English department went through this process and was denied accreditation. The reasons, published on the Internet, (www.MSMT.cz) were: *'insufficient qualification of the staff and inappropriate publications'.** The process of accreditation consisting of a submission of forms including trainers' CVs, individual subject syllabi and core bibliography was repeated in autumn 2001 and the department gained accreditation for five years (www.MSMT.cz).

Major misunderstandings of the profession, demonstrated in difficulties the department has had in the accreditation process, have been identified in three areas: focus and goals of teacher education and ways of reaching them, qualification of trainers, and trainer research and publishing activities.

Teacher training versus subject specialisation

The English department trainers believe that the ultimate goal of their efforts is to equip the students with knowledge, competencies and skills that will enable them to learn and to face the reality of today's schools. However, this may become a subject of criticism for official evaluators. One trainer comments: *'… the students should leave the school with the ability to find their ways in the world of their profession, to know the tools and methods to help them. This is not understood as the most*

important aspect yet. If we are trying to do that, we are penalised … by the Accreditation Committee, or it is not recognised as a value …' (IT2*). The ways of reaching the goals considered by the trainers to match the needs of students as they enable them to understand theory through testing it in practice, are interpreted as an indication that students do not get enough relevant theory. The appropriate way of delivering quality theory is traditionally considered to be the lecture. Trainer 2 refers to this: *'… there is a tradition in this country that students have lectures given by somebody and seminars taught by somebody else. In our department we have a mixture of lecture and seminar. That was a big problem for the Accreditation Committee'* (QT1). The classroom teaching background of English department trainers is believed to be a disadvantage in as much as the focus of training activities is considered to be too classroom oriented. The senior member of faculty says: *'… it's your life experience, you are perhaps spoilt by teaching somewhere else, you did it differently there'.* He appreciates the teacher training quality of the English department staff but does not consider it the goal: *'… there are two sides of the coin, as far as teacher training is concerned you are fine, but you are at university …'* (SMF*).

The feedback from schools, however, indicates that the focus of training at the English department meets the expectations of the schools. In most of their evaluations of practising students, teachers or head teachers appreciate their performance saying: *'… she introduced new aspects the children were not used to, e.g. reflection, peer assessment and she managed to develop their ability to listen to each other'* (ES1*); *'… he used creatively school resources and also designed his own materials …'* (ES2*); *'… all her performance was excellent … she could explain new issues and she never had classroom management problems …'* (ES3*).

External qualification criteria versus needs of the profession

The official recognition of the qualification of the department trainers is the second controversial issue raised by the trainers. The problem has been academic and research degrees gained by the department staff and their suitability. Most senior members of the department have Czech doctorate degrees and all of them completed their MA or MEd studies focused on teacher training issues in Great Britain, e.g. assessment of final theses, reflective teaching, curriculum development, etc.

These degrees are not considered appropriate qualifications by the Accreditation Committee and consequently by the university administration. Trainer 1 explains: *'We are evaluated on the basis of how many academic and research degrees we have achieved. However, what counts are mainly degrees achieved in the Czech Republic. MA degrees even if achieved at prestigious universities in Britain and even if very relevant to what we are doing are still taken as equal to basic undergraduate studies'.* Relevant, new higher degrees, however, cannot be gained in the Czech Republic as applied linguistics specialisation does not exist. *'In the Czech Rep. it is not possible to achieve a PhD degree in applied linguistics … if I wanted to enrol at a PhD programme …, it would have to be either pure linguistics or pure literature or pedagogy/psychology …'* (QT1). The suitability of degrees, however, is very important for the faculty and the university as it is one of the official evaluation criteria. The SMF emphasises that *'it is important for the accreditation committee and it's prescribed by "stone universities"'* (SMF*). The relevance of further education of the trainers is not a priority though it may be unofficially acknowledged. *'The fact that people do something that we may consider important, good and needed is a small luxury'* (SMF*). The discrepancy discussed indicates the need for revision of the evaluation criteria as SMF suggests: *'… I think the schools should be accredited, but the criteria should be developing'* (SMF*).

Teacher training-focused research and publications versus 'recognised' research and publications

Publications, conference presentations and research are understood unanimously by the department trainers and external evaluators to be a significant demonstration of professionalism. However, the moment of disagreement comes when the focus is considered. All the publications, research projects, mostly qualitative, or conference presentations completed at the English department are oriented towards training teachers or teaching English. The topics cover, for example, mentoring, student classroom research, teaching English to young learners, etc. (Accreditation materials,-CVs). However, these topics do not fall into any of the linguistics or literature specialisation categories, and therefore are considered second rate. The SMF comments on this, saying, *'I don't think this should be a philosophical faculty … but from time to time you should write something in your specialisation, which is not trivial, to keep in touch with your specialisation'* (SMF*). Trainer 1 adds that *'the official evaluation of the publishing activities of the department is done on the basis of the number of articles we have published in scientific and linguistic journals and journals published abroad'* (QT1).

The recognised research is in the areas of linguistics, literature or pedagogy and psychology and is expected to be quantitative, says the SMF: *'… people should do proper pedagogic research that would meet the statistic criteria … statistic data*

presented at a conference are preferred and people like to compare themselves in certain aspects. Research that is less clear in this sense is considered second rate in this country' (SMF*).

Several contradictions in understanding of the profession have been the focus of this section. The effects of this situation on teacher training as a whole, trainers and students as well as some suggestions for sorting the problem out will be discussed next.

D.6 Need for shared understanding of the profession

Isolation of TEFL training

The twelve-year long development of the English department leading to a shared understanding of the profession does not seem to have occurred in the area of teacher training generally. Trainer 5 comments: *'So, yes after 1989 we started developing foundations for teacher training but not in the whole programme, not in all subjects'* (IT5). Isolated subject departments implement training with no unifying vision formulated as a faculty programme. Trainer 5 criticises this state of affairs: *'If we are a teacher training faculty, we should behave like that. Not like a group of experts in whatever, training whatever but not producing teachers'* (IT5).

The lack of shared understanding and focus among all contributors to the education of student teachers has negative effects on their learning and, later on, their teaching. Students can become puzzled as they are often exposed to different interpretations of basic issues. Trainer 5 describes it in this way: *'... so far training EFL and training whatever other subject are isolated and not based on any solid foundation understood by all staff, if similar issues are touched (i.e. methodology, work with pupils, etc.) trainees are presented with contradictory approaches'* (QT5). The lack of recognition and awareness of isolation also affects the feelings and motivation of the trainers. Trainer 2 thinks that *'until the precise function of pedagogic faculty is specified, understood and esteemed, the challenging and supportive conditions for the teachers cannot be expected'* (QT2). Understanding of the profession across areas and subjects within the faculty should be the goal. Several respondents agreed upon this (T1, 2, 5, SMF).

Communication needed

Lack of communication is understood to be a major reason for misunderstanding within the profession. The SMF and Trainer 5 both agree that the absence of fruitful communication within the faculty is one part of the problem: *'... EFL and other fields are "different worlds" – no communication between the departments ...'* (IT5). The other part of the problem is the contacts with the target audience, i.e. basic schools. The training community needs to be widened by including them in the discussion. Some respondents (SMF, IT5) point to reflecting customers' needs in teacher training in terms of their share in the programme design, e.g. *'How much do they (schools) contribute to the development of our programmes?'* (IT5).

The respondents suggest some strategies that could help overcome the present situation, and support construction of the profession. They emphasise networking, both formal, e.g. *'... cooperation with the other Schools of Education in the Czech R ... seminars and conferences ...'* (QT1), and informal as a forum for sharing ideas (QT1, SMF). Publishing is understood to be another means of useful communication. Trainers propose *'sharing products and outputs with the professional community'* (QT5), and *'establishing a good professional journal dealing with the area of teaching/learning at a university level'* (QT1).

The analysis of the data from Liberec helped identify the perceptions of the training profession of the department trainers, focused on the development of their professional confidence, presented the curriculum as a shared, constantly developing idea of effective teacher training, provided an insight into training processes reflecting the professional thinking of the staff and raised the controversial issue of the recognition of the department work. Finally, it also raised the issue of the need for a wide professional discussion including all stakeholders about the nature of the profession that should meet the needs of basic schooling.

Section E: Findings from the Pardubice case study

Cross-checking and rearranging both the attitudinal and documentary data collected through different instruments during the research revealed some interesting findings, which will be dealt with in this section. The findings are treated as individual issues

which appear to have contributed substantially to the present state of the PRESETT in the Department of British and American Studies at Pardubice. These main issues include the professional development of teachers, contacts with others, the role of the British Council, institutional policy, teaching experience at schools, teaching practice, native speakers, reflection, and the changing needs of students.

E.1 Professional development of teachers

Some teacher trainers mentioned their own Magister studies (Qtt7/II, Qtt2/II) when they commented on what helped them develop in the area they feel most confident about. They perceived they were most successful in the course development and teaching of their field of expertise. One of the respondents also mentioned her one-year scholarship abroad as being helpful (Qtt2/II).

In all the questionnaires the importance of a postgraduate, or follow-up study or training is emphasised, including teacher training summer courses and specific courses of different kinds (Intt1, CV3). The impact of these courses can be seen in the development of teacher trainers' confidence mostly in the area of classroom practice, e.g. efficient planning, course design and development. Most of the department members have either finished, or they are currently studying for PhD degrees in different areas, which include pedagogy and didactics, linguistics, cultural studies and literature (CVs).

The influence of their studies is obvious in their increasing publishing activity (CVs) and research in respective fields. Moreover, some teacher trainers mention personal enrichment and widening horizons.

One respondent observed '… *studies for PhD are certainly contributing – whatever one is seriously involved in and can use in teaching pushes them forward …*' (Intt1). In another interview the respondent said '… *the study for PhD doesn't have a straightforward impact on my teaching practice since it is rather specialised … quite certainly it has influenced my publishing activity since articles of this kind can be published in professional magazines and presented at conferences … when comparing my experience with the experience of colleagues from other universities, I do find it contributing even though time consuming*' (Intt3).

Several department members completed their MA degree studies, either in contemporary literature, educational management, or in cultural studies (CV6,CV2,CV9); one person managed to obtain a scholarship abroad (CV3).

One respondent emphasised her need for further formal training, especially in the areas of conference presentations, designing projects and applying for grants, or personal and time management (Qtt1/IV). In the interview she added, '… *I would still appreciate some input since despite feeling more confident now than x years ago before my first conference presentation, I miss some theoretical background … I feel a self-made man in this field …*' (Intt1).

E.2 Contact with others

Communication with other people in general has been found to be an important issue not only in the professional development of teacher trainers but also in the overall training process. The respondents talk about contacts maintained both inside and outside the institution.

Contacts inside the institution

Most of the teacher trainers feel that contacts with other department members through both official and unofficial meetings or discussions are very important. Some people also mention the advantage of e-mail communication: '… *communication within the department works well, of course, the combination of personal meetings with fast communication using ICT proves ideal*' (Intt1).

One respondent, however, observes some lack in the communication within the department: '*There is not too much space for the communication between all the members of the department though when cooperation within any small team is needed, e.g. for preparing exams, tests, or solving a special task, it is always OK …*' (Intt2).

The cooperation inside the department is emphasised as contributing to professional development, especially by younger staff, who appreciate the possibility of discussing their teaching experience with more experienced colleagues, and the help provided by them. This could be observed in both the questionnaires and interviews. For example, '*cooperation with experienced colleagues in the department*', provided as an answer to the question '*What helped you to develop in the area you feel most confident about?*' (Qtt4/II), or a remark made by another respondent: '… *teamwork, willingness of those more experienced to help novice trainers …*' (Intt2).

Cooperation and teamwork result in the integration of courses and an interdisciplinary approach both within and across the modules of the study plan. The terms *integration* and *teamwork* are used frequently; in fact, they are mentioned in all the

recorded interviews: ' … *the ideal of integral education is approximated in the professional module … it is always a problem here to find some integration of the academic freedom of individual teachers and a consistent approach to all the subjects … so I think the processes, too, correspond with what the students should learn here'* (Intt1). *'We have been working in a team for several years already … the communication within the team is perfect and without problems … aims at integration …'* (Intt2). Another teacher trainer remarks *'It is certainly teamwork … Reading and assessing bachelor papers and diploma thesis together inspired the trainers to integrate the writing course with the course of Cultural Studies, also the assessment is coordinated. The students hand in one project though for each course different things are assessed.'* (Intt3).

The atmosphere of cooperation is further documented in some published articles (Píšová 2000), whilst the interdisciplinary approach and integration of courses are obvious in the course description and study plan and also in the content and format of exams.

However, some teacher trainers realise that it is not only their colleagues, but also their students who may inspire them and bring a positive change in the training process. Two respondents record that they felt confident about the teacher–student rapport (Qtt2/I, Qtt3/I). One of the teacher trainers describes her approach to students, her effort to motivate them and encourage them in independent study, and the atmosphere in her classes during the cultural studies course. She expresses her conviction that teachers may learn from their students as well, reporting in her interview, *'I want the students to understand that it is our common interest and work, not my own show … I give them space … I try to arouse students' interest in the topic. They are asked to work independently and are encouraged to discuss their progress … they have a lot of freedom to investigate and they like it. I learn a lot from them as well since they have different experience.'* Later, she continues, *'I thought it would be a good idea to take advantage of the students' experience with the culture and combine our concepts of reality which we may have experienced … I think it is interesting experience for both participating sides … and I teach them to compare different views'* (Intt3).

Contacts outside the institution

All the respondents emphasise the importance of contacts and cooperation with colleagues from other universities and within the wider ELT community: *'We had contacts with the ELT community which had been formed during the past ten years, we had an opportunity to go abroad, cooperate with other people, we read, so … everything fits together to form the picture …'* (Intt2). They feel that meeting the experts and other people working in a particular field at conferences or other professional events contributes to their professional development (Qtt1/IV, Qtt4/II, Qtt7/IV, Intt1). Despite other possibilities of communication, personal contacts still seem to be irreplaceable. One trainer comments, *'… personal meetings are undoubtedly important, they cannot be substituted … A good chance is meeting at conferences … we can contact one another by e-mail, and lots of things can be dealt with despite the distance, yet a personal meeting is highly important'* (Intt1).

Several teacher trainers appreciate the experience of sharing and information exchange which is made possible when participating in different seminars and workshops (Qtt3/IV, Qtt1/II, Qtt5/IV). One respondent, for example, remarks, *'… this kind of cooperation based on information exchange and experience sharing was a real asset for me'* (Intt3). Another hopes for even better networking and help from professional associations, namely the Czech and Slovak Association of American Studies (Qtt2/IV).

Contacts have also been established with partner schools and mentors through meetings with headmasters when negotiating and signing contracts for teaching practice, training courses for mentors organised by the university, and meetings with mentors while observing trainees during their one-year internship at schools.

To achieve more efficient communication between mentors, teacher trainers and students, a multi-level platform through an internet discussion forum was introduced (Píšová 2000). This kind of communication seems to have a positive impact on the integration of the 'clinical year' within the initial teacher training programme. It may also provide a response to the claim of one of the respondents: *'opinions, advice and recommendations of teachers from other schools would be helpful'* (Qtt6/IV).

E.3 The role of the British Council

The influence of the British Council on the training process and professional development of teacher trainers can be observed from both the attitudinal and documentary data. The financial support given for the trainers' participation in British Council summer courses both in the Czech Republic and in Great Britain, for MA studies or for attending conferences held abroad is widely mentioned by most of the respondents (Intt1, Qtt7/II, Qtt4/II, Qtt3/II). One of them summarised it thus: *'All that is closely*

connected with the British Council … fast-track, the support of all these activities and trainers by enabling them to attend courses abroad, study for MA in Britain … and that was not all – of course the financial support for participating in national and international conferences …' (Intt2).

The British Council activities of this kind are documented in individual curricula vitae.

Several teacher trainers also emphasise the role of British Council support in organising and running seminars, workshops and various meetings, thus providing professional advice and input (Qtt7/II, Qtt2/IV). One department member remarks, '… *regular meetings with colleagues involved in the British Studies programme and lectures for secondary school teachers focused on the integration of the British Studies within language teaching at schools were very much inspiring'* (Intt3).

Some respondents appreciated the opportunity to join the British Council projects (Ott4/II). Participation in these projects prompted some innovations in the curriculum and resulted in introducing new courses, e.g. Teaching Heterogeneous Classes (Intt2, Píšová 2001), Concordancing for ELT or Multimedia for Teachers (Intt2, CV3).

Undoubtedly, the main contribution of the British Council towards the development, and in fact the establishment of the institution, was the design and introduction of the Fast-track programme (for details see the general background section), by which the ELTE in Pardubice was launched. The story of Fast-track in Pardubice has been described elsewhere (Píšová 2000). With British Council financial support and advice, a self-access centre was established at the former Institute, which provided access to various ELT books and other resources and the possibility for self-study. Besides printed materials, the centre offered the use of video, tapes, cassettes, computers and a copying machine.

Opening and running the resource centre in Pardubice, thus providing valuable material support, was another British Council activity which was positively evaluated by some respondents: *'various publications and reference books available at the British Council'* (Qtt5/II).

A real asset for the institution, especially in the first years of its existence, was undoubtedly the provision of trained and experienced British Council lecturers. This kind of contribution was reflected in some of the students' questionnaires and in the group discussion, where the students referred to particular lecturers (Qss5, Insgd).

Another example of British Council support mentioned by one of the respondents is *'possibility to publish articles'* (Ott4/II). The promotion of publishing activity through the journal *Perspectives* is also documented in some teacher trainers' curricula vitae (CV2, CV9).

E.4 Institutional policy and professional development of teacher trainers

The need for sustainability of the teacher training programme and its official accreditation, for which formal qualifications and publishing activity by department members were needed, resulted in a certain amount of pressure being imposed on the teachers with regard to further, degree awarding studies and their involvement in research and publications. The dean of the faculty appreciates the professional development and improving qualifications of the department members and summarises the situation and her opinion in the interview:

'… most of the teachers are involved in doctoral studies. They either feel the necessity or have let themselves persuaded, yet it should aim at making the training process more theoretical … a university teacher must publish since we should approach our students not by reading what others have published, but telling them our own ideas …' (Indean).

Later, she evaluates the progress achieved especially in terms of increasing publishing activities and conference presentations and appreciates the enthusiasm and work done in the department:

'… the professional development of the department members is obvious from the submitted list of publications, from the respectable number of conference presentations focused precisely on what the department pursues … the development has been facilitated thanks to a big amount of work done and enthusiasm to get a new, original programme accredited …' (Indean).

Most of the teacher trainers also mention institutional support (Qtt4/III, Qtt3/I, Qtt7/III, Qtt2/III), though sometimes they see it, at least in the beginning, in terms of an unpleasant pressure. One respondent observes: *'… the pressure from the institutional side, the duty to enter the doctoral study, helped me …'* (Intt2).

Awareness of the necessity to improve the economic situation of the institution through receiving grants for research projects is emphasised by some teacher trainers: *'… receiving money through grants is and will be becoming more and more widespread …'* (Intt1, Qtt1/III, Qtt2, Qtt4). On the other hand, in nearly all the questionnaires, financial limits and lack of money appear as restrictions for professional and course development (Qtt2/V, Qtt7/V, Qtt5/V, Qtt3/V, Qtt1/V, Intt1). Availability and access to resources is emphasised as a positive aspect in some questionnaires (Qtt6/II).

E.5 Teaching experience at schools as an impulse for further professional development

The opinion of the importance of teaching experience for teacher trainers' further professional development is shared by all the department members who taught at secondary or basic schools prior to becoming teacher trainers (Qtt1/II, Qtt6/II). For example, one respondent remarks, '... *teaching at secondary school is certainly very important – one has to experience on their own the situation they are preparing the students for. This kind of experience is very much contributing ...*' (Intt1). Another says, '*Teaching experience at a secondary school certainly influenced my further professional career. At least my conviction concerning a necessary change in the teaching process influenced the choice of my specialisation (ELT methodology)*' (Intt2). A similar opinion was expressed also by the dean, who feels that it is very important for the teacher trainers to be familiar with the educational and social situation at schools for which they are preparing prospective teachers. She is convinced that reflecting on personal experience and understanding pupils' needs has a positive impact on students:

'*... the teachers in the department are mostly experienced practitioners who are fully aware of what they are talking about when preparing prospective teachers because of their own teaching practice at secondary and basic schools. Quite certainly we can talk about practical expertise and the necessary human maturity having a positive impact on a student. One always has something to tell while reflecting on personal experience*' (Indean).

E.6 The development of the training process prompted by reflection

Many changes in the training process seem to reflect changes in the broader educational context as well as changing students' needs.

Reflecting the broader educational context

While developing the current curriculum, designing new seminars and innovating the teaching processes, social demands on the initial teacher training and the required qualification had to be taken into account. They include, for example, the proportion of individual components of the initial teacher training emphasising the integration of educational sciences and psychology, a longer teaching practice or better cooperation between teacher training institutions and 'clinical' schools. Standards of the teaching profession prescribing a required education have been suggested together with a set of criteria for the external evaluation of a study programme submitted for accreditation. The introduction of a credit system implemented within the European context (ECTS) and the modular arrangement of the study plan to encourage the students' mobility also became a reality.

The teacher trainers believe that changes in the curriculum have always reflected new ideas and issues raised in the area of educational sciences, and the content of the current curriculum matches its goals, though it is constantly developing (Intt1). One respondent comments, '*... as far as the initial teacher training is concerned, the current programme is a result of a ten-year development and a result of years-long work ... the content matches the goals. It is a programme respecting the current state of knowledge in the areas of pedagogy, psychology, didactics, ELT methodology and all these educational sciences ... changes have been prompted by years-long honest work ... pre-graduate teacher training has always been taken seriously here ... new ideas and issues have been constantly considered*' (Intt2).

Later in her interview the same respondent emphasises her growing experience and describes the thinking process behind the course development: '*... courses change all the time, the changes are a consequence of growing experience ... the question of importance of individual issues is completely different, other things are emphasised ... it is weighting, balancing. I am trying more and hard now to relate everything immediately to their practical experience*' (Intt2).

When asked about the curriculum, the dean appreciated mainly the introduction of the clinical year and enough space for reflection: '*... the current programme has just been launched ... I most appreciate the integration of the clinical year since ... there is an advantage now to have a possibility to verify what one has to know and how one must behave facing the class, I also appreciate the possibility of reflection*' (Indean).

Reflecting students' needs

Most teacher trainers mention they look for regular feedback from students through their evaluation of courses, discussions and through research. As a result of this feedback, some courses are changed, some other courses are designed and introduced. This situation was mentioned in all the interviews. One teacher, for example, said, '*... a regular feedback at the end of the course is one impulse for the change and course development ...*' (Intt1); another remarked, '*... impulse for change ... continuous feedback from students, also during the semester, gained by inquiring, discussions with students,*

preparing questionnaires at the end of every course … feedback taken into account when designing and adapting any new course …' (Intt2). The changes, however, are prompted not only by the feedback from students, but also from former graduates and the wider ELT community (Intt2).

In addition to the causes already outlined, trainers emphasise their own need for change: *'… I myself felt the need for more frequent communication with students to see their progress …'* (Intt3); *'the most important impulse for the development and change of my courses is the fact that I become bored by repeating the same several times'* (Intt1).

E.7 The role of teaching practice

Teaching practice seems to be an important issue in both students' and teacher trainers' thinking. The students consider it an opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice and meet the teaching environment from the teacher's perspective (Oss3/2+). They find it contributes much, especially in combination with ELT methodology, to their own teaching (Qss3/3+).

Nevertheless, the students mostly feel they need more teaching practice than they actually experience during their first three years of study. Some of them even mention *'insufficient teaching practice'* (Qss5/3-), or its being *'too short to have any contribution'* (Qss2/3-).

Inadequate teaching practice is also mentioned in the group discussion: *'two weeks, which means in fact ten hours of teaching, is too short, surely'* (Insgd). The importance of adequate and longer teaching practice was also emphasised by the dean of the faculty: *'… when I was preparing for my future teaching career I criticised the teaching practice for its fragmentation and short duration …'* (Indean).

A positive attitude towards recent changes in the course programme concerning the incorporation of much longer and more demanding teaching practice is expressed also by some teacher trainers, who appreciate *'… enough teaching practice and space for reflection'* (Intt1).

E.8 The role of native speakers

The role of native speakers has changed a lot in the last ten years. When the first Fast-track teacher training programme was launched in 1992, there were four native speakers, all of whom were experienced and trained lecturers employed through contracts with different institutions such as the British Council, Peace Corps, East-European Partnership. They brought with them new teaching methods, new ideas and different cultures and their influence on the training process was immense. This is reflected in students' questionnaires and in the recorded group discussion of the first graduates from Fast-track. They quite unanimously preferred the opportunity of continual communication with native speakers and courses taught by them. The introductory language course, organised two weeks before the actual beginning of the academic year, is mentioned as being especially beneficial in the first year of study. The course took place outside the university, yet with all the necessary background for the tuition and free-time facilities. The students were in close contact with native speakers and found that situation challenging, bringing them together and helping them overcome initial difficulties in their study (Qss3/1+, Oss5/1+). They report that *'… practical language classes with a native speaker were really contributing …'* (Insgd).

Also in the following two years of study, courses with a practical focus (aimed at language skill improvement and taught by native speakers, e.g. drama, speech, writing) are mentioned as contributing the most (Qss5/1+, Qss5/2+, Qss5/3+). While discussing their answers, the students observe, *'We were forced to study in a systematic way … also the system of evaluating the students was contributing. There were clear and precise requirements, we knew exactly where we were …'* (Insgd).

The position of native speakers in the department changed considerably five years later. This fact is reflected in other questionnaires, completed by respondents who began their study in 1997/98. These students appear rather critical of the lecturers, native speakers, in practical language classes. For example, they report, *'writing course with a native speaker of zero value, messy'* (Oss1/1-), or, *'practical language classes of no value, confusing, no aim of lessons'* (Qss1/2-). Some students even remark on *'native speakers – people who did not know what and how to teach'* (Qss2/1-), etc.

In view of this, it should be pointed out that the choice of native speakers was rather complicated then. It was very difficult to attract qualified and experienced lecturers since the help from the above-mentioned foreign institutions became much more limited in this field and free-lance qualified teachers usually lost interest in cooperation when the salary, equal to that of Czech teachers, was mentioned. The native speakers criticised by the students (and also by teacher trainers) came from different

backgrounds; some were contracted through the Bohemia Corps and some were free-lance. Most of them, however, stayed for a short period or even 'disappeared' in the middle of the semester without informing the department in advance. Naturally, this caused lots of problems.

As far as the British Council lecturers were concerned, all those working in the department were experienced and trained lecturers involved mainly in ELT methodology courses and teaching practice. They became real members of the staff and contributed significantly to the curriculum development, the professional development of teacher trainers and the improvement in the language and teaching skill of the students.

Currently, there is one native speaker, an American lecturer, at the department in Pardubice. He has already been involved in the teacher training programme for six years, and his contribution to the quality of the training process by designing and teaching writing courses, language skill improvement classes and some literary seminars is much appreciated by the students. Some of them write, *'Introduction to literature with M. K. – valuable and interesting input, text analysis contributing, positive approach of the lecturer'* (Qss1/1+). The respondents consider his classes a good preparation for writing their Bachelor papers and Diploma theses (Qss4/2+) and also appreciate having been forced to speak and formulate their own opinions (Qss2/2+).

E.9 Changing levels, needs and expectations of the students

Students' responses to the two main questions are characterised by changing attitudes not only towards native speakers, for obvious reasons, but also to the curriculum components. The respondents who began their studies in 1992–1994 preferred courses focused practically and aimed at language skill improvement. On the other hand, more theoretically focused subjects were considered as having minimum practical benefits. These students further emphasise the lack of teaching practice.

Most of the other respondents enrolled in 1997/98, when ELT at secondary schools together with the possibilities for travelling and studying abroad improved considerably in comparison with 1992. The applicants were much better equipped with language skills, lots of them had experience from abroad and/or proved themselves with different certificates and exams in English. This reality became obvious in their evaluation. They did not consider language improvement courses the most beneficial part of the programme any more; they thought they had not improved their language skills, they could not see any objectives and aims in the lessons and lacked the opportunity to communicate sufficiently (Qss3/2-, Qss5/2-).

On the other hand, Morphology, Introduction to Literature and History of English-speaking Countries (which was taught in Czech by a history teacher) were the most appreciated elements of the programme. Some respondents comment, *'morphology – a deeper insight into the language, appropriate for practical use'* (Qss4/1+, Qss2/1+, Qss3/1+).

The philosophy course is mentioned as contributing little to the students' teaching practice. For example, one respondent says, *'philosophy – no connection with teaching profession and the language, only general knowledge'* (Qss3/1-).

In the second year of study integrated courses of cultural studies and writing were most frequently given a positive evaluation. These courses provided the students with the opportunity to formulate longer texts and learn the basics of academic writing, thus preparing them for their final Bachelor papers. Presenting their own projects in front of an audience significantly contributed towards the development of skills necessary for summarising the results of the research, formulating conclusions and presenting them to listeners (Qss1/2+, Qss3/2+, Qss2/2+). Courses on pedagogy, morphology and syntax, ELT methodology and literature were also mentioned as being helpful for their future careers.

Some respondents observe: *'ELT methodology – contributing for practice, inspiration for using a wide range of methods, techniques and activities in practice'* (Qss1/2+, Qss3/2+,Qss2/2+). The group of part-time students appreciated the course on pedagogy, referring to it as *'a well arranged summary of contemporary pedagogy, focused on everyday teaching practice'* (Qss4/2+).

Psychology surprisingly appeared to have made hardly any positive contribution to the programme. The students lacked conception, links with other subjects and practice and mention chaotic interpretation caused by changing to different teachers (Qss2/2-, Qss4/2-, Qss4/3-). In one questionnaire, however, the evaluation was different (Qss1/2+).

In the following year of their study the students appreciated seminars in literature (Qss1/3+) and ELT methodology integrated with teaching practice (Qss4/3+). The course on the history of English helped the students gain a better grasp of some linguistic problems and provided them with interesting information about the development of English vocabulary (Qss2/3+), yet it was considered unimportant for basic-school teachers by other students and was even found to be stressful by others (Qss5/3-, Qss1/3-). Meanwhile, lexicology was criticised for making no positive contribution especially due to the non-systematic approach and presentation by the teacher (Qss1/3,Qss2/3-).

Practically the same evaluation of the follow-up Magister study appeared in all the questionnaires. ELT methodology was evaluated as contributing the most, especially because of its links with real teaching practice, the possibility of discussing students' own experience, solving particular problems and getting practical advice (Qss1/4-5+, Qss2/4-5+, Qss3/4-5+,Qss4/4-5+). One respondent comments, '... *emphasis on practical use, training self-reflection, space for experience sharing*' (Qss5/4-5+). On the other hand, psychology was considered insufficiently integrated with other educational sciences. In one case also the literature seminar was positively evaluated since it provided the students with a complete survey of contemporary literature (Qss3/4-5+). However, the course on contemporary English was characterised as too theoretical and demanding (Qss4/4-5-, Qss5/4-5-).

Some respondents evaluated the two-year follow-up study as being insufficiently effective because of the small number of seminars and too strong an emphasis on individual study, which was rather demanding owing to their full-time jobs (Qss5/4-5-). This opinion is supported by the original scheme of the project. The Fast-track programme was designed to provide a complete initial training and full qualification for prospective teachers of English at basic and lower secondary schools. The study load of 1,100 hours in comparison with that of 800 on average within a two-subject Magister study at pedagogical faculties was in accordance with granting the full qualification. Nevertheless, to meet the demands of four to five years of study to get the Magister degree, the 'proper' qualification for entering the profession, a two-year follow-up programme was accredited. The emphasis was placed especially on didactic and pedagogical-psychological components and teaching practice, whereas the subject component (linguistics, literature) was shifted towards a more theoretical level, which was considered rather irrelevant both by the students and teacher trainers.

This section has provided a survey of the nine main issues which emerged from the Pardubice case study. These issues concern the professional development of the teacher trainers, contacts with others both inside and outside the institution, the role of the British Council, institutional policy, teacher trainers' former experience from schools, reflections on the educational context and students' needs, teaching practice and the development of students' needs and expectations. In the following section these issues and those from the parallel study in Liberec will be discussed.

Section F: Discussion and implications of the case study findings

In Liberec, as we have seen, the main findings include issues relating to the professional thinking of trainers, training processes, the curriculum, and external recognition of the department's achievements, whilst in Pardubice they concern the professional development of teachers, the role of the British Council, teaching experience and teaching practice, native speakers, and the changing needs of students. The significance and implications of these findings are discussed here.

F.1 Liberec

The present state of teacher training at the English Department in Liberec is the outcome of twelve years of development which has been influenced by two major factors – international input and support and Czech teaching and training experience. Both of these factors have been equally important and over the years they have influenced each other. Foreign input accelerated and helped focus the development, Czech counterparts have supported it by their willingness to learn. The process has resulted in the establishment of a basis of professional confidence in the staff and their growing independence. The understanding of teacher training qualities as it developed in the process, however, does not appear to fit the local educational tradition, and this eventually raised a range of recognition issues.

F.1.1 International support and learning training

The British Council, but also other international institutions like USIS, Peace Corps and East European Partnership, helped establish challenging and supportive working conditions. They provided specialists, materials both language development and

TEFL oriented as well as technology. A variety of courses and conferences, supported mainly by the British Council, enabled networking and encouraged publishing. MA studies and other courses, for example the latest ones, Young Learners and Heterogeneous Classes, then provided opportunities to study some issues in depth and also to complete research projects relevant either to departmental or basic school educational needs. This assistance towards the process of establishing the basis of an EFL teacher training profession and its focus has thus been a major contribution.

Massive foreign support, intensive teamwork, and the development of staff qualifications were significant characteristics of the first six years of the growth of the department and laid a firm basis for further development of trainers' professional thinking and performance. What the first dynamic period triggered, further practice has reinforced.

The shared process of developing professional beliefs and gaining TEFL training experience is reflected in the articulation of the trainers' understanding of the teacher training profession, and demonstrated in the curriculum and in classroom processes.

F.1.2 Teacher training profession

The teacher training profession reflects the characteristics of classroom teaching as well as those of higher education. A teacher trainer is expected to demonstrate his or her qualities in the classroom, and in research and publications. Each of these areas requires different knowledge, competence and skills. Their development, however, is interrelated and they affect each other. The former covers above all the classroom performance of trainers fulfilling the saying *'practise what you preach'* in terms of planning, implementation, reflecting, providing feedback, examining, classroom management, establishing rapport, etc., as well as gaining a profound and continuously updated knowledge of the subject and methods of teaching it and mastering English at an advanced level.

The latter also includes a whole range of activities. These are: tutoring student classroom practice and research, widening the professional horizon by studying related areas, research and publishing in teacher education relevant areas, continuous development of PRESETT educational programmes, designing and running INSETT educational projects, networking within TEFL teacher training and teacher education generally and establishing and maintaining contacts with schools, the EFL world and also other teacher training departments.

The understanding of teacher training as a very complex profession with a very definite focus on learning and teaching needs of trainees has been developing in a whole range of ongoing processes that help create trainers' professional confidence and beliefs.

F.1.3 Professional confidence development

The range of areas in which trainers are expected to be productive, effective and professional requires trust in their own performance. Training confidence and quality growth appears to have both internal and external sources covering teacher training and also broader educational issues. Classroom experience, team cooperation and informal sharing have a significant value for confidence growth in everyday work processes as they help clarify or confirm training ideas and also develop individual teaching styles. Sharing within a professional community not only leads to the development of mutual understanding of crucial issues but consequently to the growth of the professional confidence of its members at various networking events, e.g. conferences and seminars, or through teacher training relevant publishing. Participation in various long- or short-term courses also has a profound effect on professional thinking and confidence growth. It confirms existing experience, makes it fall into a theoretical framework, provides much relevant inspiring input, and allows the trainers to feel at home in the teacher training professional community.

Trainers' confidence as it is demonstrated in their everyday work has basically two forms: the curriculum and its implementation in the training process.

F.1.4 Curriculum

Development of the balance between theory and practice, effective classroom performance and awareness of principles of learning and teaching processes as well as of further professional development need are the overall goals of the departmental curriculum. Its present form has resulted from continuous reflection on long training and teaching experience, new ideas from courses and networking events, informal evaluation, discussions, observations and sharing.

The content, format, assessment and processes designed reflect the trainers' understanding of teaching profession needs and ways of meeting them in the training process, as well as reflecting student learning needs. In terms of content, the curriculum seeks to develop relevant English language knowledge and skills and cultural background, as well as English language learning

and teaching related knowledge and competences. A range of optional subjects cater for the professional and personal interests of students. The format in which lecture, workshop, seminar and individual work are mixed provides opportunities to develop both theoretical and experiential knowledge, independent and critical thinking.

The overall focus on educating teachers is implemented in a range of training processes.

F.1.5 Processes

Teacher training processes that enable effective learning and student professional development provide students with a chance to learn TEFL relevant information, make connections between theory and practice, develop learning, teaching and reflective skills and gain some confidence. The processes enabling students to understand or experience the theory-practice connections are crucial for the development of future teachers, as without this link students are not able to understand and use the principles for teaching and learning purposes, and in that case the theory is useless. Therefore the link has to be considered at every moment of training. We cannot expect the connections will be created incidentally in the basic school classrooms during teaching practice. To make theory work in practice, it is necessary to focus on and deliberately develop the links also in the faculty classrooms. Several factors which enable this process to take place were identified and articulated:

- professional and personal trainer qualities demonstrated as a good teaching model
- student involvement in the teaching process
- awareness of theory applications development
- opportunities to experience theory applications
- learning processes awareness raising.

The teacher training vision of the English department trainers is demonstrated in their professional understanding, curriculum design and implementation. However, this does not appear to match the ideas of all stakeholders in the teacher education arena which results in misunderstandings and consequent evaluation problems.

F.1.6 Controversies

External evaluation completed officially by the Accreditation Committee of the Ministry of Education in the regular accreditation process on the one hand, and school teachers and head teachers evaluating the teaching performance of practice teaching students on the other hand, demonstrate significant differences. The major issue in the recognition discussion is the understanding of the notion of specialisation. In the Czech educational context it is traditionally understood to be a subject specialisation. In the case of foreign language teaching the recognised areas have always been linguistics and literature. Applied linguistics has never been recognised as a specialisation. This appears to be a source of major misunderstanding between TEFL trainers on the one hand and official evaluators as well as academic colleagues from other areas on the other.

The experience of the department appears to be problematic in most evaluation aspects, i.e.

- training focus emphasising effective classroom practice of their graduates instead of academic knowledge accumulation
- post-graduate qualification of trainers focused on teacher education and completed in Great Britain instead of linguistics, literature or psychology pedagogy studies
- qualitative, teaching practice oriented research projects completed by the department members and their EFL teaching and training focused publications instead of theoretical investigations and academic articles.

The official evaluation by the Accreditation Committee is a crucial matter for the department. The trainers then have to face the dilemma of choosing between the academic and reflective models of teacher training.

The schools as the target audience, however, appreciate and emphasise the value of focusing on English teaching classroom practice needs, innovations that students bring to the classrooms, the effectiveness of their teaching performance and their ability to learn from experience.

It appears that in the world of teacher education and everyday basic schooling we do not speak one common language. The contradictory themes discussed above indicate an urgent need to develop shared understanding within the teacher training community both inside and outside the faculty to achieve true effectiveness in teacher education.

F.1.7 Implications and discussion needed

This internal evaluation of the English Department at Liberec has provided an analysis and discussion of the operation of the department, the thinking of the trainers underlying it, the processes influencing the trainers' activities, and also some wider educational issues of quality recognition. There are several lessons to be learned from the experience, the first being that massive, intensive, focused and professional international support of one area of education can quickly help constitute a profession and educate confident professionals. Secondly, although the wider impact has its limitations in the short term, the classroom performance of students reflecting the practice oriented nature of the training provided by the English department shows that in a long-term perspective the impact may increase at the ground level.

The study also articulated, however, an urgent need for discussion about the aspects of quality teacher training within the profession. This discussion needs to involve all stakeholders, i.e. all departments contributing to the teacher training process, schools, the Ministry of Education, the Accreditation Committee. The discussion should seek to achieve a shared understanding of the profession, its characteristics, goals and priorities. It is necessary to agree upon teacher training quality characteristics within the educational context of the institution and the country. The questions which need to be asked include:

- What is teacher training?
- What are the priorities and goals of teacher training?
- How do the goals reflect the educational needs of the target audience, i.e. student teachers and basic school children?
- What are the teacher trainer professional competencies?
- What are the criteria for the evaluation of teacher training?
- How do they reflect the educational needs of student teachers and basic schools?

Until these questions are answered and consensus is reached, the beneficial effects are reduced as the training, which student teachers are exposed to, can have controversial characteristics with possible negative effects on their learning and later on their teaching performance in classes, the sustainability of the programmes developed can be threatened, and the lack of recognition can bring disillusionment and loss of motivation for trainers.

Consensus can only be reached through constructive communication, intensive networking and a firm will to achieve the goals of education as they are formulated in the White Paper (Bílá kniha), the key document of the Czech Ministry of Education:

'… to meet the needs of personal, professional and community life as well as different abilities of students and to provide not only a broad basis of knowledge and practical skills, but also appropriate tools generally usable, i.e. key competencies including ability to communicate, process information and numerical data, work in a team, learn, and use creatively the competencies developed' (MŠMT 2001, p. 90).

F.2 Pardubice

It can be concluded that the research performed at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pardubice, helped to reveal answers to the questions raised by the aim of the overall evaluation project, including the identification of the input provided by the British Council, assessment of its impact, and the implications for the future. For characterising the current state of PRESETT at the Department of British and American Studies, which was the aim of the case study, two main issues were considered: the overall training process and teacher trainers' professional thinking.

F.2.1 The training process

The area investigated within the issue of the training process was the curriculum. The current curriculum has developed from the original Fast-track programme, whose design and implementation are recognised as the main contribution of the British Council to ELTE in the Czech Republic, though formally initiated by the Ministry of Education. The current curriculum has still preserved some characteristic features of Fast-track, especially the focus on intensive language improvement, professional skills for teaching and integration of teaching practice and school experience with subject knowledge.

During the research performed at the Department of British and American Studies it became obvious that the most important issue emerging across the data was that of continuous development. The development concerns the teacher trainers, curriculum and students. On a broad scale it has certainly been very much influenced by changes in the overall educational

context in the country, which have to be reflected on in order to meet the demand, provide an adequate and high quality education and thus succeed in being competitive.

The present curriculum is the result of development over a period of years and reflects research in the field, changes in society, practice and students' needs. Keeping in mind that the students evaluated a curriculum introduced ten years ago (Fast-track), and then its slightly adapted version five years later, it becomes apparent that most of their positive and negative comments were taken into account when introducing innovations and transforming the curriculum into its present state. During the ten years of its existence, the original programme has developed into a fully-fledged five-year Magister programme, providing the graduates with a recognised qualification and degree. Not only the implementation of the curriculum, but also its development, was strongly influenced by the British Council activities.

The students are characterised by the increasing level of their communicative competence in English and by their changing needs and attitudes to different aspects of the curriculum. A gradual shift of interest has been noticed towards more theoretically and professionally focused courses and also a greater awareness of the need to apply the acquired knowledge and communicative skills in their teaching practice. The students profited not only from the British Council's generous material support in furnishing and equipping the self-access centre at the faculty with useful and necessary material, but, especially in the first years of Fast-track, from courses taught by British Council lecturers. They appreciated the close contact with native

Figure 2 Process of continuous development at the Department of British and American Studies
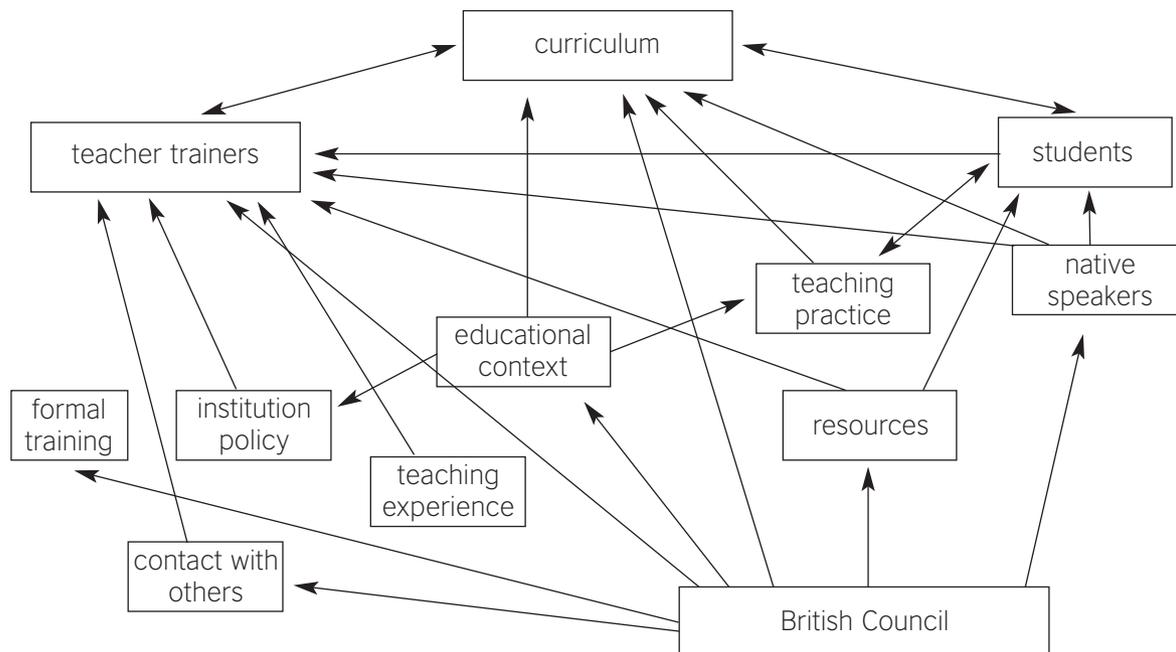
Note: The figure shows those elements in the department which are impacted upon by the development which emanates from the British Council; these are the curriculum, the teacher trainers and the students. In turn, these three elements also influence one another. As can be seen, the British Council contributes to the development of all these elements either directly or indirectly (for example, through their lecturers). The only box in the diagram which is not connected to the British Council is that representing 'teaching experience' (i.e. the secondary or basic school teaching experience of some of the teacher trainers). This can be explained in two ways: either the teacher trainers who mentioned this issue and experienced it before 1992 did not know about the British Council then, or they did not realise that the summer courses which they attended in the late 1980s were in some way associated with the British Council.

speakers, the possibility of constant communication and innovative teaching methods and approaches. However, it should be pointed out that this concerned not only the British Council lecturers but also experienced lecturers contracted through the Peace Corps and East European Partnership. Nevertheless, it can be claimed that through their provision of trained lecturers the British Council played an important role in increasing the level of the students' language performance.

Besides the mutual interrelations and influences among the mentioned subjects of the developmental process, the constant changes in PRESETT at the department appear to be prompted by several factors, among which the leading role seems to be that of the British Council. As can be seen from *Figure 2* and from both the attitudinal and documentary data, the British Council policy and activities had an immense impact on the professional development of teacher trainers, who appreciate especially its financial, moral and material support. They very often claim that without the help provided to them by the British Council, they would not have been able to attend conferences, participate in summer courses, seminars and workshops, or study in Great Britain to become more qualified. The British Council encouragement in their research and publishing activities has also been mentioned. Some of the teacher trainers were grateful for the resources and possibilities offered by the British Council resource centre.

F.2.2 Teacher trainers' professional thinking.

The professional training provided for the newly recruited teacher trainers and financial and moral support, promoting contacts and cooperation, enhanced the professional development of teacher trainers and thus also contributed to the curriculum development. Teacher trainers feel that formal training provided to them by different forms of postgraduate studies or at seminars and workshops contributed significantly to their professional development. Contacts with others and cooperation both inside and outside the department and institution were highly appreciated by most respondents. Some of them also emphasised the contribution of the institution and their own teaching experience.

During the research a number of interesting issues emerged from questionnaires and interviews, and most of these findings were further supported by different documents. However, it was the implementation of Fast-track which in fact triggered the whole history of the present Department of British and American Studies – the history of ELTE in Pardubice. As the research has shown, promoting contacts, experience sharing, cooperation and dissemination of expertise are all extremely important for the success of a large-scale project such as Fast-track. Effective communication and cooperation between teacher trainers and teachers as well as emphasis on reflection are further necessary attributes for a successful preparation of prospective language teachers at basic schools.

It should also be pointed out that in order to achieve complete recognition of the work done, the political, social and educational contexts have to be considered, traditions and bureaucracy have to be taken into account. Further, important activities should be negotiated and signed for by the authorities before any future project is implemented. Keeping in mind cultural differences will save much effort, energy, money and also disappointment while struggling for the recognition of official qualifications or degrees.

Section G: Implications and recommendations

G.1 Implications

From the detailed analysis of policy in Section B above and from the two case studies in Liberec and Pardubice presented in Sections C to F, it can be seen that there is little doubt that the British Council provided fairly massive, long-term and focused input into PRESETT teacher education in the Czech Republic, particularly between 1991 to 1996, in terms of expertise, training, resources and international networking and contacts. (At the same time, the contribution of other 'outside' agencies and individuals should not be ignored.)

This input clearly had a major impact on the professional and personal development of staff in English departments:

- It has led to the development of fully sustainable teacher education curricula for training English language teachers.
- These curricula, as evidenced by the case studies, demonstrate clear and principled goals in terms of an integrated balance of theory and practice for reflective teacher education and an awareness of quality at every level.

- Through networking on a national and international level, a group of specialists has developed who clearly identify themselves as teacher education professionals although for the moment this is only a phenomenon in English language teaching.

The very positive impact identified above still continues to sit somewhat uneasily within the Czech context, as can be seen from the following:

- There is lack of recognition not only of the work and achievements of these individuals and departments, but also of their qualifications (MAs) which are not recognised as post-graduate qualifications.
- Lack of acceptance of both teacher education and applied linguistics as serious academic fields by Czech academic institutions means that the valuable research and publications may also not be recognised as academic achievements.

G.2 Recommendations

The outcomes of the study imply:

- the need to take into account the local context when planning a big project in the cultural, educational, political and social sense. An awareness of all the variables will facilitate the planning and implementation of the project so that it achieves its intended objectives.
- the need for establishing and maintaining networks and contacts both within the EFL world and outside it. Communication with EFL colleagues, other teacher training departments and schools through conferences, seminars, workshops and sharing experience and expertise and describing professional issues and values in a professional journal would bring many potential benefits. In particular, it could lead to mutual understanding of teaching and training practice, recognition of the work of the others, and eventually to the improvement of classroom practice both in teacher training institutions and schools.
- the need for formulating the characteristics and qualities of the teacher training profession in the Czech educational context. Consensus will contribute significantly to the recognition of degrees, training practices and focus, and publications and research as well as to the focusing of teacher training on reflecting the needs of students, teachers and schools. It could thus help implement the vision articulated in the Ministry of Education's White Paper (MŠMT 2001) on educational policy in the Czech Republic, which outlines a new school environment that emphasises motivating and respecting learners and individual difference, developing their communication and interpersonal skills, creativity and problem-solving abilities, to develop learning skills for the information society and life-long learning (MŠMT 2001: 18, 48, 90).
- the need to accept the fact that immediate impact in the whole system of education cannot be expected. There is evidence from this study that changes may be appearing on the ground level, i.e. in the classroom performance of student teachers and new teachers as well those teachers who attend INSETT courses. They not only apply TEFL approaches in their English lessons but also in other subjects they teach and thus slowly and gradually influence awareness of the need for change in schools.

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THES (2002)

CHAPTER 5

Masters courses for pre-service teacher educators

Marta Šigutová

This study was carried out in 2001–2002 to examine the impact of Masters courses on the professional development of a group of teacher educators/trainers[1] from Czech universities who had followed Masters courses in the United Kingdom in the past ten years. The description of the professional thinking and research activities of post-Masters graduates is related to the contextual factors which may have influenced the impact of undertaking Masters courses.

The focus of research was on post-Masters graduates' perceptions of the Masters courses which they took part in under British Council PRESETT (Pre-service Education and Teacher Training) and British Studies projects, on their attitudes to further professional activities in teacher training, and their attitudes to doing research and disseminating research results. The data was gathered from analysing questionnaires, e-mail correspondence, follow-up interviews and also from content analysis of relevant documents available at the British Council archives in Prague.

Results indicate that respondents' personal professional development and the impact of doing Masters courses on their further professional work have been significant. However, recognition of foreign Masters degrees in the wider Czech educational context remains an unresolved issue.

Recommendations given in the study suggest that enhancing trainers' further publication and professional activities and creating a policy in the area of recognition of foreign degrees at Czech universities would be beneficial for post-Masters graduates' own professional work, but it could also support sustainability of the pre-service teacher education departments in which they work.

1   Introduction

Since 1994, the British Council in the Czech Republic has been providing support for a group of teacher trainers from Czech universities to follow Masters degree courses at British universities. The aim of this study is to examine the input which has been provided and assess the impact which Masters degree courses have had on the trainers' further professional development and research.

I will first describe the changing educational context within which the trainers have worked in the past ten years. The major part of the study is taken up with analysis of trainers' perceptions as expressed in questionnaires, e-mail correspondence and

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1   The term *teacher trainer* or *trainer* will be used throughout this study.

interviews. While this part of my research looks at perceptions of insiders (i.e. Masters graduates), the analysis of relevant documents available from the British Council office in Prague provides a wider perspective from which the impact of Masters degree courses may be evaluated. It is my intention to draw attention to lessons which have been learned and which may be helpful for the future activities of the British Council and other providers of teacher education.

2 Context

The 1990s presented a challenge for the departments of English at Czech universities to meet the rising demands for more English language teacher education courses, the numbers of foreign language schoolteachers (except teachers of Russian) having been kept very low under the previous system.

Although the 1990s saw the beginning of the expansion of higher education institutions, and new universities were established in several places where there had previously been only teacher training colleges, it soon became obvious that a great deal of effort would be needed to meet the higher education accreditation committee's requirements for the advancement of knowledge and increased amount of departmental research at newly-formed departments of English at universities. These were sometimes established independently as so called 'Fast-track' institutes (see Chapter 4 in this volume).

So, it became apparent to departmental members that in order to deliver high quality English pre-service teacher education courses, teacher trainers needed to update their theoretical knowledge; they needed free access to recent research carried out in educational studies and ELT methdology. At the same time, it was very difficult for the trainers to find opportunities to upgrade their qualifications in ELT at Czech universities as there had been little tradition in pursuing PhD studies in this field. Unlike linguistics and literature, ELT methodology (applied linguistics) was not considered sufficiently academic to satisfy the requirements of PhD studies by the academic establishment, so teacher trainers working at faculties of education did not have enough opportunities to get qualified help at Czech universities.

In order to satisfy an urgent demand for ELT specialists, the British Council supported the English departments first by providing UK-recruited and trained staff. Nevertheless, for reasons of sustainability, the policy was to help Czech staff to obtain higher qualifications in EFL methodology, applied linguistics and cultural studies at British universities. The project was set up to provide curriculum development and training specialists in ten key faculties (i.e. faculties of education). One of the objectives was further specified as *'to provide short- and long-term training for faculty staff'* (British Council 1991). A similar objective was included under the British Studies project.

As a result, since 1994, 30 ELT trainers from Czech universities (23 under the PRESETT project and seven under the British Studies project) have been sponsored by the British Council to undertake Masters degree courses with UK institutions.

The biggest group, 14 trainers (12 Czechs and two British Council UK national employees), have been funded to undertake distance MA TESOL courses at Moray House, Edinburgh (now under the Faculty of Education, University of Edinburgh). The remaining 16 studied at the following institutions:

University of Reading, MA TEFL 6
University of Birmingham, MA Applied Linguistics 1
University of Nottingham, MA Educational Management 2
University of Warwick, MA British Studies 2
University of Strathclyde, MLitt in British Cultural Studies 5

So as to describe the group of trainers mentioned above, it is worth mentioning that they were usually graduates of five-year, two-subject degree courses at universities, one of the degrees being English. For the purposes of further discussion it is important to mention that the graduates of five-year *undergraduate* courses have traditionally been awarded a Mgr (Magister) degree in the Czech educational context. A few of the prospective MA group also held Czech PhDr degrees (PhDr – *postgraduate* degrees awarded mainly before 1989 – are an equivalent of PhD).

This report looks into trainers' perceptions of their professional development since they started their Masters courses abroad.

3 Methodology

The following research instruments were used for gathering the data.

3.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire consisting of nine questions (including both closed and open questions) was used (see Appendix 1). After each closed question, respondents were asked to give reasons for their answers.

Questionnaires were sent to 26 MA graduates. After one reminder, 20 of these were returned (seven from MA TEFL, five from MEd TESOL, two from MEd Educ Management, four from MLitt and two from MA British Studies graduates). The response rate was, therefore, 77 %.

The questionnaires were anonymous, but respondents willing to provide more data if needed were asked to include their contact details.

3.2 E-mail correspondence

More data for analysis was then collected from e-mail correspondence with those respondents who had previously indicated their willingness to answer follow-up questions.

In total, data was gathered from 13 e-mail answers to two questions (1 closed, 1 open – see Appendix 2).

3.3 Interviews

As the focus of inquiry was on respondents' perceptions, it was felt appropriate to address a few of them further in order to obtain deeper insights and provide clarification of some of the emerging issues. All in all, three interviews were recorded and transcribed, providing answers to open questions (see Appendix 3).

3.4 Documents

Documents included for analysis come from the archives of the British Council office in Prague (years 1991 onwards). These are listed in the *References* section of this chapter.

In sum, four different research instruments were used to provide information, and an effort has been made to triangulate the data obtained. Nevertheless, I wish to note that the main limitation of this study is its heavy reliance on respondents' perceptions. Further, most of the British Council documents studied contain interesting information about the decisions taken by the British Council in respect of the emerging issues, but modifications to and outcomes of these decisions were not always systematically documented. In the section *Findings* which follows, responses to questionnaires, e-mails, interview questions and statements selected from the documents are treated as constituting a single database. Generally, the word *Masters* will be used in the report to indicate the whole body of respondents' degrees, as it was neither intended nor appropriate to do a comparative study. (However, where needed to clarify the answer, a reference will be made to the type of degree.) For analysis, each respondent was given a reference number at random: questionnaires from Q1–Q20, e-mails from E1–E13, interviews from Int1–Int3. References to document sources (D) are given in the text. The data has been transcribed literally using italics (my comments and additional remarks are shown in square brackets). Interviews were carried out in Czech, so first the original version and then the translation is provided.

4 Findings

The main themes emerging from the data are discussed here. First, respondents reported a number of different motivations for undertaking a Masters degree in the UK. Generally, they claimed that the Masters degree experience provided them with new opportunities for professional development. Respondents also identified the additional benefits of professional development, and they reported their willingness to disseminate the results of their research activities and experience of teacher training. Evidence of respondents' ability to disseminate their research has been taken from their lists of publications. However, set against this awareness of professional development are contextual and personal constraints, as well as concerns around the issue of recognition of foreign qualifications by Czech institutions.

4.1 Objectives in undertaking professional development

4.1.1 Professional knowledge

A variety of reasons were given for doing a Masters course in the UK. Several respondents remarked on their desire to enrich their professional knowledge. For example, respondent Q6 says: *I wanted to get deeper insights into current approaches, to systematise my so far received knowledge.*

Other respondents such as Q10 and Q12 expressed a desire to *deepen* their *knowledge of TEFL.*

Another respondent comments on a new challenge, i.e. teaching British Studies (BS), which in some cases had so far been covered by native English speaker lecturers at universities (as well as by literature courses):

Q13 BS – *a new subject*

The data from questionnaires is supported by that from e-mails and documents:

E7: *My own decision to start this study was based on the idea that I could obtain further views, information and knowledge in the field of ELT.*

D: *Distance MA programme [was] established to enable approximately 12 Presett high-fliers to fill Fast-Track lecturer post vacancies* (i.e. 12 Czech trainers; two English native speakers were also given the opportunity, thus making the total number of 14 MA TESOL graduates; see British Council 1995a).

4.1.2 Professional qualifications

Respondents also expressed their wish to improve their qualifications. Sometimes the reason was extrinsic:

Q2: *… to silence 'big boys'.*

Q3, 9, 13, 14, 18: *[I wanted] to achieve better qualifications.*

Int2: *my jsme prostě všichni potřebovali projít nějakým vzděláváním a mít další akademický titul … (we all needed to go through some further education and obtain a further academic degree …)*

Similar reasons to those above (for offering Masters courses) are expressed in the following extract from British Council planning documents:

D: *Outputs: enhanced status of ELT professionals within PRESETT English departments, partly through the improvements in qualifications …* (British Council 1997a).

4.1.3 Professional growth

Other respondents had intrinsic reasons for wanting to take a Masters degree as the following responses indicate:

Q9: *[the aim was] to learn something new and necessary for my work.*

Q1, Q5: *I wanted to improve my teaching.*

Q10: *I wanted to become a better teacher trainer.*

Q9, 15: *[the aim was] professional growth.*

Again, these responses appear to reflect one of the British Council's formal objectives.

D: (continued from above) *Outputs: enhanced status of ELT professionals within PRESETT English departments, partly through … professional development* (British Council 1997a).

4.1.4 Personal development

Some trainers also give personal preferences, such as interests in culture (Q4), interest in ELT (Q16, 18), gaining *'cultural experience'* (Q9) or *'it had always been my dream to study in GB'* (Q17). Comments such as *'a chance to apply'* (Q3, 17, 20) also appear, or simply *'I was selected'* (Q3) and finally, respondents indicate an appreciation of the novelty and opportunity to make use of a chance of *'a course not offered in CR'* (Q9, 16).

4.2 Evaluation of the Masters degree experience

Looking first at the available quantifiable data, it appears that when evaluating the usefulness of Masters courses in terms of learning to do research (see Table 1), trainers claim that the Masters study ranked between 'very useful' and 'useful' across the following skills areas: formulating research questions, selecting appropriate research methodology, designing research instruments, using data collection tools, doing data analysis and writing up a research report. There are only a few mentions

Table 1 Perceptions of usefulness of Masters course input (N=20)

	very useful	useful	not very useful	not useful at all	no response
formulating research questions	10	9	1	0	0
selecting appropriate methodology	11	9	0	0	0
designing research instruments	10	8	1	1	0
using data collection tools	9	8	2	0	1
doing data analysis	7	10	2	0	1
writing up research reports	13	7	0	0	0

of a course being 'not very useful' in any of these specific respects and just one mention of a course being 'not useful at all' (see Table 1). One trainer also mentions that her course (MLitt) did not involve research, and so the questions regarding data collection tools and data analysis do not apply to her.

Turning now to qualitative data found in responses to open questions regarding their Masters course experience, trainers on the whole express their appreciation for support from their supervisors in providing consultation on their dissertation writing, the organisation of the course, and also help from their peers. However, some reservations are also expressed.

Some comment positively on issues concerning relationships with peers and with tutors:

Q9: *I appreciate … personal support … informal group sharing …*

Q17: *[I appreciate] consulting with tutors over important and confusing issues.*

Q18: *[I appreciate] hints from the supervisor.*

Other respondents comment on organisational aspects:

Q9: *[I valued] formal guidance, material support … access to literature and other sources of information, which was crucial.*

Q10: *The course was systematic, run by real professionals.*

Q11: *Masters course provided in-depth guidelines [for doing research, studying].*

Others also comment positively on access to sources of information, and a respondent on a distance module (Q19) remarks that *'materials were wonderfully selected, with the inclusion of folio tasks'.*

On the overall impact of the experience, respondents say:

Q16: *The Masters was much better than the Czech PhD I did … the best way how to do research and how to write it up.*

Q17: *What I experienced in Britain [i.e. on an MA course] was totally different from what I used to do as an undergraduate and post-graduate student in the Czech Republic. We were used to memorising things, to knowing where we can find what, rather than to arguing and approaching things critically and creatively.*

However some reservations are expressed in the following comments:

Q2: *[I didn't] spend much time in Britain, so it was more time and energy consuming.* (distance MA)

Q15: *[as for supervision] – rigorous or qualitative approaches unresolved … having a skilled supervisor or support group would presumably be also a powerful tool.*

Q17: *… hard work, sometimes very painful.*

Although the reservations quoted above represent a minority of the comments, they seem to indicate that undertaking postgraduate courses abroad demands a willingness from participants to overcome difficulties originating in uncertainty, and also requires commitment to learn new skills in a new environment.

4.3 Perceptions of additional benefits of professional development

4.3.1 Perceptions of confidence

Perceptions of confidence are apparent throughout the data, with regard to doing research, being ready to disseminate results and expertise, and carrying out trainer training.

When expressing their current attitudes to doing research, most trainers claim that they feel confident across the range of skills specified in the questionnaire rubrics (see Table 2). A few respondents feel very confident across all the skills. However, some claim they are not very confident in designing research instruments, doing data analysis, writing up a research report, disseminating expertise at conferences and publishing articles.

One trainer did not answer the question concerning disseminating research results, saying *'it is not a question of being or not being confident, but a question of time. I could if I had more time for that'* (Q1).

It is important to highlight the respondents' perceptions of increased confidence after successfully finishing their Masters research. The experience gained through doing research has shown many trainers what they are (or specifically, what they are not yet) capable of in terms of doing research.

The following are comments in response to open questions:

Q10: *I doubt I would [have] ever been able to do some research without the course.*

Q15: *I say confident rather than very confident because although I think I can get there in the end I need several bashes at, e.g. formulating the research question and so on before I think I've got something satisfactory.*

Q17: *After carrying out research connected with my MA dissertation, I realised I could do it successfully. It was the first necessary step. Since then I am not afraid of doing research as much as I used to be … I think I gradually became more creative, inventive, independent and confident.*

Some respondents mention that they are reasonably confident in some areas while not so confident in others:

Q6: *It depends on the field of research – the more familiar I am [in the field], the more confident I feel.*

Q10: *… statistics poor, but at conferences [where I usually present] statistics is not required.*

Q11: *My theoretical basis may be more professional than practical application (I teach classroom research, tutor DW [diploma work], coordinate writing and research courses).*

Q14: *Designing questionnaires and collecting the data is great fun, as is describing the rationale and the framework, etc. The*

Table 2 Perceptions of confidence (N=20)

	very confident	confident	not very confident	not confident at all	no response
formulating research questions	3	16	1	0	0
selecting appropriate methodology	2	17	1	0	0
designing research instruments	3	14	3	0	0
using data collection tools	3	15	1	0	1
doing data analysis	3	13	3	0	1
writing up research reports	4	13	3	0	0
disseminating at conferences	2	13	4	0	1
disseminating – publishing	3	10	5	1	1

only problem is I'm not always sure what I'm supposed to do with the data I've collected. In other words, several potential avenues for further research probably go begging just because I don't see them. In fairness though, this may be due more to my own lack of imagination than any shortcomings in the MLitt course.

Q15: *It is maybe a stage in the development of a researcher to be able to pinpoint what they have found out of relevance to different audiences.*

Q20: *Sociological research I am not trained to do but feel confident in the field of textual analysis.*

4.3.2 Perceptions of professional development

We can examine this in two ways: awareness of trainer training development and changes in training behaviour.

Awareness of trainer training development

Quite a few comments spring up from the data regarding awareness of research playing an important role in a trainer's professional development, from acknowledgement of its positive role in teacher training to perceptions of introducing 'new ideas' into teaching:

Q3: *Thanks to the MA programme, my skills in all above mentioned areas [i.e. doing research] improved tremendously, the skills acquired can now be successfully used when I work as a DW (diploma work) adviser.*

Q4: *The research mentioned above has brought many new ideas into my teaching, and it is still contributing to it in terms of materials, information sources and practical access to many spheres that are connected with my teaching job.*

Q19: *It helped me to understand children's needs and preferences, a reality of the classroom.*

E3: *For me the MA … programme gave a lot for my work in the English department.*

Changes in teacher training behaviour

Trainers report that their behaviour has changed in several ways. A few remark on their improved ability to have deeper insights into trainees' learning processes when writing their diploma theses, and consequently on being able to offer guidance to trainees doing research better than before:

Q2: *[I became] more tolerant and understanding towards trainees doing research.*

Q12: *I could introduce the procedure as well as results to my students.*

The illuminating role research has played in trainers' professional work may be seen both in quantifiable and qualitative data from the questionnaires. Trainers claim that in terms of satisfaction, research has played a 'very satisfactory' and 'satisfactory' role in their development as teacher trainers. (See Table 3.)

Table 3 Perceptions of the role of research in teacher training development (N=20)

	very satisfactory	satisfactory	not very satisfactory	not satisfactory at all	no response
role of research in teacher training development	10	7	1	0	2

Here are some comments illustrating the pattern revealed in Table 3:

Q6: *Small-scale research has become an integral part of my preparation for any teacher training activites.*

Q11: *It is necessary to mention 'smaller' research investigations (action research) I occasionally conduct in order to scrutinise a strategy, a syllabus, etc.*

One comment on a trainer's enhanced ability to evaluate trainees' learning indicates another way of research feeding back into training activities:

Q15: *Research abilities have made me more systematic in monitoring and measuring learning using a wide variety of more creative tools than I might have used in the past.*

4.3.3 Perceptions of research skills development

Respondents stress that they continue to develop as researchers. They note that they have learned much due to their ongoing research experience, as the following comments suggest:

Q9: *Learning by doing [is satisfactory].*

Q10: *People learn by doing (at least I do).*

Q15: *… the only way to learn – from your mistakes.*

Q16: *I suppose you cannot develop as a researcher without carrying out some sort of research.*

As a result of continuous learning, respondents note an increase in their research skills:

Q9: *… ongoing practice [is contributory] to reflection.*

Q14: *With experience one learns how best to phrase questions and what pitfalls are to be avoided.*

From Table 4 it can be seen that trainers claim that research has played mostly a 'very satisfactory' or 'satisfactory' role in their professional development. One of the respondents who did not answer this question indicated that he or she had not carried out research in the last five years. Nevertheless, constraints are also expressed, mainly in terms of lack of time, not enough concentration, etc. (See Section 4.5.)

Table 4 Perceptions of the role of research in professional development (N=20)

very satisfactory	satisfactory	not very satisfactory	not satisfactory at all	no response
8	9	1	0	2

4.4 Disseminating research results

4.4.1 Attitudes to dissemination

When answering the questionnaire, most trainers report that they are 'keen' to publish the results of their research activites, a few are 'very keen', but quite a few also express negative feelings in this respect, and one is 'not keen at all'. (See Table 5.)

Table 5 Attitudes to disseminating research findings (N=20)

	very keen	keen	not very keen	not keen at all	no response
keenness to disseminate research findings	3	8	6	1	2

When commenting on their preferences, some trainers express their will to share the results with others. I interpret the following comments as examples of intrinsic motivation:

Q3: *Once I've found out something, the results deserve to be disseminated.*

Q12: *If it is general[ly] useful for more people [then keen].*

Q14: *If we have something interesting to say, then why not share it with others?*

Q15: *You always learn something from doing research, even if about the process of doing it, which is worth sharing.*

Q17: *… when I do some kind of research and write an article, it always seems to me that it will be interesting for others to read it. That's why I make an effort to have it published.*

Q18: *Actually, doing a piece of research is more important than writing about it, for me of course, since I often need it for my job, teaching, etc.*

On the other hand some trainers note that disseminating research results is a part of their duties as university lecturers. I interpret the following comments as examples of extrinsic motivation:

Q2: *… good in CV, more professional appearance*

Q9: *In our academic world it is publish or perish – you have to disseminate whether you like it or not.*

Q14: *We are expected to publish occasionally, aren't we?!*

Q17: *Since I teach at a teacher training college, we have to provide a list of publications, conference presentations every year.*

That's why I am keen to publish articles and give presentations professionally.
Q18: *I understand for the bosses, for evaluating my work, etc. the printed research is more valuable.*
An interesting comment comes from one respondent who notes that her efforts to disseminate can be followed by others:
Q2: *... an example for other teachers.*
However, as Table 5 shows, reservations over disseminating research findings are also mentioned by respondents who chose the 'not very keen' and 'not keen at all' options in the questionnaire. The open answers to this question will be referred to in Section 4.5 below.

4.4.2 Experience of dissemination
Evidence of ability to disseminate expertise was measured by asking respondents to indicate how frequently they give presentations at conferences, write up conference presentations for publication in the proceedings, write handbooks and other pedagogical materials, produce published articles and so on.

Giving presentations at conferences
The questionnaires show that 12 out of 20 Masters graduates delivered 85 presentations at conferences; 57 of these were presentations at international conferences in the five years between 1996 and 2001. Eight respondents did not give any indication in this respect.

Conference proceedings
Eight respondents made an effort to have their conference contributions published, the outcome being 26 articles in conference proceedings.

Handbooks, readers, teachers' books, video
Four respondents have been very active in this area in the past five years, publishing 15 handbooks or readers for ELT teachers/ELT undergraduates, and three ELT teachers' books. One respondent also mentions publishing an ELT video and a teacher's book.

Articles, book reviews, reports
Eleven respondents published 69 articles, out of which three ELT articles apppeared in international magazines *(Teacher Trainer; Babylonia: A Journal of Language Teaching and Learning; Levende Talen Magazine)*. The rest were published in national magazines and journals devoted to teaching foreign languages including English, such as for example *Cizí jazyky, ATE/ASUA Newsletter, Brno Studies in English*, etc., and also in *Perspectives*, published by the British Council in Prague, but read at other British Council centres in Central and Eastern Europe (see also Chapter 10 in this volume). One respondent also mentions an article published on web pages, one has published an evaluation report, and another 12 reviews of EFL books.

Miscellaneous
In the category of 'Other disseminating activites', four respondents mention running seminars, 31 in total. However, as 'running seminars' was not an item in the questionnaire, it is quite likely that the number of seminars held is in fact much higher. What is worth noting, though, is that 19 seminars (out of 31) were devoted to introducing, implementing and assessing the impact of the European Language Portfolio in the Czech educational context.
A few respondents also mention their participation in various grant-funded projects. Three respondents succeeded in gaining 18 grants, two have worked as consultants and co-organisers in long-running projects. One of these projects was aimed at promoting issues of citizenship in Europe in pre-service teacher education *(Faktor evropanství v přípravě učitelů)*, and the other focused on coordinating the European Language Portfolio activities in the CR. One respondent mentions working on the national board for the organisation of the European Year of Languages, 2001, one is a member of the ELTeCS board (English Language Teaching Contacts Scheme), one is an oral examiner for UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate), one is a member of the AMATE board (Asociace metodiku/ Association of Teacher Educators) and another is President of ATE CR (Association of Teachers of English in the Czech Republic).

4.5 Constraints to further professional development

4.5.1 Publishing and disseminating expertise

Miscellanous constraints are expressed, mainly in terms of lack of time and the difficulties that arise as a result of writing for different audiences.The following comment encapsulates what many respondents say:

Q11: *Interpretation and presentation of research results seems to me a very demanding task that requires time, energy and concentration.*

Others confirm this by saying:

Q4: *The results of my research activites have not been completed yet – they need to be given much more time.*

Q6: *One is so exhausted after being involved in 2–3 grants annually that I don't have enough energy/stamina to write an article … not enough time to develop as a researcher.*

Q10: *I'd love to publish the results if I had more time.*

Some blame themselves or their salary:

Q2: *I don't like giving prepared speeches.*

Q5: *… overdose of laziness and scepticism.*

Q6: *Due to my peanut salary I've got to earn some extra money to support/contribute to my family budget. [implying that research does not bring it]*

Some respondents mention the differences between writing for different audiences:

Q2: *… again and again have I realised the difference between preparing research reports for the English and Czech audience.*

Q2: *I need a native speaker [when writing for a publication].*

This particular issue (a need to have a native speaker to check language, and differences in style when writing for Czech and English audiences) is mentioned by only one respondent in response to a questionnaire. However, as it is an interesting issue, further interviews were carried out – one with the respondent herself, and two with others who have also published widely. They were asked the same questions. Here are their answers:

Int2: *Pokud píšeme pro anglické publikum, které je dostatečně seznámeno s tím, o čem píšeme, můžeme si dovolit nevysvětlovat detaily, můžeme používat terminologii, která pro mnohého českého uživatele vypadá jako „neterminologie" … mají pocit, že to není dostatečně vědecký … když začneme psát česky, tak tam musíme začít vsouvat víc termínů, musíme z toho udělat daleko vědečtější a složitější záležitost, aby to vypadalo dostatečně odborně … (When writing for the English audience who are sufficiently acquainted with what we are writing about, we can afford not to explain details, we can use terminology which for many Czech readers looks 'non-terminology' … they (i.e. Czech readers) have a feeling that it is not sufficiently academic … when we start writing in Czech, then we have to include more terms; we have to make it sound very academic and complicated so that it looks sufficiently professional …)*

Another respondent expresses very similar ideas to those above, and adds:

Int1: *vždy si to nechám zkontrolovat od rodilého mluvčího, když se to má publikovat; nejsem tak sebevědomá/ nebo hloupá, abych si myslela, že to mám všechno správně. … V češtině ráda používám metafory, a myslím, že se vyjadřuji květnatěji, což bych v angličtině těžko zvládala … na druhé straně, my jsme absolvovali mnoho seminářů, čteme anglickou literaturu, takže odborná terminologie je nám bližší v angličtině. (I always have it checked by a native speaker if it is to be published. I am not so self-confident, or silly, to think that I've got everything right … When writing in Czech, I like using metaphors, I like to use expressive language, which is something I am not that sure of in English … on the other hand, we have been to so many seminars, we often read professional literature in English, so English terminology comes naturally to us.)*

Comments from another interview sum up a great deal of what has been said above:

Int3: *V češtině je to náročné taky … terminologie mnohdy chybí, vytvářejí se „patvary" s českou koncovkou…některá slova jsou těžko přeložitelná, např. eliciting, monitoring… ale v zásadě nevidím rozdíl – v angličtině to někdo přečte, a v češtině jsou problémy s terminologií. (It is also demanding in Czech … terminology is sometimes missing, we create our 'own terms' English words with Czech endings … some words are difficult to translate, e.g. eliciting, monitoring … but generally speaking, I don't see a big difference – if you publish in English, you get someone to read it, if in Czech – you have problems with terminology.)*

In short, apart from constraints on publishing activities which might be expected to be mentioned, such as lack of time, energy and concentration, other comments express perceptions of cultural differences when writing for different audiences, and the necessity to solve various linguistic problems arising from publishing in English and Czech.

4.5.2 Contextual constraints: recognition of foreign degrees

By far the most frequently mentioned constraint is the issue of recognition of foreign degrees. Considerable confusion surrrounds this matter. According to the Ministry of Education, *'people who have an MA or a similar degree from good UK universities can automatically assume that the MA will be equal to the Czech Mgr.'* When challenged on the point that an MA degree is in fact a higher degree, i.e. a postgraduate degree, the Ministry spokesperson responded that there was no evidence of that (quoted from e-mail correspondence with Staša Závitkovská, Head of ELT Unit, the British Council, Prague). This is supported by comments taken from e-mail correspondence with post-Masters graduates.

In answer to the question of whether a Masters degree is recognised as a post-graduate degree at their institutions, eight respondents out of the 13 who responded say it is not recognised (i.e. it is considered to be merely the equivalent of a Mgr./Magister degree), three are not sure (they state that it is valued more than Mgr, e.g. by the head of the department and colleagues, but not officially recognised), three have not investigated the issue (or have found it difficult to), one says it is partly recognised by the head, one (a British national) says it was not an issue in 1991 when *'Czech institutions presumably had to accept the judgement of the BC'* (E13). The total of 16 responses is due to the fact that some respondents gave more than one answer, oscillating between the three choices.

Qualitative data illustrate respondents' personal feelings about the issue of recognition:

E2: *It feels like having done things for nothing except my own benefit, for which I am thankful.*

E1: *I don't care … I am angry … I am disappointed … I am tired … a degree of helplessness.*

Another respondent echoes the 'I don't care' approach expressed above by respondent E1, and explains her reasons further:

E4: *I have not investigated the issue of recognition, it is irrelevant in my case, as I have got a Czech PhD. However, there have been queries at our university about my right to use MA in official materials. I was told that I should not use it unless I have formal approval by the Ministry of Education. This approval is based on an assessment of curricular data of my course by any university in the Czech Republic that operates a similar programme (it makes the whole situation rather funny, as there is no university in our country that would offer a Mgr. programme in educational management). I must say I do not really bother about it and use it freely whenever I like it.*

Then she resorts to metaphor:

E4: *Typical Czech 'Kocourkov'* (referring to an imaginary town where the councillors behave and act in an absurd, nonsensical, counter-productive way, resulting in the mismanagement of life in the town).

Interview data confirm the findings above and highlight the existing confusion at a governmental and university administration level:

Int2: *bohužel kdo nad náma vládne je akreditační komise a ministerstvo a na tom ministerstvu o tom rozhodují lidi, kteří o tom skutečně nic nevědí. (Unfortunately, the governing bodies are the accreditation committee and the Ministry, and people at the Ministry who make decisions about it (i.e. recognition) really don't know anything about it.)*

Int3: *zažila jsem mechanický přístup [tzn. MA je považováno za ekvivalent českého Mgr.] … nenechala jsem se odradit, a na základě odborného posudku mě posunuli do kategorie odborné asistentky s vědeckou hodností … i když v rámci školy je moje MA studium uznáno, obecně chybí legislativa, aby byla oporou. (I've experienced a mechanical approach [i.e. MA is considered to be an equivalent of Mgr] … I wasn't put off, and on the basis of an expert's account I was later put into the category of a senior lecturer with a post-graduate academic degree … but, even if within our school my MA study has been recognised, generally speaking, the legislation is missing to help the process of recognition of foreign degrees.)*

Comments on the mismatching of degrees can also be found in British Council documents.

D: *Considerable numbers of the teachers are now committed to academic programmes abroad such as MA TESOL or the equivalent. Although these bring intrinsic professional benefits they may unfortunately not necessarily count for very much officially. The title MA is often assumed to be equivalent to the local 'Magistr' and thus nothing more than a first degree.* (British Council 1995b)

The following extract from the same document summarises the main issues regarding the recognition of foreign degrees very clearly:

D: *Accreditation procedures – higher academic qualifications*

These continue to cause pressure on departments and may leave clouds on the future for many. Senior staff in several departments have devoted an inordinate amount of time and energy to gathering the necessary documentation and have been subjected to a great deal of anxiety and stress as a result. Several of the Czech teaching staff in these departments still fail to meet the academic requirements in terms of research and publications which would be required. … Unfortunately the topics for research and academic work which would most easily fit in with their normal pattern of work at the teacher training departments

and which might be of direct benefit to the programme's development, for example, language teaching methodology, action research, testing and so on, do not readily fall into categories which are acknowledged as 'serious' by the academic establishment. There still appears to be a tendency to favour linguistic and literary disciplines even though their direct relevance to teacher education may be minimal.

For example, it may need to be demonstrated whether or not the degree of MA awarded by a British university can be considered as the first stage in a PhD programme, and thus should entitle the bearer to appropriate allowances and recognition. Such research would of course have significance for the entire field of higher education and is presumably of vital importance to the Czech Republic in its bid to enter the European Union if it wishes its own qualifications to be recognised. (British Council 1995b)

This was written in 1995, yet in 2002 respondents write:

E5: ... it's definitely not recognised by other academics or by people at the Ministry of Education. Some of them are suspicious of it.

E7: ... when a new salary scale was discussed at university ... I realised that this qualification meant nothing ... The degree wasn't considered satisfactory even by the Accreditation committee.

E8: I have absolutely no idea what the Masters degree should be equal to in the Czech context. This should be solved by the responsible authorities ... I am sure it should be given proper recognition and maybe it should be put on some scale where one would be able to find out where he or she has got to due to finishing the studies of this kind.

According to the documents, however, the issue was raised in the years after 1995, as the following extracts demonstrate:

D: Higher degrees gained at foreign universities are not officially valid in the context of the Czech academic hierarchy. In effect, this means that Czech teachers in higher education who have been awarded British degrees through or are currently engaged in programmes sponsored by the British Council have no guarantee of recognition in respect of job security, promotion, etc. Departments are increasingly under pressure from academic authorities to provide proof of academic status otherwise they risk not being granted accreditation. Discussion between the Council and the appropriate authorites in the Ministry and universities is therefore a priority this year. (British Council 1996)

Regarding 'nostrification', the process of establishing and officially recognising equivalences between academic qualifications in different countries:

D: Nostrification – We should continue to pursue this both with the Ministry and with the universities, particularly for British MA equivalence. (British Council 1997b)

Yet, when looking through the documents in the following years, less and less mention of the issue of recognition can be found, although continuing support has been provided to professionals wishing to upgrade their qualifications by pursuing Masters courses in the UK (namely, distance MA courses in Moray House, Edinburgh).

The last words in this section should go to the respondents:

E12: I hope that joining the EU will help us ...

That said, the experience of one respondent indicates that the problem extends beyond the Czech Republic.

E13: With MA TESOL in hand ... I contacted the University of Vienna ... with a view to doing a PhD ...Vienna rejected any idea of 'nostrification' of my qualifications because the BA (Hons) degree in English Literature does not exist in Austria; a magister qualification in TESOL also does not exist.

5 Discussion

How does the previous data relate to the research questions? In other words, what has been the impact of Masters study on the trainers' further professional development? What has been its impact on their further research?

To answer these questions, I have looked into trainers' perceptions of knowledge empowerment, and their perceptions of their research and trainer training development. I have attempted to establish what value has been added to their professional lives, judged from their own point of view. Furthermore, I have tried to relate the perceptual data to the outcomes of their activities and the wider educational context in the Czech Republic.

In brief, trainers' own feelings regarding their professional development suggest very clearly that confidence based on value added to their professional lives is underlying their professional activities. In some cases they are also valued locally as professionals, although in some other cases, this is still not true.

Looking deeper into the evidence for examples of further professional development, it is obvious that trainers continually draw upon their own experience in doing Masters research when tutoring trainees' research activities, including small-scale research into curriculum and syllabus design, introducing new ideas into their teaching, and evaluating the effectiveness of changes in the syllabus.

Some of the trainers have also published widely – 12 out of 20 included lists of their publications in the past five years; they also claim they are keen to publish and find research satisfactory. (It is of interest to note that despite constraints, six out of 12 respondents also make considerable efforts to publish both in English and in Czech so as to reach a wider audience.) Although there are big differences in the number of individual publications, some of these differences are understandable as several trainers have only recently finished their Masters courses, and they feel they need more time and concentration to disseminate the results of their research. On the basis of the data, other differences are more difficult to explain; eight respondents who had not included their publication lists did not volunteer to answer follow-up questions, so it was not possible to pursue the issue further.

Despite a large total number of publication and dissemination activities, only a few trainers have written for magazines and journals published outside the Czech Republic. However, instances of giving presentations at international conferences as well as publishing contributions in conference proceedings have been very high.

Furthermore, a few respondents have become consultants to, or coordinators of national projects, so it appears that some are perhaps gaining influence in national educational policies.

Nevertheless, it is also clear from the data that quite large amounts of energy have been spent in fighting the recognition issue. Recognition of foreign degrees is related to the security of respondents' jobs and accrediting the study programmes they have designed (or have helped to design). The data from Vienna University (E13), rejecting the nostrification of MA TESOL, suggests that the problem of recognition is not limited to Czech universities. Furthermore, an article by Linder (2002) deals with the same issue: *'Generally speaking, it is practically impossible to find work in the regulated (recognised) system of an EU country unless you are a citizen of that country and have obtained your university education and teaching credentials there.'* However, Linder concludes in a more positive way: *'A common policy in the area of mutual recognition of university language degrees and teaching credentials is a goal that needs to be achieved.'*

Obviously, there is interest and a great deal of potential on the part of post-Masters graduates for further professional growth, but this may be wasted if the issue of recognition is not solved in the best interests of both sides – individual trainers and their higher education institutions.

6   Implications

As this study has indicated, Masters courses have facilitated significant increases in trainers' personal professional growth. Another obvious effect is their increased confidence and there is a correlation between this growing confidence and the number of publications, training and research activities carried out inside and outside their departments. However, in order to sustain what has been achieved, the following may be suggested:

Firstly, it appears important to publicise teacher trainers' activities and research results to a larger audience. In other words, it would be helpful to spread publication activities beyond ELT professionals in the Czech Republic by writing both in Czech (for publication in national professional journals and magazines) and in English (for publication in international professional journals and magazines). Although it may seem obvious, it is necessary continually to support and nourish the publication activities of Masters graduates, especially those who have only recently finished their Masters courses.

Secondly, it may be recommended that contacts between teacher trainers, the British Council, the Ministry of Education and accreditation bodies continue to be promoted in order to gain more influence on the process of recognition of trainers' professional work.

Thirdly, and related to the previous point, it is vital to achieve recognition of foreign degrees. This seems to be the most challenging task ahead. However, unless attempts are made to create an official board which will analyse and evaluate the aims, objectives and content of foreign qualifications, there is little hope that the situation will change and a reasonable policy on recognising foreign degrees will be created.

Fourthly, more research needs to be done before starting similar projects in the future to ensure that at least the participants of such projects have realistic expectations of their outcomes. Negotiations with the Ministry of Education and other influential bodies which have a say in accreditation committees should be carried out beforehand.

Finally, a joint programme of PhD studies focused on language teaching methodology, set up in cooperation between Czech and English universities is worth considering so as to support trainers' further professional growth and promote the impact of previous Masters courses on educational policies in the Czech Republic.

7   Conclusion

When offering new opportunities for pursuing Masters courses in the UK, the British Council intended both to support professional development of pre-service teacher trainers at Czech faculties of education and to enhance teacher trainers' status by improving their qualifications.

The findings of this study have revealed the following:

There is evidence to suggest that the obvious impact of Masters courses was the increased confidence of the participants, their perceptions of personal professional growth and a correlation between perceptions of confidence, professional growth and an increased amount of research and dissemination activities. In short, one of the aims mentioned above has been achieved and a majority of respondents have acknowledged that.

However, examining the role of the wider educational context has raised concerns about a possible demotivating effect of lack of recognition on further sustainability of departments, as well as a worry that this lack of recognition may pose a possible threat to trainers' professional careers. So, the second aim remains unresolved.

Therefore, in support of both aims, it appears that further measures should be taken to maximise the potential of Masters courses in the UK. It is hoped that this chapter has indicated ways to do this, and as such, the contents of this study may be found useful by the British Council decision makers across the region.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire: Research activities of post-Masters trainers

Dear colleague,

As a member of the BC evaluation group, I am doing a report on research activities of post-MA trainers. I would appreciate very much if you could devote some of your precious time to answering the following questions. Your answers will be treated as confidential.

Please send the questionnaire back by 16 January 2002.

Thank you very much in advance.

With best regards

Marta Šigutová

Enclosed: a self-addressed envelope

1 *Why did you do an MA TEFL/ MEd/MLitt/MA British Studies course? (Please delete as appropriate.)*

2 *In terms of learning to do research, how would you rate your Masters course? Please circle the appropriate answer:*

a) very useful	*b) useful*	*c) not very useful*	*d) not useful at all*

in formulating research questions: *a b c d*

in selecting an appropriate research methodology: *a b c d*

in designing research instruments: *a b c d*

in using data collection tools: *a b c d*

in doing data analysis: *a b c d*

in writing up a research report: *a b c d*

Please give your comments on the above.

3 *Your current attittudes to doing research*

Please circle the appropriate answer:

a) very confident	*b) confident*	*c) not very confident*	*d) not confident at all*

in formulating research questions: *a b c d*

in selecting an appropriate research methodology: *a b c d*

in designing research instruments: *a b c d*

in using data collection tools: *a b c d*

in doing data analysis: *a b c d*

in writing up a research report: *a b c d*

in disseminating research results at conference presentations: *a b c d*

in disseminating research results – publishing articles: *a b c d*

Please give your comments on the above.

4 *Over the past five years, have you carried out research investigations?*

Please circle the appropriate answer: *YES   NO*

If NO, why not?

If YES, please answer Questions 5–8.

5 *What role has carrying out research played in your development as a researcher? Please circle the appropriate answer:*
   a) very satisfactory   b) satisfactory   c) not very satisfactory   d) not satisfactory at all
   Please give your comments.

6 *What role has carrying out research played in your development as a teacher trainer? Please circle the appropriate answer:*
   a) very satisfactory   b) satisfactory   c) not very satisfactory   d) not satisfactory at all
   Please give your comments.

7 *How keen are you to publish the results of your research activites? Please circle the appropriate answer:*
   a) very keen   b) keen   c) not very keen   d) not keen at all
   Please give your comments.

8 *Please list the outcomes of your research activities in the past five years. (Feel free to send a part of your CV.)*

   Articles:

   Conference presentations:

   Conference proceedings:

   Web pages:

   Other:

9 *Looking back on your professional development over the past five years, please comment here on any other issue concerning your research skills, interests and experience that has not been covered by this questionnaire.*

10 *Would you be willing to answer further follow-up questions? If so, please give your name and contact details.*

Thank you very much for taking time to fill in this questionnaire

Appendix 2

E-mail questions on Masters recognition

1 Is your MA TESOL/TEFL/Litt/BS/MEd recognised by your university/workplace as a post-graduate degree?
(Please tick the appropriate choice.)

Yes
No (it is considered to be an equivalent of Mgr.)
Not sure

2 Could you please comment on how you feel about the above?

Appendix 3

Interview questions

What did a Masters degree mean in your career ladder? And what did it mean for the department? How do you feel about it?

Do you see any differences when writing in English and in Czech? If so, could you comment on them?

CHAPTER 6

In-service teacher education as a life-long learning process

Jana Jílková

Growing interest in teaching and learning English since 1989 has led to a serious shortage of English language teachers in the Czech Republic. In response to this, the British Council set up an in-service training programme. This chapter examines the development of the programme over its first ten years and the impact which it has had on today's trainers. Aspects of the training, the sustainability of in-service teacher education work and the implications of recent developments are considered. The cadre of 63 trainers themselves – and other stakeholders – believe that marked progress has been made in their competence in English, their training skills and their own self-confidence. Nevertheless, the trainers perceive that their skills are not formally recognised by the Czech authorities.

1   Introduction

After political changes in the Czech Republic in 1989, there was a marked decline in interest in learning Russian, previously a compulsory first foreign language for all learners. Interest in learning English rose dramatically. However, this demand for English could not be fulfilled immediately as there was a severe shortage of teachers who possessed both the necessary language competence and appropriate language teaching skills.

The British Council set up a trainer training programme which aimed to provide in-service support for teachers who were teaching English in elementary schools (compulsory education for pupils from the ages of 6 to 15) and secondary schools (students from the ages of 15 to 19). The support provided by the British Council started on a small scale and then developed in response to the changing situation over a number of years until it became a fully-fledged programme with long-term aims. This chapter presents the framework of the British Council programme, its development and the perceptions of major stakeholders towards it. It also considers the implications of recent developments.

The discussion begins, in Section 2, by looking at the context of the study. INSETT activity before the British Council programme started in 1991 is described briefly; this is followed by a survey of the three phases into which British Council activity fell. Section 3 then presents the methodology of the study. The core of the chapter comes in Section 4, where the findings are presented and discussed. Three major aspects are examined here: the impact of the INSETT activities on trainers, the impact of the activities on the actual provision of INSETT, and the likely sustainability of the INSETT activities. The last part of the chapter examines the implications of the study.

2 Context

The present study focuses on the impact of the British Council INSETT trainer training projects from 1991 onwards. Before giving a description of the projects, a brief outline of the situation prior to this may add to the reader's fuller understanding of the context.

2.1 INSETT before the project

Prior to the political changes in 1989, INSETT training was available in the Czech Republic through a network of Regional Pedagogical Institutes (KPU) and the national level Central INSETT Institute (ÚÚVPP), both of which were attached to the Ministry of Education. A similar but independent network existed in the Slovak Republic which had its own Ministry of Education even before the division of Czechoslovakia into two nations in January 1993.

In practice, opportunities for teachers of English at this time were quite limited. One source of INSETT was the occasional seminars and support visits given by teacher trainers to schools. These were arranged by the KPUs and conducted either by their own staff or by British Council lectors or United States Information Service (USIS) staff who were then working in the country under cultural agreements. Another source was intensive summer and winter courses (see also Chapter 7). More opportunities became available in 1988 when a full-time INSETT lecturer was recruited by the British Council for the Prague KPU, and the following year when an additional peripatetic INSETT lecturer post was created by the British Council to cover the whole country, offering possibilities of short workshops and support visits. By autumn 1990 the Prague KPU, with substantial input from the British Council lecturer based there, had set up and started to offer an ongoing year-round series of short refresher courses. Thus up to 1,000 teachers of English per year had access to refresher methodology training (Malcolm Griffiths, personal communication). With very few exceptions at this stage, INSETT for English teachers was conducted by native-speaker teacher trainers.

But then the impact of political changes put two new sets of pressures on the provision of INSETT and led to a shortage of adequately trained INSETT trainers. With Russian being dropped as a compulsory subject on the school curriculum and with the huge demand for other foreign languages, there was suddenly a severe shortage of English teachers. In the school year 1990–1991, about 38% of primary/lower secondary school (*základní školy)* pupils chose English, 50% chose German and only 10% chose Russian. At upper secondary schools *(střední školy)*, about 36% of students wanted to learn English, 30% German and 28% Russian.

It was estimated that about 14,000 more foreign language teachers were needed, about half of whom would have to be teachers of English. This number was made up of a shortfall of 6,000 English teachers and 6,500 German teachers for primary/lower secondary schools, with a further shortage of 700 English teachers and 300 German teachers at the upper secondary level. On the other hand, the surplus of Russian teachers was estimated to be over 5,000 at the primary/lower secondary level, with a further surplus of nearly 900 in upper secondary schools (Doc 1).

Meanwhile, the predicted number of new graduates in English between 1991 and 1994 was only about 100 per year, although by 1995 the number of graduates in English had reached nearly 400 (Doc 1, 2).

These figures indicate the extent to which INSETT providers such as KPUs and university departments were faced with the task of providing English language and methodology training for the thousands of teachers who would need to retrain in order to become teachers of English and other foreign languages.

At the same time, however, a continuing process of discussion and change at the Ministry led to the closure of some KPUs, restructuring and large staffing cuts in others and a period of overall uncertainty about their future existence and the roles which they would be required to play. Thus the possibility of developing systematic and comprehensive coverage to meet the needs became more difficult to realise. From 1990 onwards, associations of teachers of English began to develop. Although there were at one early stage four associations, the situation eventually stabilised and left two: the Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic (ATECR) and the Moravian Silesian Association of Teachers of English (MSATE). These were independent bodies funded by membership fees and partly with grants from the Ministry of Education. They swiftly established links with international organisations such as IATEFL and TESOL. The first national ELT conference took place in Prague in February 1991 under the auspices of ATECR. Soon afterwards both associations established regional centres which, in the absence of official INSETT bodies and structures, supported INSETT on a voluntary basis. The activities of the regional centres included running small regional mini-libraries, one-day mini-conferences, and INSETT workshops led by locally based native-speaker tutors. Later, Czech teacher trainers and presenters, often sponsored by publishers, contributed to these workshops.

2.2 INSETT trainer training projects

The British Council INSETT trainer training projects fell into three phases. Phases 1 and 2 each concentrated on the establishment of a cadre of ELT INSETT trainers. Phase 3 focused on the sustainability of INSETT through the cadre and also on providing opportunities for specialisation.

2.2.1 Phase 1: Innovation

In Autumn 1991, after discussion with the Ministry of Education, the British Council launched a new INSETT project *'to re-establish in-service teacher training programmes for teachers of English in the primary and secondary school sectors'* (British Council 1991, British Council 1992). As well as the existing INSETT lecturer posts, part of the workload of the newly-created PRESETT lecturer posts was also made available for INSETT activities. The provision for INSETT was further increased quite considerably by the creation at the same time of four ELT Fellow posts by USIS. The next year saw two additional full-time and one half-time specialist INSETT lecturer posts being created by the British Council. In the summer of 1992 the British Council, acting on a request from the Ministry of Education, supported 15 representatives of the teachers' associations in attending a British Council summer school 'Becoming a Teacher Trainer' in the UK: this was not directly linked to any other activities in the British Council project.

At this point, there was still no comprehensive INSETT teacher training system and much of the training was given by foreigners. However, in winter 1992–1993 a plan was developed to try to achieve the project's aim through a programme of training and support to form a cadre of Czech trainers. The idea was first suggested at a networking meeting of British Council lecturers and their Czech counterparts from INSETT institutions. This plan was then elaborated with the Ministry of Education and representatives of the teachers' associations, and it was hoped gradually to bring the number of appropriately trained Czech ELT INSETT trainers up to a sustainable level. Under the plan, from then on British Council training in teacher training skills was to be linked to the provision of practical supported experience such as teaching on summer schools (see Chapter 7).

Between 1993 and 1995, 45 new trainers joined the cadre. All applicants were practising teachers in schools, and the selection process consisted of a written application and oral interview with panels of Ministry, teachers' associations and British Council representatives, and in 1995 also by trainers recruited in 1993. Criteria included awareness of methodology issues and interpersonal skills. The newly-recruited trainers first attended summer courses in the UK to receive initial input in teacher training skills: these courses were set up as part of the British Council's annual programme of courses and were intended for an international audience of trainers from mixed backgrounds, PRESETT as well as INSETT, and mixed levels of experience. On their return to the Czech Republic, the trainers were required to work as methodology tutors on intensive residential summer courses, thus taking over a role previously always taken by native-speaker teacher trainers. The trainers planned the courses in collaboration with British Council and USIS lecturers, who also gave developmental feedback to the Czech trainers.

After their first summer school experience, the Czech trainers went on to extend their experience and involvement in delivering INSETT in different ways according to their local circumstances. They made contact with local INSETT providers for whom they provided input on year-round courses or set up their own training groups for teachers. Most of the trainers gradually built up a steady flow of part-time training work in this way and most also returned to teach on the summer schools several times (see Chapter 7). By late 1996 a large number of trainers from the British Council trainer training programme had become involved in a nationwide Ministry of Education retraining programme for teachers of the lower levels of basic school, and eight trainers had been recruited by the British Council in cooperation with the Ministry of Education to design and deliver two pilot modules for a Credit Accumulation Transfer Scheme (CATS) for INSETT.

The British Council provided further support to the professional development of the trainers through establishing regional trainer support groups, the first being set up in 1994 and run by British Council INSETT and PRESETT lecturers. These groups met twice a year to work on logistical and methodological issues of teacher training, thus gradually developing networks of regional trainers. During Phases 1 and 2 of the INSETT project, some of the trainers also had opportunities for further professional development either on courses in the UK or through preparatory training and module-writing training for the CATS scheme. Table 1 gives an overview of the training opportunities provided by the British Council in the period 1992 to 1998 and the numbers of participants involved.

Table 1 INSETT trainer training courses 1992–1998 under the INSETT project

Year	No of participants*	Type of course/programme	Place	Target participants
1992	15	An introductory course in trainer training	UK: Cambridge	Representatives of ELT associations in the Czech Republic
1993	16*	Teacher Training for ELT: approaches and techniques	UK: Edinburgh	Selected new trainers
1994	9*	Teacher Training for ELT: approaches and techniques	UK: Edinburgh	Selected new trainers
1994	8*	Teacher Education: training the trainer in ELT	UK: Cardiff	Selected new trainers
1994	1	Trainer Development Course	UK: Canterbury	Selected new ELT trainers
1995	9*	Teacher Training for ELT: approaches and techniques	UK: Edinburgh	Selected new ELT trainers
1995	5	Teaching English to Young Learners	UK: Warwick	Selected trainers already involved in the programme
1995	6*	Communicative Language and Teaching Skills of Teacher Training	UK: Hastings	Selected new ELT teachers
1996	14	CATS Preparatory course	Czech Republic: Brno + Prague	Volunteer trainers already involved in the programme
1998	8	CATS Module writing	Czech Republic: Prague	Selected trainers already involved in the programme

* Number of participants indicates the number of in-service trainers taking part but it does not necessarily indicate the total number of participants.

2.2.2 Phase 2: Consolidation

The period between autumn 1996 and spring 1998 was mostly given over to a review of the current level of INSETT: the level and quality of activity being carried out by the trainer cadre that had so far been developed in the programme. This coincided with the inception of the new structure of British Council ELT posts (see Chapter 3) when the previous INSETT and PRESETT lecturers were replaced by six regionally-based ELT coordinators with responsibility for PRESETT, INSETT and ESP in their region. Principal inputs to INSETT during this period were the development of the Regional Trainer Support Groups, extensive consultation with the trainers on the needs in their particular regions and ongoing support to the INSETT summer schools. One of the coordinators identified trainer training as a priority for his region and allocated part of his devolved budget for locally targeted training towards supporting two potential trainers to attend a 'skills of teacher training' summer school in the UK.

At the end of this period of review and consultation, the ELT coordinators introduced a new INSETT project aimed at addressing the need, which had been identified as a priority, to increase the size of the trainer cadre. A decision by the Ministry of Education to introduce a foreign language to younger children than had previously been the case, that is from year 4 (age 9), led to increased demand for INSETT from teachers who were now required to teach language, but who themselves often had limited language skills and no training in language teaching methodology. The Ministry of Education set up a nationwide project to provide training for these teachers. Not only were most of the British Council-trained trainers now involved in the Ministry's nationwide programme or similar local initiatives, but a large number of experienced teachers who had received no formal training in training skills were also recruited to work on these programmes. Thus there was clearly a potential audience for a further course.

Another need identified as a priority was to provide further training for the existing trainers, i.e. training that would enable them to support some of the new trainers and to develop their training skills in areas such as course design and interpersonal skills.

Owing to the specific nature of the needs identified and the financial advantage involved, the ELT coordinators decided to run tailor-made courses in the Czech Republic, instead of sending smaller numbers of participants to general courses in the UK as had been the case with the first wave of training (summarised in Table 1 above). The coordinators designed a structure for one trainer training summer school that could provide training for new and existing trainers simultaneously. For the newly-recruited trainers, the course objectives were to *'develop participants' awareness and expertise as INSETT trainers through:*

- *reflection on previous experience*
- *direct input*
- *supported preparation of a project based on future activity as INSETT trainers, e.g. preparing summer course sessions'* (Doc 3).

Meanwhile, the objectives of the course for the existing trainers were to enable participants to train and support less experienced trainers and to develop their further autonomy, competence and confidence (Doc 3). These inter-related courses are the Teacher Training (Introductory) and the Teacher Training (Further) activities shown in Table 2 on page 106.

The two courses took place simultaneously in the Czech Republic in July 1998. The courses were delivered by a team of trainers from Pilgrims Language Centre in the UK, who submitted a bid for the trainer training activity. Selection of the participants for the Teacher Training (Introductory) course was carried out by representatives of the ELT coordinator team and of the existing trainer cadre; eight new teacher trainers were identified in this way.

2.2.3 Phase 3: Specialisation and sustainability

From the feedback after the 1998 trainer training courses and the ongoing consultation, the coordinators identified need and interest on the trainers' part in providing two new directions for the ongoing professional development of the cadre. One of these concerned the sustainability of the cadre and their continuing development; the other was focused on developing special areas of expertise to meet specific areas of need and interest shown by INSETT trainees. New projects and activities were thus devised to address these needs in what the coordinators planned as the last phase of the current ELT projects.

The need for specialist input was addressed by the establishment of four new projects which were actually set up independently of the existing INSETT project but which were intended to attract trainers from that project as well as PRESETT participants. The four new projects were concerned with Teaching English in Heterogeneous Classes, Teaching English to Young Learners, British Studies for Secondary Schools and Drama in ELT. The first two were designed for both INSETT and PRESETT trainers together (see Chapter 8), whereas the British Studies for Secondary Schools was intended only for INSETT trainers while the Drama in ELT project was targeted at INSETT and PRESETT trainers as well as non-training teachers.

Support for development of trainers' ICT skills addressed both of the aims in this period: enabling skills for sustainability on one side and specialisation on the other. The ICT for ELT initiative in 2001 involved the development of basic computer skills. The second ICT for ELT project in 2002 was more specialised and aimed to develop ICT training skills for ELT trainers (Griffiths 2002). In total, 26 participants successfully completed one or other of the two courses (Brabbs 2002).

The sustainability of the INSETT cadre was partly addressed by an initiative in developing and managing quality in course design and delivery. This formed the first part of the Phase 3 INSETT project in response to the need for sustainability. Trainers who applied to take part in these courses received intensive training in these skills at two courses in 1999 and 2000 and each year developed bids for financial support from the British Council to run courses. The coordinators assessed the bids according to rigorously applied criteria, and released funding only for course proposals that met them.

During the last year of this sustainability-oriented project there was a series of consultations and other forms of support to trainers from the INSETT projects – as well as ESP and PRESETT – to set up an independent body of teacher educators. AMATE (Associace Metodiku – Association of Teacher Educators) was voted into existence by British Council trained trainers from all three sectors in November 2000. Strategic planning and initial administrative activity by an elected steering committee in developing a constitution and structure for the organisation were facilitated by the British Council under the projects and AMATE officially launched itself as an independent organisation in June 2001. Table 2 shows the professional development inputs for INSETT trainers between 1997 and 2001.

Table 2 INSETT trainer training inputs 1997–2001

Year	No of participants	Type of course/programme	Place	Target participants
1997	2	Becoming a Teacher Trainer	UK: Cambridge	Selected ELT teachers – new
1998	26	Teacher Training (Introductory)*	Czech Republic: Kroměříž	Selected ELT teachers – new
1998	23	Teacher Training (Further)*	Czech Republic: Kroměříž	ELT trainers already involved in the programme
1999	28**	Course on Course Development: Sharing Best Practice	Czech Republic	Selected ELT trainers
1999–2001	11***	Teaching English for Heterogeneous Classes Including Children with Mild Dyslexia Problems Project	Czech Republic	Selected ELT trainers
1999–2001	8***	Teaching Young Learners Project	Czech Republic	Selected ELT trainers
1997–2001	19	British Studies at Secondary Level	Czech Republic	Selected ELT trainers
1999–2001	8	Drama and ELT Project 1999–2001	Czech Republic	Selected ELT trainers
1999–2000	25**	Developing Quality: Sharing and Planning Meeting	Czech Republic	Selected ELT trainers
2001–2002	11	TRANSKELT Project (Transition Skills for ELT)	Czech Republic	Selected ELT trainers
2001–2002	3	Evaluation Project	Czech Republic	Selected ELT trainers

* These courses were run partly simultaneously (with participants sometimes working together) and partly separately.
** Courses linked to the in-service summer schools programme (see Chapter 7).
*** Linked to projects in Teaching English to Young Learners and Heterogeneous Classes which also served members of the PRESETT projects (see Chapter 8).

Today there is an active cadre of 63 in-service teacher trainers trained by the British Council. However, a few members of the cadre of pre-service teacher trainers also occasionally provide in-service training.

3   Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The main aim of the evaluation reported here was to investigate a ten-year training programme for in-service teacher trainers supported by the British Council, and to find out about its impact on English-language teacher training in the Czech Republic. The two main questions to be answered by the research were :

1 Which aspects of the training had an impact on today's trainers?
2 How did the provision of trainer training opportunities change over time?

Some activities took place within the trainer training programme, whilst others were carried out outside the project. This chapter is concerned with both types of activity. The intention is to examine the overall development of in-service trainer training projects since 1991, to look for evidence of further professional development, and to consider the trainers' perceptions of the impact of the training on themselves.

Section 3.2 describes the different types of data which were employed in the survey, whilst section 3.3 identifies the different categories of informants who were contacted.

3.2 Data

The principal forms of data employed in this study are documents, questionnaires and interviews.

Documentary data included official and internal documents provided by the British Council, such as programme frameworks; course objectives; agendas of meetings; correspondence about training; communications with other stakeholders (e.g. the Ministry of Education, pedagogical centres, etc.); organisers', trainer-trainers' and participants' information sheets, profiles, reports, feedback, questionnaires and interviews; and official websites.

The trainers completed a questionnaire and six of them were also interviewed and the interviews were recorded. Three slightly different but compatible versions of the questionnaire were used (see the Appendix). A questionnaire was also distributed to a random sample of teachers who had attended seminars run by the British Council-trained trainers and to some pedagogical centres, so as to produce a more rounded picture. To encourage respondents to answer as frankly as possible, they were not asked to sign the questionnaires. A random sample of teachers was interviewed. The British Council National ELT Projects Coordinator also provided an interview which was recorded. All the recorded interviews were transcribed.

A further set of documentary data consisted of publications, conference participation details and the membership lists of professional associations. The purpose here was to gain evidence of the scope of trainers' professional activity.

3.3 Informants

The principal informants in the study were teacher trainers, the British Council's National ELT Projects Coordinator, the staff of training centres and trainees. These are discussed separately below.

3.3.1 Teacher trainers

Altogether, there are 63 members of the cadre of British Council trainers in the Czech Republic; this number includes myself. Preliminary information about the evaluation study was sent to all these trainers. The majority of them work as teachers at primary and secondary schools or language schools. Any training they provide is usually on an irregular basis.

The addressees were invited to reply if they did not wish to receive the questionnaire. Five of them responded that they could not provide answers, mainly due to health reasons, and were therefore not sent questionnaires. The questionnaire was therefore sent to 57 potential respondents. Reminders were sent three days before the deadline and eventually 47 completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 82% of the maximum number of potential respondents (i.e. 57) or 75% of the total cadre of 63. Six teacher trainers were interviewed by phone and the interviews were recorded. These teacher trainers were chosen at random and as such may be considered to constitute a representative sample.

3.3.2 British Council National ELT Projects Coordinator

Malcolm Griffiths has worked as an ELT project coordinator in the Czech Republic since 1991 (having previously worked as a teacher trainer here from 1989). Since 1995, he has coordinated projects, including the INSETT Project, as National ELT Coordinator. He was interviewed as a source of information about in-service training over the past decade and his views on it.

3.3.3 Pedagogical centres

The pedagogical centres, or training centres, are institutions founded by the MŠMT (Ministry of Education) to provide further education for educators at kindergartens, primary, lower and upper secondary schools, special schools and other educational institutions. Data was collected from the staff of these centres through questionnaires and interviews. Documents issued by the pedagogical centres – such as catalogues of seminars and other activities on offer – were also examined.

3.3.4 Trainees

Another type of data used was the perceptions of teachers regarding the in-service training which they experienced. Randomly selected pedagogical centres were asked to distribute questionnaires to the teachers and head teachers who were currently attending further education courses in the centres. Participants were asked to respond to the questionnaire immediately, on the day that they participated in the programme. One hundred teachers were contacted in this way.

3.3.5 Coding references in the text

Each completed questionnaire received from the trainers' cadre was given the abbreviation *T* or *TT* (depending on the version of the questionnaire) and a unique reference number.

Similarly, evidence from interviews with trainers is referred to as *I* plus a number (1–6). *I7* denotes the interview with the British Council national coordinator. *Ap* plus a number signifies evidence gained from the responses given by trainers in the application forms which they had to complete when applying for admission to a British Council trainer training course. *Doc* plus a number and/or a letter indicates documents provided by the British Council and other institutions.

4   Findings and discussion

This is the central section of the chapter and it presents findings which fall into three main groups: the first concerns the impact of the INSETT projects on the trainers who took part in them; the second looks at the impact of the project on provision of INSETT for ELT training in the Czech Republic; and the third considers issues of sustainability.

4.1 Impact of training on trainers' professional development

We will explore the impact which training, as described in section 2.2, had on trainers by considering the following issues: the factors influencing teachers' decisions to apply to join the trainer training project; their subsequent commitment to the project; the development of their training skills; development of language skills; development of self-esteem and confidence; and sharing best practice.

4.1.1 Decisions to apply to join the project

Both in their original applications to join the projects and the questionnaires answered as part of this research, INSETT trainers gave reasons for wanting to join the project and to receive trainer training.

Some saw it as a new opportunity for professional development as such. In the early 1990s in particular, attending a British Council in-service training programme was a rare chance for applicants to obtain formal in-service training of any kind, as there were not at that time many opportunities for further ELT development. One of the trainers wrote in her application form, *'This will be the first opportunity I have been offered [formal training] ...'* (Ap40), a sentiment shared by other trainers. Some wanted to obtain a qualification, such as the applicant for the 1998 course who said: *'Chtěla jsem si zvýšit kvalifikaci' (I wanted to be better qualified)* (TT5).

For other teachers it was the challenge which attracted them:

T9: *I just tried because I wanted to improve my teaching skills.*

TT3: *It was an excellent opportunity to start something new, which I really appreciated.*

Trainers often stated that they wanted to develop their training skills:

Ap3: *I am particularly keen to develop my training skills as I would like to work as a trainer even further.*

Ap24: *... I feel I need to extend my theoretical and especially practical knowledge of methods in order to be able to pass them on.*

A majority of them expressed their strong feelings about the need to develop professionally:

TT14: *I was training re-qualifying teachers after the revolution and I felt I was not prepared for their questions.*

TT24: *I wanted to improve my teaching methods.*

In particular, many trainers also mentioned a desire for new ideas:

Ap12: *I feel that I need some new ideas not only for the people I teach but also for myself.*

The sharing of experience with lecturers and colleagues was also mentioned:

Ap31: *I would like to take part in this programme to develop my awareness of issues of content and methodology in teacher training. I also highly appreciate the possibility to share experiences and insight with tutors and colleagues and develop professionally.*

Ap16: *… I would like to concentrate on developing new approaches in this field and share new ideas with other people.*

4.1.2 Commitment to working as an INSETT trainer

The teacher trainers claimed to be committed to the trainer training in which they participated and said that they wanted to help their trainee teacher colleagues, students and other colleagues:

Ap32: *I would like to acquire better qualification to work as a teacher trainer, especially as a methodology trainer. In our region there are not enough English teachers. I would like to help the unqualified teachers to improve their language and methodology skills.*

Ap36: *… and [I] try to help our colleagues and current and future students to bridge the gap between the cities and us in the country.*

They were fully aware that there would be hard work involved, but this did not discourage them from applying:

Ap23: *I realise the programme will be demanding but it is a wonderful opportunity.*

They also felt responsible to others:

Ap27: *As I expect the trainees I teach to learn and improve the language and methodology skills, they presumably expect the same from me. Therefore I would like to take part in the programme to refresh my knowledge of methodology and, of course, to learn some new ideas and techniques of teaching English. In other words I would like to become a better teacher trainer.*

Ap26: *I would like to develop in teacher training as I have devoted myself to teaching children and sharing teaching with other teachers.*

This commitment to the profession is exemplified by their continued involvement in teaching and training at a time when many language teachers have left the profession, and the role of these courses in this cannot be underestimated: *'… without them the level of teaching English would be much lower than it is now. Thanks to the support and generosity of the British Council, we could prepare a lot of unqualified teachers of primary schools for teaching English'* (TT8).

4.1.3 Development of training skills

Some of the respondents who took part in the earlier trainer training courses, such as this participant of the Edinburgh course in 1993, appeared to see the initial benefits of trainer training in somewhat general terms:

'Od 1993 se všechno se změnilo. Byli jsme první, kteří měli výuku na fakultě. Nadšeně jsme poslouchali rodilé mluvčí a bylo nám jedno, co říká, bylo to pro nás něco extra. Měli jsme radost, že si můžeme vychutnat řeč.' (Everything has changed. We were the first ones who studied at the faculty. We enthusiastically listened to native speakers no matter what they were saying. We always felt it as something special. We were happy to enjoy the language.) (I4).

Other reactions to the first experience of participating in training are typified by the following:

TT1: *The first course of mine was held in Britain and was mostly focused on theory, the last one (British Studies) was more practical for me.*

T6: *Everything was new to me.*

T4: *I was happy to get help from experts.*

TT14: *The first course was a great adventure for me. I was very happy to be there with X who helped me a lot with solving problems.*

With more experience, the trainers more frequently tend to see the benefits in terms of developing specifically as trainers. They were able to evaluate the process, and were in a position not only to appreciate the training but also to look at it more critically. For example one participant of the 1998 programme said: *'After some training I tend to observe trainers more as a "professional", not just as a participant. So I realise the good points of the training more than before.'* (TT12).

Several trainers report that after receiving training they were encouraged to experiment, introducing newly-learned ideas into their training, or to try new forms of cooperation with their colleagues. Most of them say they implemented this successfully, though some of them were unable to do so, and they often blamed themselves for this failure, for example participants having different expectations from the training. Successfully implemented ideas usually met the needs of the trainees. The training enabled trainers to put their knowledge to the most appropriate use depending on the trainees' needs. One of the respondents quoted one of her participants, who praised her after the seminar by saying *'I felt as if I was in my mum's belly!'* (TT21).

Apart from the initial trainer training, the further professional development offered through the project seems to have been well received by many participants. This can be seen for example in the participants' feedback comments on the CATS pre-training course (see Section 2.2.1):

Doc 4/CAT-11: *The course encouraged me to go on working on myself, making use of reflection.*

Doc 4/CAT–9: *March HW [homework] made me to do a research in one of my classes.*

Further examples of positive feedback on later courses can be illustrated by these extracts:

TT3: *The first time people were very uncertain, stressed. The last time it was a body of professionals.*

TT13: *The very first courses were focused on methodology, Hastings 95 was more demanding, theoretical, I started to learn how reflection on my own work is important and the angle I watch education from was much wider and I realised that there are more items which affect education not only methodology. The most recent courses were about specific problems and items and showed me how I can be an organiser, a creator, not only a common teacher.*

The effect and relevance of the training has also been recognised by other parties. The experts responsible for training the second cadre of teacher trainers note in their report after delivering the training:

'*It is very clear that the training of the British Council in the Czech Republic has been invaluable, effective and relevant. We were both impressed by the quality, energy, awareness and attitudes of the participants. They themselves told us how much the British Council had helped them to develop.*' (Doc 5)

Trainers also frequently commented on the hard-working but friendly and encouraging atmosphere they experienced during the training, and often stressed its importance.

4.1.4 Development of language skills

The trainers also felt that improving their own English language was an essential part of the training. This perception was expressed both prior to joining the project, as in these two examples:

Ap41: *It's a great opportunity for me to develop my training skills and abilities as well as my language skills.*

Ap48: *Since I teach only English I have trainee teachers regularly. I would like to improve my English to advise them better* and retrospectively in questionnaire responses:

TT1: *I wanted to improve my English.*

TT5: *… I also wanted to increase my understanding of spoken English and to develop my oral communication skills.*

Contact with native speakers was frequently mentioned by the trainers, who appreciated the chance to benefit from the language input, to communicate in the target language, and the interaction with the people themselves:

TT13: *… and a chance to meet native qualified teacher-trainers – nice people.*

T7: *Desire to learn more about these problems and the wish to be in contact with the native speakers.*

The English-speaking environment was also appreciated by those trainers who received training in the UK:

TT14: *The course in Hastings was a very good chance to learn something and to be in a nice place.*

One of the respondents commented on the opportunity for regular cooperation with native speakers and claimed that this led to greater confidence:

TT35: *English should be the language to use during training. I could use English more and in a more confident way. … This point [i.e. cooperation with native speakers] has been the most important for me as it was the only way to get in touch with native speakers.*

4.1.5 Development of self-esteem and confidence

Most trainers mentioned confidence in their responses, and this is vital to fulfilling the aim of the British Council training of fostering sustainability and preparing trainers as experts who will not need to rely on British Council guidance in future. Greater confidence, together with trainers' professional skills, enables them to be aware of their qualities and to put them into practice, as stated by one of the respondents:

TT14-9: *I would not dare do a training session before that [before having been trained by the BC].*

Some participants mentioned their increased confidence:

TT21: *We [trainers] developed from nearly no confidence to relatively confident person and trainer, researcher, etc.*

One of the trainers wrote:

'*Those who participated at the courses have experienced a high level training, become more confident as teachers and speakers of English as well I'd say that thanks to it, we have become what is called "island of positive deviation". If we teach other*

subjects, we can often improve our teaching methods there (I've tried some ideas in Marketing, for example)' (TT15). This trainer also stresses *'... and I am more confident'.*

There are many similar instances of trainers reporting increased self-confidence. This teacher is describing an attempt to implement a new idea:

TT15: *I know that I've been very careful when planning the structure of my presentation and I've found it very important to use techniques to create a very friendly relaxed atmosphere since the training. And I am more confident as far as these are concerned.*

Further cases include the following:

TT11: *Czech teachers have become more confident, are flexible and are ready to implement the latest methods in their lessons.*

TT6: *My professional confidence has increased. I have acquired related skills such as teacher training, conference presentations, writing articles, classroom (language) research. I am more aware not only of my strengths but also of my weaknesses and I can identify my professional needs.*

TT14: *I think that thanks to these courses there are quite a lot of teachers with better knowledge of English and also with self-confidence.*

4.1.6 Sharing best practice

As we saw in Section 4.1.1, the opportunity to share experience with other professionals was an important factor in the decision to apply to join the project. All the trainers responded that they share information and experience, some of them through talking to colleagues, or with trainees while running seminars. For example:

TT1: *[I shared my experience from the training course] with my students, INSETT teachers and colleagues.*

TT11: *I used many materials when contributing at seminars and conferences.*

Only a few gave any indication that they share information in more formal ways, such as at teachers' meetings, through writing articles and in conference presentations. A survey of a random selection of conference programmes, for example, shows that few in-service teachers present their ideas at conferences. From Chapter 10 in this volume, we learn that only four British Council trained trainers have ever published an article in the journal *Perspectives*. Finally, only eight respondents made reference to giving conference presentations and only two of them mentioned sharing ideas through writing.

There is evidence that teamwork has been encouraged during the training, and teachers have appreciated this opportunity to work together and share ideas. Further support was also provided by means of twice-yearly regional trainers' support groups, which were a real platform for discussion and exchange of ideas. The majority of trainers participated regularly in these meetings and appreciated them a great deal, as this sample answer from an interview with one of the trainers shows. The interviewee is commenting on the Regional Trainers' Support Group (RTSG) :

I3: *What were the RTSG like? Excellent. I participated in all meetings and only missed one. I was in touch with other people and received a great deal of information there. It was a great help.*

4.2 Provision of INSETT

As described in Section 2.2, trainers had several opportunities and requests to provide in-service training to meet various demands from teachers of English whose numbers rapidly increased throughout the 1990s. That the INSETT trainer training programme was having an impact and meeting a real need seems to be supported by the fact that almost all those recruited for the second phase of trainer training in 1998 were already active as trainers to some extent. This was quite a contrast to the situation in 1993 when those trainers recruited in the first phase generally had had no opportunity to gain experience at the time of their selection.

The contribution to INSETT made by one component of the INSETT project, the summer schools, is discussed in some detail in Chapter 7. Between 250 and 350 teachers per year received intensive training in methodology and language development this way, delivered by participants of the British Council INSETT trainer training programme.

In addition, most trainers who took part in the project gradually became active in delivering INSETT at various other stages in the academic year, mostly in cooperation with local INSETT providers. For example, a survey of trainer activity in spring 2000 showed that 33 out of 51 people who responded to the survey were actively involved in delivering INSETT year-round. Their activities ranged from one-off sessions to 19 people who were employed by their local pedagogical centre or other education authorities to give regular weekly sessions (Doc 6).

Information on seminars and courses offered by pedagogical centres in this country shows that the British Council trained trainers deliver training for teachers through these institutions. The INSETT coordinators working for pedagogical centres

responded that they cooperate with the British Council trainers and that the quality of the training delivered by this group of trainers is always high (Doc 7).

4.3 Sustainability of teacher education work

In this section, we examine the sustainability of teacher education work in three ways: by looking at the way in which responsibility has been handed on to Czech trainers, by considering formal recognition of training, and finally by looking at recent developments.

4.3.1 Transfer of responsibility

In parallel with the three phases of the INSETT project as described in Sections 2.2.1–2.2.3 respectively, the process of handing over responsibility for providing INSETT can also be divided into three phases. In the first, British Council staff took responsibility both for the training of the Czech trainers and for ensuring the conditions for them to work as trainers, for example by liaison with official INSETT providers to organise summer schools. In the second phase, British Council staff ensured pedagogical support and professional development, advice, consultation, observation and feedback for the trainers, whilst often encouraging the trainers to do these things alongside them at the same time. However, it was the trainers themselves who took responsibility for all other aspects, ensuring administration, liaison with organisers, design of courses and recruitment of staff to courses. In phase 3, the British Council ELT coordinators pulled back even further, wherever possible reducing their role to one of monitoring activities, and advising on criteria for activities to be organised entirely by trainers. These included trainer support events, such as the RTSGs, and INSETT provision events, such as summer schools. Professional development input at this stage concentrated on enabling skills including course design, ensuring quality in course management and ICT.

Many informants' responses support the claims made by informant I7, the National ELT Coordinator, that by 1999 the British Council was supporting trainers primarily in ways to enable them to become independent. By this point, the informants were willing to take initiatives themselves, as for example in the criteria-based course development programme (see Chapter 7):

I7: *I think we [the British Council] gave the message, sensitively, that we can only have you trainers still on board if you are showing that you are still here to develop, and not only to come and, let's say, tick over, have refreshment courses, meet your friends. This is partly about money, it's about sustainability, and priorities, and our priority had to be with people who were showing that they were willing to work hard to develop.*

Not all the trainers met these requirements, and the British Council representative was able to appreciate this:

I7: *... not everybody had the same personal circumstances, the confidence to be able to do that. We didn't lose a lot of people but I think that some people at that stage felt, 'well, I've been doing it for five years, and I've enjoyed it, but ...' OK, so one or two people we didn't see very often again, but they came back the next year, a lot of them ...*

The National ELT Coordinator explains how trainers' skills obtained in the courses were put into practice and developed further through two rigorous rounds of bidding for funding to run summer courses. This process was aimed at encouraging autonomy:

I7: *... many bids the first year were rejected [...] twice before they were accepted. But – part of our training, and a very important part of it – was [...] very, very detailed feedback ...*

The gradual transfer of responsibility which the British Council introduced was recognised by the trainers. The following comment is typical:

TT25: *The most important difference was that responsibility for arranging new events and their content were gradually transferred from BC trainer trainers to Czech trainers.*

4.3.2 Formal recognition

An important issue which may have negative impact on the long-term sustainability of the INSETT expertise developed since 1993 is that of formal recognition of training.

As was seen earlier, demand for and appreciation of the services of British Council-trained trainers is considerable. However, the skills and expertise of trainers trained within the British Council programme since 1993 are not formally recognised in the Czech Republic through qualifications or the granting of the professional status of 'In-service Teacher Trainer'. One major consequence of this is that although the in-service trainers can be paid for their services, they are not entitled to a reduction in their regular teaching workload. In effect, therefore, they work as trainers in their spare time. This, of course, limits the amount of time available for them to deliver training and it frequently leads to overwork, tiredness and possibly also professional 'burnout'.

The only exception to this so far has been in the case of eight trainers who delivered the pilot modules for the Credit Accumulation Transfer Scheme (see Section 2.2.1). In this case, the Ministry of Education is said to have issued a letter to the head teachers of the schools where the trainers were teaching. This letter is supposed to have requested only that the teachers should be given the opportunity to concentrate all of their teaching into four days, rather than the normal five; there was no suggestion that teachers should be given a reduction in teaching load.

I have not been able to see a copy of this letter. However, letters dated 14th and 21st January 1998 from the MŠMT, on the topic of *'Uznání statutu teacher trainer'* (Recognition of teacher trainers), are available (Doc 8). These documents indicate that even a trainer who has been through British Council trainer training cannot be recognised as a teacher trainer until they have completed a specialised course on preparing modules for further education *('Podmínka absolvování specializovaného kurzu pro přípravu modulů'*, Doc 8) and, moreover, until they have satisfied at least six out of a total of nine other professional requirements. Even then, recognition is limited to this specific CAT course, as the letters make clear:

'Výše uvedený statut (metodik-školitel) dává absolventu právo vykonávat lektorskou činnost v modulárním projektu CAT v oboru Anglický jazyk.' (The above-mentioned status [of the teacher trainer] gives the graduate the right to provide training in the modular CAT project CAT in the English Language specialisation.)

Thus this recognition was granted only for CAT modular courses. It did not apply for any other courses or other forms of training. Questionnaire respondents feel the importance of achieving formal recognition. Many fear that their knowledge and qualifications will not be taken into account when promotion is being considered:

I8: *Když nám neuznají kvalifikaci, nebude se nám ani počítat do kariérního růstu … (Without recognition of our training it will not be considered for example for professional development.)*

I13: *… oficiální uznání kvalifikace získané školeními BC by bylo velice užitečné – pro jednání s úředníky na pedagogických centrech. (… official recognition of our qualifications gained through the BC training would be very useful – for negotiations with officials at pedagogical centres)*

I9: *Bez uznání naší kvalifikace nás ministerstvo nebude podporovat ani jako 'trainers' ani nám nepřispěje na další vzdělávání. (Without recognition we will not get any support from the ministry to work as teacher trainers neither to develop our expertise further.)*

Respondent I15 describes how this problem has directly affected him/her:

'… (např. akreditačni komise) se ale o tento druh vzdělání nezajímá, takže jsem na svém postu (tj. na univerzitě) stále málo kvalifikována.' (… (for example the accreditation board) does not consider this type of education which means that I am still underqualified for my position (e.g. at university).)

4.3.3 Recent developments

The establishment of a formal network of teacher educators which coincided with the end of the INSETT projects is an important and positive factor in ensuring the long-term sustainability of INSETT expertise. As part of the INSETT projects, particularly during phase 3, the British Council aimed to encourage the formation of sustainable networks that can exist independently of British Council support. Thus, as the Council undertook its planned withdrawal of direct provision of human and material resources (see Chapter 3), they hoped not to leave a void.

At a general meeting in November 2000, *'partners from all the BC ELT projects (INSETT, PRESETT and ESP) clearly indicated that they wanted to continue to network, cooperate and develop and decided that this could best be done by forming an independent professional body of ELT teacher educators'* (Mace 2001). They voted to form such an independent professional body and elected a steering committee which in June 2001 launched the new organisation called AMATE (Associace Metodiku/Association of Teacher Educators). AMATE's stated aims are as follows:

1 To create conditions for further professional and personal development of its members and to support cooperation between them
2 To contribute to the establishing of a system of life-long education of teachers and ensuring quality of both pre-service and in-service courses
3 To provide professional expertise to the Ministry of Education pedagogical centres, and other educational institutions
4 To establish links and develop cooperation with educational organisations nationally and internationally.

During its first year of operation, AMATE called a general networking meeting and one specific meeting devoted to the topic of school leaving examinations; submitted and had accepted by the Ministry of Education a proposal to establish national INSETT frameworks for ELT; established an internet website; and ran a number of small-scale courses and seminars at the regional level.

AMATE received some professional support through the one-year TRANSKELT project (2001–2002), which provided trainers with training in management-oriented skills, and particularly in areas relevant to sustaining networks such as fund-raising, communication and team-building.

Thus the process of handing over *'complete responsibility for the identification, design, implementation and management of educational projects'* (Mace 2001) can be said to have taken at least one step forward.

To summarise, our analysis looked firstly at the impact of trainer training on the trainers' professional development, then at the ways in which the provision of INSETT has itself developed, and finally at the future sustainability of teacher education work. The first of these issues – professional development – was considered from six perspectives: the decisions which led to trainers applying for training opportunities in the first place, their commitment to working as trainers, the development of their training skills, the development of their language skills, changes in their self-esteem and confidence, and their patterns of sharing ideas and materials with others. Sustainability, meanwhile, was examined through the way in which responsibility has been transferred to Czech trainers, through issues relating to the formal recognition (or absence of recognition) of training, and lastly through a look at some recent developments.

5   Implications and conclusion

The evaluation data suggests that the British Council supported training programme has had a remarkable effect on in-service teacher trainers over the course of the last ten years. Fulfilment of the objectives of the British Council programme seems to be confirmed by the majority of individuals, who appreciate the opportunity they have been given of joining a cadre of trained professionals. They accepted and fulfilled the demanding requirements of the training, and valued the tutors' high standard of expertise and the content of the programme.

They expressed almost a sense of awe at the nature of the task in which they were involved, combined with excitement at being exposed to new ideas and the chance to acquire new knowledge and skills. At the same time, however, trainers' excitement has been tempered by concerns about their formal recognition and to some extent by worries about the sustainability of further activities of the trainers' cadre and their training.

Through the training, they feel not only that they have developed professionally, being able to use their knowledge and skills in their own teaching and training, but also that they are able to work better in teams and within networks. As members of a team, they feel able to share with and learn from others. Now they all generally have the confidence – born of increased self-esteem and awareness of their own professionalism – to share ideas with their colleagues, other educators and the public. The wide dissemination of trainers' expertise through their own teaching and training has been an important development in English language teaching in the Czech Republic.

The quality of the British Council's training has also been recognised by pedagogical centres who use the trainers' skills and knowledge for the courses and seminars which they provide at their premises, and by the teachers who participate in the training provided by these trainers. Trainers' increased ability to teach and train other teachers to international standards has led to the creation of a recognised Czech trainers' cadre which is available for use by the Ministry of Education, the pedagogical centres and others.

Trainers' concerns centre around the sustainability of the training process. Some positive developments seem already to have taken place. The professional body AMATE, founded with British Council support, started its work in autumn 2001 and is expected to make an important contribution to sustainability. Further negotiations and the search for ways of collaborating with the Czech Ministry of Education, other educational institutions and other bodies would appear to be essential to allow this process to continue.

There is now a cadre of highly qualified and highly motivated English language trainers. Both directly and indirectly, the projects have contributed to the process of educational reform in the Czech Republic, providing theoretical and practical needs-related training. As a result of these projects, trainers have benefited from characteristics such as improved teacher training, the tailoring of in-service training to needs, and post-training skills maintenance.

All of this corresponds to the educational policy in this country as set out in the White Papers on Education in the Czech

Republic (English synopsis of the White Paper http://www.msmt.cz/cp1250/info/sql/web/informace.asp?kods='12', 19. 4. 2001, and *Bílá kniha – Národní program rozvoje vzdělávání v České republice – 4. verze* (The White Paper), www.msmt.cz/cp1250/web/12/WhiteBook.doc, 23.9.2002). The changing role of educators should be supported by, among other things, improving the quality of their education, including in-service training, life-long learning, to increase their motivation, and by creating conditions for a career structure for educators. The broad expertise of the trainers' cadre, used to build up an efficient system of further education, could save a great deal of investment in training new trainers in the future. Unlike a number of other English language teachers who have left the system already or newly-qualified teachers who do not start teaching at all, or who soon leave the school system, these trainers have remained working within the education system for years. In common with everyone, however, their professional development is a life-long process, and would benefit from being continuous. The British Council remains in contact with the Czech educational authorities. The trainers also show willingness to share, to network with others in the field, and to disseminate their knowledge and skills further. The opportunity exists for the benefits of their expertise and experience to be an integral part of our educational system.

Before concluding, we also need to consider some lessons which can be learnt from the experience of the INSETT programme.

1 As noted in Section 4.3.2, the question of official recognition of the training provided by the British Council for INSETT trainers remains unresolved. In itself, this need not affect the INSETT training directly. However, our interview evidence indicates that the lack of recognition has a negative impact on the attitude towards their work of the trainers, and there must therefore be a risk that in the long run this may impinge on the sustainability of INSETT provision. If there is a lesson here, then, it seems to be that training projects cannot lightly dismiss the question of the compatibility of new training formats with existing indigenous qualification structures.

2 The undoubted successes of the INSETT programme also need to be explained. What was it about the programme which contributed to its success and which might be transferred to other contexts? We can probably point to three characteristics in particular.

The first is the important role played by the networks of trainers, regionally and nationally; these have clearly been extremely important. At the same time, the summer schools also did a lot to build and maintain the networks (see Chapter 7), and so there is a reciprocal relationship here between INSETT activity, the formation of collaborative networks, and back again to INSETT activity.

Secondly, another significant feature was the adoption of an experiential and gradually developmental approach rather than one based on a long-term master plan. In other words, INSETT activity developed in response to the changing characteristics of the situation and in response to needs as they became apparent.

A third influential characteristic was the fact that – at least in the second phase – the training offered for trainers was tailor-made and delivered in-country rather than standardised and pre-packaged.

These three features of the Czech INSETT programme go a long way to explaining its success.

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Appendix

Questionnaire for teacher educators

Dear Colleague

Would you mind spending a few minutes of your valuable time completing this questionnaire with details of your experience? The questions concern the British Council's involvement in teacher education for ELT in the Czech Republic. Your answers will help to contribute to an evaluation of the British Council's role which is taking place at the moment.

You may write your answers in English or in Czech, as you wish. Your response will be treated in confidence.

Please return the questionnaire to me as an email attachment preferably by 18 February 2002. My email address is: icvkh@tiscali.cz, or you can send it by post: J. Jílková, Ostasova 524, 284 01 Kutná Hora

Many thanks for your help.

Jana Jílková

1 Your experience of participating in British Council trainer training courses

(Edinburgh 1993, 1994, 1995, Cardiff 1994, Hastings 1995, Cambridge 1997, Kroměříž 'new trainers' 1998, Kroměříž 'old trainers' 1998, Course development course in Suchdol 1999, Course development course in Unhost 2000, CATS preliminary course 1996, CATS module writers course 1996.)

1 a) Which British Council training course did you attend **for the first time**? _____ (course and year)

1 b) So far, how many British Council training courses have you attended (including the first one)? _____ (total number)

2 Your reasons for participating in British Council training courses

2 a) Why did you decide to participate in a British Council training course **for the first time**?

2 b) Why did you decide to participate in later British Council training courses? (Answer question 2b only if you have had experience of participating in more than one such course.)

2 c) Which courses were the most memorable? Why?

3 Changes over time

(Answer questions 3a and 3b only if you have had experience of participating in more than one British Council training course.)

3 a) Did you notice any difference between the first course and the most recent course which you attended?
Yes / No

3 b) Please list the differences which you noticed between the first course and the most recent course which you attended.
(Answer question 3b only if you answered 'Yes' to question 3a.)

4 Effect of the course(s)

4 a) Have you ever tried to implement an idea that you learned from a British Council training course and then discovered that it was **not** successful? Yes / No

4 b) Please describe **one** experience when you tried to implement an idea that you discovered was **not** successful.
(Answer question 4b only if you answered 'Yes' to question 4a.)

4 c) Have you ever tried to implement an idea that you learned from a British Council training course and discovered that it **was** successful?
Yes / No

4 d) Please describe **one** experience when you tried to implement an idea that you discovered **was** successful.
(Answer question 4d only if you answered 'Yes' to question 4c.)

4 e) In your opinion, have the courses had any influence on your training practice?
Please, list those that apply to you a) to h) and add as many others as are relevant.

a) using English for training purposes
b) your confidence in delivering training
c) structure of your training (e. g. training which you design for your trainees)
d) methods of dissemination of your expertise
e) formal study programmes
f) regular cooperation with native speakers
g) growing needs to consult sources in English because of the development in the field
h) other:
Please comment on each of the above points.

4 f) Have you ever gone back to (i.e. reused) materials from trainer training courses?
Yes / No   Please specify:

4 g) What sessions were most beneficial to you? Please give details:

5 Sharing with others
5 a) Have you ever shared your experiences from a British Council training course with other people?
Yes / No

5 b) If you answered 'Yes' to question 5a, **with whom** did you share your experiences?

5 c) If you answered 'Yes' to question 5a, **how** did you share your experiences with others?

5 d) Have you seen any evidence of any benefit of the BC training courses to the Czech educational system?
Yes / No   Please specify:

6 Modifications
Please suggest any modifications which you would make if you were organising the training courses.

7 Are you at present
a) an INSETT trainer   b) a PRESETT trainer   c) an ESP trainer   (d) other ....?

8 What kind of institution do you currently teach/train in?

9 Any other comments

Please give any other comments you have about the British Council training courses for ELT, Regional Support Groups, etc.

Many thanks for your help with this questionnaire. Now please return it by post or as an email attachment to icvkh@tiscali.cz, J. Jílková, Ostasova 524, 284 01 Kutná Hora.

CHAPTER 7

Summer schools for teachers

Ludmila Havriljuková

This chapter focuses on British Council support given to summer schools for teachers of English in the Czech Republic. In 1993 the British Council linked an existing programme of summer schools to its new INSETT (In-service Education and Teacher Training) programme. This gave the opportunity for professional and personal development not only to teachers of English, but also to their trainers. The sustainability of this innovation can be seen from the fact that 'post-British Council' summer schools now run independently. An account of this successful experience might be interesting not only for the stakeholders who contributed to or participated in the summer schools but also for potential stakeholders or teacher trainers in other contexts who are thinking about organising summer schools of this type.

1   Introduction

The aim of this study is to find out what the perceptions of three groups of stakeholders of in-service summer schools were. The British Council summer schools went through a number of different stages in their development. These stages are discussed in Section 2. Section 3 explains how the perceptions of stakeholders were measured. In Section 4, we look in detail at the issues that emerged from the responses of the stakeholders. These include perceptions of the summer schools, expectations before the first and most recent summer schools, perceived benefits of the summer schools, and dissemination after the summer schools. The chapter ends with an examination of implications in Section 5 and the conclusions in Section 6.

2   Context: the summer schools and their development

Before 1989, Russian language was a compulsory subject in all Czech schools. Owing to the change in the political situation after the 'Velvet Revolution' in 1989, there was suddenly a hugely increased demand for English and other foreign languages to be taught instead of Russian. Many former teachers of Russian or other subjects after only a short period of preparation started teaching English language at basic schools. The teachers who were required to teach the large new target group of pupils often lacked both the language and the methodology skills required. Hence, at the beginning of the 1990s, there was a considerable need for in-service teacher training and a need for trainers to carry it out. (For a more detailed description of the background see Chapters 4 and 6 in the present volume.)

The summer schools which form the subject of this study were part of a British Council initiative which aimed to address these two needs: on the one hand they offered intensive training in methodology and language for teachers and on the other, for trainers, they provided practical experience in delivering training. This study deals with summer schools from 1993 but in fact the schools had a much longer history. In pre-1989 Czechoslovakia (as it then was) they existed under bi-lateral cultural agreements which the Czechoslovak government had with Britain and the USA. They provided one of the few opportunities for Czech and Slovak teachers to have access to up-to-date language teaching methodology and materials. For well over a decade, up to 200 teachers a year attended the courses, which were taught entirely by British and US tutors (recruited by the British Council and the United States Information Service), administration being covered by the Czech and Slovak Ministries of Education.

This study focuses on the summer schools after 1993: the point when the link between the existing programme (that for teachers) and the British Council INSETT trainer training project was created. By agreement with the Czech Ministry of Education, Czech trainers began to teach the methodology components on the schools rather than the UK and US-appointed native speaker lecturers as had previously been the case. (An equivalent programme began in Slovakia at the same time.) In each of the first three years from 1993, a new group of trainers was selected and given training. They attended courses in training skills in the UK during the first part of their summer vacation and then, towards the end of the vacation, they were required to work as trainers at summer schools in the Czech Republic. They were supported by teams of British Council and US-appointed trainers who, in addition to teaching the language component, gave feedback to the Czech trainers on the planning and delivery of the methodology component. After this initial training and experience, the trainers had further opportunities to consolidate their experience by working in summer schools in subsequent years. Thus, the number of trained and experienced trainers on the programme gradually increased from 16 in 1993 to 43 in 1995. (Chapter 6 gives further background about the trainers and about the INSETT project itself.)

In line with the INSETT trainer training project, the roles of the Czech trainers and their level of responsibility gradually developed over the years: while that of the British Council and USIS-appointed lecturers became less prominent. By 1996 the Czech trainers were taking full responsibility for setting up, designing and directing the summer courses themselves, including such aspects as liaising over organisation with the administrators as well as timetabling and course evaluation: all previously undertaken by British Council staff. Native speaker resource staff mostly continued to teach the components of language improvement and cultural background throughout. However, from now on (1996) they were no longer recruited by secondment of British Council and USIS lecturers but through local contacts. These teachers came from various backgrounds, were often already working in the Czech Republic and sometimes had little formal training. They were temporarily engaged just for the duration of the schools. Some of them contributed to just one summer school, but others were invited back year after year.

It may be helpful to provide a few statistics to give the reader an idea of the scale of the programme. In 1995, there were four summer schools on this model, offering tuition for a total of 249 participants. Forty-three Czech trainers from the British Council project taught methodology components along with 14 native English-speaking teachers. The fully residential schools lasted for between seven and ten days, each day consisting of at least nine 45-minute sessions, including self-access time. The trainers generally worked in pairs in order to boost professional development and support and each pair taught ten 90-minute sessions during a typical school. In 1998, the British Council provided support to eight summer schools of this model, a reflection of the fact that the administrative partners were now entirely local and regional educational authorities rather than national level. This led to individual schools on a smaller scale although the total number of trainers involved was on a similar scale: 38 Czech INSETT trainers were engaged as tutors, there were 17 native speakers and the number of participants, 249, was much greater. By this time there was considerably more diversity between the different schools, reflected in the background of participants, a tendency to provide a more specialised focus, e.g. teaching young learners; integrated skills; creativity in language teaching.

Another significant difference between the summer schools before and after 1993 was the background of the participants. Previously they had all been teachers who were fully qualified to teach English and thus the summer schools functioned as refresher courses. Apart from a few exceptions not covered in this study (since they came under other BC projects), the post-1993 schools – that is all those on which the Czech INSETT trainers worked – were exclusively intended for the many teachers who were not specially qualified for English yet who were now teaching the subject because of the new demand. Their level of language competency and awareness of methodology was often very much lower than their fully-qualified counterparts.

From 1998 onwards, the role of the summer schools programme within the INSETT project and also the extent of BC support was subjected to review and scrutiny by a team of British Council ELT coordinators. Whereas the professional development and teamwork aspects of the programme had always been given strong emphasis, from this time onwards quality and sustainability began to be increasingly important concerns. Thus, in parallel to developments in the PRESETT project (see Chapter 4), the nature of support for the programme was closely linked to the requirement to ensure quality and the sustainability of the expertise and models so far developed. Hitherto the British Council had supported the summer schools by covering tutors' fees and grants for materials with the one condition being that the trainer teams (excluding the native speakers) had participated on the INSETT trainer training project. However, under a system introduced in 1999, the provision of British Council support became conditional on proposed courses meeting a set of rigorously applied quality assurance criteria. Eleven courses were supported in this way in 1999 and seven in 2000.

British Council support for the summer school programme was discontinued after the 2000 summer schools: the INSETT project was coming to an end and had as its priority, along with PRESETT managing, the transition to a new paradigm of partnerships in ELT projects (see Chapter 3). Nevertheless in both 2001 and 2002 summer schools on the British Council model (or similar) were run by former project members totally independently of British Council support.

As can be seen above, there were several groups of stakeholders in the summer schools, including local and national organisers, and the British Council staff who set up and steered the programme. However, this study will concentrate only on the perceptions of just three stakeholder groups with one factor in common: they were all directly engaged, on site and full-time, in the activity of the summer schools. These three groups are: the Czech trainers who gradually took over responsibility for the schools, the Czech teachers who attended as participants and the native speaker resource staff who also taught at the schools.

3 Methodology

As indicated earlier, the central objective of this study was to find out what impressions stakeholders had of the summer schools. The principal way in which this issue was investigated was by asking different groups of stakeholders who had been involved in at least two summer schools at different points in time to compare their impressions of their first and their most recent involvement. An advantage of this approach was the opportunity for triangulation which it offered. The following research instruments were used to collect data:

- Questionnaires
- E-mail correspondence
- Interviews
- Documents from the British Council archives in Prague.

The main questionnaire consisted of two parts; the first asked respondents to answer questions about their first summer school experience, and the second asked about their most recent experience. There were slight differences between the questionnaire versions designed for trainers, i.e. the Czech trainers and the native speaker resource staff (see Appendix 1), and that for participants (see Appendix 2).

The questionnaire for participants was sent to 35 people and eventually 15 responses were received (though two respondents wrote on the same questionnaire). Responses were written anonymously and returned by post. Most of the Czech trainers used e-mail to respond to their questionnaire. Ten completed responses were received from the trainers and a further five from native speaker resource staff.

A simple follow-up questionnaire was designed to investigate trainers' thoughts on the future of the summer schools. Eight responses were received.

Some documents held in the British Council's archives (reports, correspondence, information sheets, feedback, etc.) were used to supplement the analysis. Two interviews were held; one of these involved two teacher trainers and the other was with one of the British Council coordinators with responsibility for the programme. Both interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

4   Findings

This section discusses the findings which emerge from the study, particularly from the questionnaire responses. The discussion falls into the following areas: perceptions of the summer schools, their perceived benefits, dissemination of expertise, and predictions for the future.

4.1 Perceptions of the summer schools

Respondents expressed a wide range of perceptions about the summer schools. Six main categories can be identified and are discussed here: team spirit and relationships, atmosphere, organisation, professionalism of trainers, expectations before the first and the most recent experiences, and ownership of the summer schools.

4.1.1 Team spirit and relationships

Every one of the Czech trainers (T) mentioned team work in one way or another, as the following extracts indicate:

T7: *I worked together with people I liked and we gradually made a team.*

T2: *Our team was and still is very good, so I got friends and colleagues I could work with as a team. Support, cooperation, team spirit.*

Participants (P) also perceived trainers as members of a team rather than as individuals:

P12: *Opravdu perfektní parta a skvělí lektoři. (Really a perfect team and great trainers.)*

The native speaker (NS) resource staff also tended to talk of their Czech trainer colleagues in terms of 'teams', as the following illustrates:

(NS4): *Such a good team of leaders, and it was a pleasure to live with them, be with them.*

At the same time, however, the question of relationships between Czech trainers and native speakers aroused quite a lot of comment. In many cases, these relationships were perceived to be excellent and open. For instance, native speaker NS1 claimed that *'The distinction between "TTs" [Czech teacher trainers] and "NSs" [native speaker resource staff] was not particularly apparent.'* Attitudes were not always so positive, however. One native speaker resource staff person complained that there should have been *'more input from the TTs [Czech trainers], maybe more specific direction'* (NS2).

On the other hand, some Czech trainers felt that their native speaker colleagues were insufficiently experienced:

T3: *They [native speakers] were nice but I think … not enough experienced in teaching teachers and they recognised their needs too late.*

Others noted simply that relationships between the two groups were less than cordial:

T9: *We had only one NS [native speaker], the relationship was not good.*

4.1.2 Atmosphere in the summer schools

Many respondents commented on the positive atmosphere which they experienced in the summer schools. The following comment, from a participant, is typical:

P13: *Lektoři byli na vysoké odborné I lidské úrovni, dokázali vytvořit báječnou a tvůrčí atmosféru. Příjemné prostředí. (The trainers were on a high professional and personal level, they were able to create a wonderful and creative atmosphere. Pleasant environment.)*

Meanwhile, one member of the native speaker resource staff observed:

NS1: *There was an excellent working and social environment.*

The pleasant atmosphere was mentioned by the Czech trainers as well. For instance, one commented:

T4: *It was enjoyable, especially in terms of the atmosphere and new experience.*

4.1.3 Organisation of the summer schools

Most respondents in all three groups commented on this issue, though there was no explicit question on this topic in the questionnaire. Interestingly, they all had their own perspectives on the matter.

From the standpoint of the participants, two issues were particularly striking: the way in which time was effectively exploited, and the division of participants according to their level of English. These comments from Participants 13 and 8 respectively are illustrative:

P13: *Skupinové vyučování, velmí efektivně využitý čas, žádné prostoje. (Teaching through group work, time used effectively, no blank periods.)*

P8: *Se studiem jsem byla velice spokojena, protože obtížnost výuky byla zvolena přiměřně ke znalostem účastníků, kteří byli rozděleni do jednotlivých skupin podle znalosti Aj. (I was very satisfied because the lessons were demanding according to the knowledge of the trainees, who were divided into groups according to their level of English.)*

The native speaker resource staff made similar observations:

NS1: *Participants were effectively divided into groups reflecting language level. The programme was varied.*

However, they were also impressed by the consultation and coordination which laid the foundation for the summer schools:

NS4: *It was extremely well organised. … We didn't have a lot of sessions, but we spent a lot of time going to each other's lessons and reflecting with our colleagues.*

The Czech trainers' comments, on the other hand, focus mainly on issues of workload. Trainer T1, for example, found the work to be *'very demanding … because of being new in the field'*, whereas trainer T4 noted that preparing for classes needed *'enormous effort and time'*. There were numerous similar comments:

T6: *Preparation for the workshops was time consuming.*

On the other hand, most of the Czech trainers expressed a sense of satisfaction despite the hard work:

T7: *It was very rewarding and enjoyable.*

4.1.4 Professionalism of Czech trainers

There were numerous comments, from the native speaker resource staff and from the participants, about the professionalism of the Czech trainers. For example, native speaker NS1 characterised his/her Czech colleagues as being *'capable, experienced and enthusiastic professionals'*. Another made the following observation:

NS4: *I was very impressed by how extremely well trained these teacher trainers were, and how they could run their summer school.*

Several participants reported that they saw the Czech trainers as providing a model for them, as the following example illustrates:

P4: *Přístup a odbornost lektorů AJ jsou pro mě i Z. laťkou, ke které se chceme obě co nejvíce přiblížit. V podstatě jsou pro nás vzorem … hnacím motorem (We would like to achieve the approach and the workmanship of the trainers as much as possible. Actually they are our role models and … our great motivation element.)*

The Czech trainers themselves reported that they were motivated to work hard because of the highly professional atmosphere:

T5: *Because of the feeling of highly professional work, everybody tried hard.*

4.1.5 Expectations before the first and most recent experience of summer schools

It is interesting to compare the expectations of the three groups of stakeholders before their first and their most recent experience of summer schools, bearing in mind that they refer to a variety of different schools and situations.

Many of the Czech trainers reported having had mixed emotions and expectations immediately before their first summer school experience. These included excitement at new opportunities:

T3: *It was a great challenge for me, I expected that I will see the fruits of all my previous studies and I wanted to be popular among the trainees.*

T5: *I hoped that it would help in my further professional development.*

But many of the Czech trainers were also apprehensive, on a number of grounds:

T4: *In fact, I was a bit afraid, as I did not have that much experience and expertise.*

T8: *I thought the level of the teachers would be too high for me to meet their demands.*

T7: *I was afraid that the Czech teachers would not accept seminars delivered by non-native speakers.*

By the time the Czech trainers came to their most recent summer school experience, these generalised apprehensions had disappeared and were replaced with much more specific concerns about workload or about features of the programme design:

T4: *A bit of fear because it was planned in a more demanding manner than the previous ones.*

T7: *The topic was quite complicated and we changed the way we had worked so far.*

T3: *I knew the course would be more demanding and had to be coherent so that the team would have to work more closely together to fulfill the aim.*

However, by the time they came to their most recent experience, the Czech trainers also knew that they could rely on the collaboration of their colleagues.

Moving now to the participants, it appears that they had quite clear expectations before the first summer school. They expected that they would receive input in many different areas:

P1: *Nové metody jak učit zábavnější formou, seznámení s novými materiály a učebnicemi, prohloubení mých znalostí jazyka (New methods, how to teach in more enjoyable ways, getting to know new materials and coursebooks, extending my knowledge of language.)*

When they were getting ready to participate in the more recent summer schools, participants' expectations appeared to be largely unchanged. So for example participants P1, P7, P9, P10 and P11 all mentioned that they expected to have exposure to *'more new activities'*. Indeed two people explicitly said that they expected *'the same as before'* and a further two expected to be *'meeting old friends'*.

Native speaker resource staff claimed to have very few expectations before the first summer school. As native speaker NS3 claimed, *'I didn't really have any'*. Moreover, before their most recent involvement in the summer schools, the native speaker resource staff still had very few expectations, although they knew now that they would be working with *'a highly professional team, running a smooth operation'* (NS2) and that they would be contributing to *'a well planned course'* (NS4).

It appears, therefore, that it is really only among the Czech trainers that any significant change in perceptions or expectations of summer schools can be identified. Their former rather vague uncertainties have evaporated and they express concern only about specific technical aspects of their programmes. They have become more confident and they know that they can rely on the cooperation of colleagues. Among the other two groups of stakeholders – the participants and the native speaker resource staff – there is little perceptible evidence of change in expectations.

4.1.6 Ownership of the summer schools

A final point can be made concerning perceptions of the summer schools. From the responses, it emerges that most participants, in addition to one Czech trainer and one native speaker resource staff member, made no distinction between the 'real' British Council summer schools and the 'post-British Council' summer schools after 2000. In the minds of these informants, the latter are still 'British Council summer schools', even though the Council plays no role in them and they are actually organised by teams of Czech trainers in cooperation with the local pedagogical organisations or teacher training colleges.

4.2 Benefits of the summer schools

Respondents identified a number of benefits which they gained from the summer schools. These can be categorised as cooperation, confidence, growth and development, and a new stimulus, although inevitably there is overlap between these categories.

4.2.1 Cooperation

The generally positive team spirit identified by many respondents has already been discussed in Section 4.1.1 above. Several Czech trainers also noted this feature as one of the benefits of their involvement in the summer schools: *'a demanding but very useful experience'* (T3). In this connection, many Czech trainers commented on the benefits which they had gained from their British Council colleagues. The following is just one example:

T2: *I value … most of all the 'non-directive' way of guidance and support the British Council provided.*

4.2.2 Confidence

The term *'confidence'* was frequently used by many of the Czech trainers in their questionnaire responses and in interviews. Here is a small selection:

T1: … *building up confidence*

T10: *It increased my confidence.*

T2: *I think I had confidence, some experience.*

Some of the native speaker resource staff also commented on their Czech colleagues' growing confidence:

NS4: *I was again impressed by their confidence, energy and skills.*

Some participants also reported an increase in their own self-confidence:

P4: *Zjištění, že mé znalosti nejsou nejhorší, zvednutí sebevědomí. (Finding that my knowledge is not so bad, rise in self-confidence.)*

4.2.3 Growth and development

Perhaps not surprisingly, most of the participants described what they had learnt from participating in the summer schools as one of their major benefits, particularly in terms of language development and methodological awareness:

P6: *Naučila jsem se slyšet mluvenou angličtinu (I learnt how to listen to spoken English.)*

P2: *Poprvé jsem viděla v praxi použití některých netradičních metod výuky Aj. (I saw in practice some non-traditional methods of teaching English for the first time.)*

P4: [SS] *Byla šokem a vytržením ze všední stereotypní práce, ale I lítost nad tím, že jsme neměli možnost něco takového prožít během studia na vysoké škole, kde nám předčítali metodiky a nic nás konkrétně nenaučili a nepředali do praxe. (It was a kind of shock to be freed from a stereotyped work, but I also regretted that we had not had the opportunity to experience anything like this during my studies at college, where our teachers only lectured on methodology and did not teach us anything specific about teaching in practice.)*

Several participants reported that their own motivation to learn English had improved as a consequence of taking part in the summer schools:

P5: *Díky letní škole jsem se začala angličtině věnovat na jazykové škole. (Thanks to the summer school, I went in for English at the language school.)*

Interestingly, several of the native speaker resource staff were also able to identify areas where they had been able to benefit from their involvement in the programme:

NS1: *I observed several classes taught by colleagues and got some exciting new ideas on methodology.*

NS5: *It enriched myself linguistically, socially and professionally.*

One of the Czech trainers also claimed to have learned from the participants:

T3: *I can not only teach them [participants] but learn a lot of interesting and inspiring things from them.*

Others noted developments in their own attitudes:

T6: *I started to treat my students as partners not as somebody who needs to be treated as a child.*

And perhaps most significantly, some believed that the opportunity to work as a trainer had helped them to reflect on their own teaching:

T7: *What you do on a course with teachers enriches you as a teacher and becomes part of your classroom routine and vice versa.*

T10: *My professional performance increased after each action [summer course], I think. I deepened my qualification and extended my work experience.*

4.2.4 New stimuli

A final cluster of 'benefits' can be found in the comments which respondents in all three categories made regarding the summer schools as a 'starting point' or a 'stimulus' to some new activity. So, for example, some of the participants spoke about deciding to take up teaching English; one member of the native speaker resource staff started organising her own summer schools; and one of the Czech trainers became a trainer in a pedagogical faculty.

4.3 Dissemination of expertise after attending summer schools

Almost all the participants commented on dissemination of expertise – both formal and informal – after attending the summer schools. Eleven people said that they had had an opportunity to share their experiences with colleagues at school. One respondent, who is a methodology teacher, claimed to use ideas from the summer schools in her own workshops, whilst another reported that she shared information from the summer schools during the methodology meetings at the beginning of and during the school year.

Participants also reported disseminating information and ideas through demonstration lessons; sharing materials, games, songs and methods with colleagues; describing their impressions of the summer school informally with colleagues; and recommending literature to others.

4.4 Predictions

As noted in Section 3 above, a short set of supplementary questions concerning the future of the summer schools was sent to the Czech trainers. All eight respondents believed that teachers would still need summer schools in the future. One trainer commented at length:

T5: *They __must__ continue. There is still a great lack of teachers of English – a fact ignored by the Ministry (in my opinion), yet they have the idea of starting teaching English from the third grade (with the same number of very often unqualified teachers?) published in Bílá kniha [Offical report]. The potential of the group of tutors trained by the BC should be used and developed – their qualities and willingness to work is on very high level.*

The same respondent noted that holiday summer schools are usually the only chance that many teachers (especially married women) have for self-development in English language teaching.

Curiously, several of the Czech trainers mentioned their own self-development, rather than the development of teachers, as a reason for the continuation of the summer schools.

A number of respondents indicated a belief that the Ministry of Education should take over responsibility for the summer schools:

T5: *They should be supported by MŠMT [Minstry of Education], the BC has done a lot and substituted the Ministry responsibility for a long time.*

Regarding modifications required in future summer schools – if there are to be any – respondents emphasised the need for continual experimentation:

T1: *Each of the eight summer schools I have participated in was different in one aspect or another, and this should be true about the future summer schools as well; one should experiment with timetable, change the main topic, etc., otherwise it loses the challenging bit.*

A number of respondents felt that the summer schools had become 'over-organised'. Indeed, in one of the post-British Council summer schools a deliberate decision was taken to make the event less organised and less stressful. During their interview, some of the Czech trainers involved in this event expressed astonishment at this decision, although others responded positively to the new approach:

T8: *Less stress because we had more freedom to adjust the lessons to the needs of the trainees. The outcomes were better than ever (e.g. stories, tests, etc.).*

Finally, as noted in Section 4.1.6 above, many of the Czech trainers were just not aware that the summer schools are no longer organised by the British Council; they are still *perceived* as British Council events. This may be the best evidence of the success of the British Council's work in this area.

4.5 Summary of findings

From this detailed examination of the responses of the Czech trainers, the native speaker resource staff and the summer school participants themselves, it can be seen that responses fall into four major categories: perceptions of the summer schools, benefits of the summer schools, dissemination, and predictions for the future.

With regard to perceptions of the summer schools, six issues have emerged:

Team spirit and relationships between Czech trainers and native speakers

The team spirit was perceived as excellent by almost everybody, but views on the relationships between the Czech trainers and their native speaker colleagues were rather mixed.

The atmosphere of the summer schools

This was reported to be very good.

Organisation

The three groups of stakeholders noticed different things, with the participants commenting on effective use of time and streaming according to language competence, the native speakers commenting on the amount of consultation and coordination which went on, and the Czech trainers being struck by the workload which they had to cope with.

Professionalism of trainers

The participants and the native speakers all commented favourably on this.

Expectations before the first and the most recent experiences

It was apparent that the participants' and the native speakers' expectations changed little, regardless of how frequently they took part in workshops, whilst the Czech trainers became markedly more confident.

Ownership of the summer schools

It was discovered that many respondents were unaware that the summer schools in 2001 actually no longer had any connection with the British Council.

The benefits of the summer schools which were reported were of four types:

Cooperation

The cooperation with British Council colleagues in the earlier summer schools was particularly noted.

Confidence

Some participants noted that they were more confident as teachers having taken part in the summer schools, but primarily it was the Czech trainers who felt that they themselves had grown in confidence through their involvement.

Growth and development

Most respondents in all three groups of stakeholders identified some ways in which they had 'grown', but most comments in this area came from the participants and related to development in their understanding of methodology and in their own mastery of English.

Stimulus for new action

Their involvement in the summer schools was seen by many respondents as a prompt for new career developments.

Dissemination activities

Such activities, both formal and informal, were carried out by almost all participants.

The Czech trainers felt that the summer schools should continue, partly because teachers needed them, but partly also because they themselves needed the professional development opportunity which their involvement gave them.

5   Implications

One very important implication arising from the findings is that the summer schools of the type described in this chapter do seem to be worth preserving as a regular part of INSETT provision. They can be seen as a major and effective opportunity for professional development for both teacher educators and teachers of English. Since there is likely to be a need in the near future for new trainers to be trained, the summer schools would provide an excellent forum for new trainers to gain vital experience. Members of AMATE, the professional body of teacher educators, have a great wealth of experience of running schools of this kind to high standards. Thus AMATE would be well placed to take responsibility for keeping the programme going.

On one side, working relationships developed between AMATE members and pedagogical centres and the Ministry of Education, particularly since 2000, would suggest that there are good possibilities for establishing partnerships with institutions that would provide the necessary administrative and financial input. At the same time, the findings of this study give strong evidence that the level of professional skills now attained by those who have been running the schools, in management as well as teacher training, means that courses can run in their present form independently of British Council support. However, should there be growing interest in and need for more specialised summer schools, as for example was suggested by the TEHC and TEYL projects (see Chapter 8), it might also be desirable and feasible for the British Council also to be involved to some extent – for example by providing the trainers with access to and support in developing specialised expertise.

Recognition of trainers' skills and experience, or the lack of it, at least at an official level, remains one important factor which may threaten the sustainabilty of this valuable contribution to professional development. Although holding intensive courses during the summer vacation is easier than trying to fit in any kind of extensive INSETT activities during the academic year – for both the trainers and the participants – it is still open to question how many trainers will continue to want to give up part of their vacation in order to take on extra work. One of AMATE's stated aims is to work towards achieving an officially recognised status for trainers – its success in managing this could thus be a key factor in the long-term future of the summer schools.

Finally, if the summer schools as such are to be preserved, there are specifc aspects of them which the study seems to suggest could be developed further, or should be considered a priority when it comes to preservation. The development of effective teamwork and the good atmosphere it can create, come across as being highly prized features and ones that add considerable value to the overall success of professional development at the summer schools. So clearly it should not be left to chance, as sometimes appears to be the case according to some respondents. Instead, it needs to be formally integrated into the planning and running of the schools – and this starts with all team members having a chance to meet well before the course and to plan collaboratively.

6   Conclusions

The general conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that the British Council was successful in its efforts to set up a form of in-service provision in the shape of summer schools. Over a number of years, British Council involvement in the summer schools has gradually been withdrawn and Czech expertise has replaced it. This, therefore, appears to be an interesting case of successful sustainability.

As we look to the future, the need for summer schools is clearly still with us since requests continue to come in from teachers. Moreover, a new need is becoming apparent: English will soon be taught from the third grade at basic school, yet the majority of primary teachers are not qualified in teaching English. It is to be hoped that the means can be found to maintain the summer schools which have so far been so successful.

Appendix 1

Questionnaires for Czech trainers and for native speaker resource staff

Dear Colleague,

The British Council is evaluating the effect of their training over the past decade. As a member of the evaluation team, I would like to ask you to answer this questionnaire concerning your experience of teaching on the summer schools organised and supported by the British Council in the Czech Republic (1993–2000). Please feel free to use as much space as you require to answer the questions. Your answers, without your name, will be used to evaluate the project of the British Council.

Preliminary questions

1 How many summer schools have you contributed to?

2 When was the first one?

3 When was the most recent one?

Part A: Your first experience of a summer school

1 What were your expectations before the first summer school?

2 What aspects of the summer school were the most memorable?

3 Please describe the relationship between the teacher trainers and the native speakers.

4 How did you find the workload during the summer school?

(Please tick)   too heavy   heavy   about right   light   too light

Could you explain your answer?

5 How did you find teaching on the first summer school?

(Please tick)   very enjoyable   enjoyable   not enjoyable   very unenjoyable   other

Please expand on your answer.

6 Did the experience of the first summer school have any effect on you as a person? Yes/No

Yes: please specify in what way/ways.   No: why not?

7 Did the experience of the first summer school have any effect on you as a professional? Yes/No

Yes: please specify in what way/ways.   No: why not?

Part B: Your most recent experience of contributing to a summer school

1 What were your expectations before the most recent summer school?

2 What aspects of the most recent summer school were the most memorable?

3 Please describe the relationship between the teacher trainers and the native speakers.

4 How did you find the workload during the most recent summer school?

(Please tick)   too heavy   heavy   about right   light   too light

Could you explain your answer?

5 How did you find teaching on the most recent summer school?

(Please tick)   very enjoyable   enjoyable   not enjoyable   very unenjoyable   other

Please expand on your answer.

6 Did the experience of the most recent summer school have any effect on you as a person? Yes/No

Yes: please specify in what way/ways.   No: why not?

7 Did the experience of the most recent summer school have any effect on you as a professional? Yes/No

Yes: please specify in what way/ways.   No: why not?

8 Please comment on any additional points that you think should have been included in this questionnaire.

Thank you for the time you have taken to fill in this questionnaire and for helping with the evaluation.

Appendix 2

Questionnaire for participants

Dear Colleague,

Would you please take time to answer this questionnaire? It is for participants of the summer courses which were organised and supported by the British Council in the Czech Republic in the years 1993–2000. The British Council is evaluating the effect of their training over the past decade. As a member of the evaluation team, I would like to ask you to answer this questionnaire. Please answer the questions in parts A and B as fully as possible. If you prefer to fill in the questionnaire in Czech, you are welcome to do so. Please feel free to use as much space as you require to answer the questions. Your answers, without your name, will be used to evaluate the project of the British Council.

Preliminary questions

1 How many summer schools have you participated in?

2 When was the first one?

3 When was the most recent one?

Part A: Your first experienxsummer school

1 What were your expectations before the first summer school?

2 What aspects of the summer school were the most memorable?

3 How did you find the workload for participants (workshops, projects, self-study) during the summer school?

(Please tick)   too heavy   heavy about   right   light   too light

Could you explain your answer?

4 How did you find studying on the first summer school?

(Please tick)   very enjoyable   enjoyable   not enjoyable   very unenjoyable   other

Please expand on your answer.

5 Did you have any opportunities to share your experience from the summer school with colleagues at your school? Yes/No

Yes: please specify in what way/ways you shared your experience.   No: why not?

6 Did you use any ideas from the summer school in your teaching? Yes/No   Why/Why not?

7 Did the experience of the first summer school have any effect on you as a person? Yes/No

Yes: please specify in what way/ways.   No: why not?

8 Did the experience of the first summer school have any effect on you as a professional? Yes/No

Yes: please specify in what way/ways.   No: why not?

Part B: Your most recent experience of contributing to a summer school

1 What were your expectations before the most recent summer school?

2 What aspects of the most recent summer school were the most memorable?

3 How did you find the workload for participants (workshops, projects, self-study) during the summer school?

(Please tick)   too heavy   heavy about   right   light   too light

Could you explain your answer?

4 How did you find studying on the most recent summer school?

(Please tick)   very enjoyable   enjoyable   not enjoyable   very unenjoyable   other

Please expand on your answer.

5 Did you have any opportunities to share your experience from the summer school with colleagues at your school? Yes/No

Yes: please specify in what way/ways you shared your experience.   No: Why not?

6 Did you use any ideas from the summer school in your teaching? Yes/No   Why/Why not?

7 Did the experience of the most recent summer school have any effect on you as a person? Yes/No

Yes: please specify in what way/ways.   No: why not?

8 Did the experience of the most recent summer school have any effect on you as a professional? Yes/No

Yes: please specify in what way/ways.   No: why not?

9 Please comment on any additional points that you think should have been included in this questionnaire.

Thank you for the time you have taken to fill in this questionnaire and for helping with the evaluation.

CHAPTER 8

Issues of cooperation and self-confidence in the Heterogeneous Classes and Young Learners projects

Alena Literová

This chapter concerns two British Council projects in the Czech Republic between 1999 and 2001 which covered the specialist areas of teaching English to young learners and teaching English to heterogeneous classes. This was the first instance of joint-sector projects: projects that involved both in-service and pre-service teacher trainers participating together. Three main issues for this qualitative evaluation were raised by the respondents' answers. The first is the content of the project courses. The second is the question of cooperation between in-service and pre-service teacher trainers which emerged during their mutual collaboration and the third is the increase in self-confidence of the participants, manifested by the dissemination of gained knowledge. The final sections of this chapter discuss the findings.

1   Introduction

This chapter investigates two broad issues connected with the British Council projects: Teaching English in Heterogeneous Classes (TEHC) and Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL), which were launched in November 1999 and carried out between April 2000 and June 2001. These issues are firstly, the degree of cooperation between participants on the projects, and secondly, the impact of taking part in the projects on their professional development and their self-confidence. In fact these issues were not featured specifically in the planning for the projects, which were principally focused on developing expertise in specific content areas, and it may be that it is still too early to study the impact of this new expertise in schools and on training courses. However, as the evaluation reports written both during and after the project testify, both cooperation between participants and their personal development emerged as being much more than side issues (BC Docs 3, 4).

The study is divided into five parts, starting with the context of the study and the methodology employed. Section 4, *Findings*, forms the main part of the study and attempts to answer questions concerning participants' cooperation and the impact of the projects on their self-confidence. Finally, the discussion and conclusion summarise the whole chapter.

2   Context: Background and process

The British Council professional development projects Teaching English to Heterogeneous Classes and Teaching English to Young Learners, which ran from 1999 to 2001, were developed in response to specific needs in the Czech Republic at the time. They both addressed demand from teacher trainers for access to more information and professional development in two areas of language teaching that appeared to need special attention since they made specific and often new demands on the teachers. The target groups for the projects were teacher trainers who had previously participated in either of two recent British Council projects: Pre-service Education and Teacher Training (PRESETT) or In-service Education and Teacher Training (INSETT) – two participants had in fact been on both – and the project offered an opportunity for them to extend their training expertise to include one of these two specialist areas.

2.1 The two projects

2.1.1 Teaching English in Heterogeneous Classes

The aim of the TEHC project was to support *'the development of appropriate provision for Teaching English to Heterogeneous Classes (with specific reference to the inclusion and integration of learners with mild SpLD [Specific Learning Difficulties] in mainstream classes) through the professional development of INSETT and PRESETT trainers and strengthening of networks'* (BC Doc 1).

The need and desirability of such a project in the field of TEHC emerged from two earlier activities: an introductory workshop on dyslexia in ELT, led by a UK consultant in the field (BC Doc 5), and a baseline study/needs analysis on the situation regarding provision for learners of English with dyslexia, or mild specific learning difficulties (SpLD), commissioned by the British Council from two Czech PRESETT lecturers (BC Doc 6). Both of these revealed a need and an interest on the part of ELT teacher trainers in developing awareness and expertise in this area. According to the baseline study, many teachers in the Czech Republic lacked knowledge of how to support learners with these difficulties. The aim of the project was firstly to provide theoretical input, which would then be applied in practical research to be undertaken by individual participants. The rationale was to help develop an expertise base that would be applied to teacher training provision in both the INSETT and PRESETT sectors. The consultants' terms of reference (BC Doc 7) state that the level of the content should be approximately equivalent to that of a UK Masters degree course. The consultant negotiated the content and process of the input sessions with the British Council ELT coordinators. Content covered in the theoretical input included perceptions and constructs of disability; pedagogical approaches: multisensory and metacognitive; assessment; differentiation; phonological approaches to reading; research skills. Examples of research projects include individual case studies of using differentiation, for example in writing and spelling; vocabulary; self-esteem; investigation of incidence of specific learning difficulties in secondary schools; using self-reflection diaries with PRESETT trainees during a SpLD course.

2.1.2 Teaching English to Young Learners

The aim of the TEYL project was *'to enhance the quality of TEYL in the Czech Republic through professional development of INSETT and PRESETT trainers and strengthening of networks'* (BC Doc 2). The teaching of a modern foreign language to children from year four of basic school (age nine to ten) became compulsory in the Czech Republic in September 1997. This had considerable implications for teacher supply, and placed new demands on teacher education programmes since training for ELT had previously been mostly geared towards teaching learners from age ten and upwards. In 1997, pedagogical faculties launched new undergraduate programmes to train teachers of English for the lower primary level of basic schools, that is for pupils aged nine to ten. At the same time, several in-service initiatives, both local and nationwide were set up to provide support for practising teachers who lacked the necessary training to teach languages to young and very young learners. The British Council TEYL project was intended to help develop an appropriate expertise base that could be of benefit to such PRESETT and INSETT programmes. As with TEHC, the projects consisted of both theoretical input and individual research projects, with an expert consultant being asked to aim the content at approximately UK Masters degree level. Content areas included: thought and language; cross-curricular approaches and teaching schemes; role of story; materials development for intercultural learning; Central Europe young learners learner policies. For their individual research projects,

participants worked on case studies of metacognitive strategies in YL vocabulary learning, applying Blom's taxonomy of cognitive strategies with storybook learning, and a survey of the use of children's literature in YL classes.

2.2 Background to the participants: INSETT and PRESETT

The findings of the present study concentrate on personal and interpersonal issues such as confidence and cooperation between participants. It is therefore relevant at this stage to outline certain aspects of the participants' backgrounds and the processes that they underwent when taking part in the projects.

A total of 30 participants registered for the two projects at the outset: 17 for the TEHC project and 13 for the TEYL project. Of the total 30, 17 were INSETT trainers, 11 were PRESETT and two were active in both fields. Ten participants completed the TEHC project and nine the TEYL. Of the total 19 who completed them, nine were INSETT, eight were PRESETT and two were involved in both areas.

2.2.1 INSETT trainers

The INSETT trainers taking part in the two projects had all previously been involved in the British Council's INSETT trainer training project, including the summer school experience programme (see Chapters 6 and 7). They were all ELT teachers, mostly full-time school-based teachers also working part time as INSETT trainers for local education providers. In this latter capacity they came into frequent contact with young learners and heterogeneous classes issues as they impacted on the teaching of English. Prior to their participation in the TEHC or TEYL projects, any formal contact with PRESETT project members and their institutions would have been through another capacity, for example by acting as mentor teachers for pre-service trainees, not through any British Council project activity. Most of their previous experience of professional development, both on the receiving end and in delivering it, was practically rather than theoretically oriented. According to the baseline study, they might frequently have used and promoted aspects of the classroom methodology they would be looking at in the TEYL and TEHC projects, such as storytelling and multisensory activities, but would have had little previous exposure to the theoretical underpinnings of such methodology.

2.2.2 PRESETT trainers

The PRESETT trainers taking part in the two projects were all employed at pedagogical faculty English teacher training departments. Out of the 11 who initially joined the project, nine had either completed or were currently engaged in post-graduate ELT or applied linguistic studies, eight of these being Masters programmes with UK universities (see Chapter 5). Thus, already at the outset of the projects they had had considerably more theoretical grounding than their INSETT counterparts and had had 'official' experience of carrying out academic research, and exposure to relatively up-to-date theory. They would have had contact with schools and with ELT teacher trainers through their involvement in supervision and or coordination of school experience for their pre-service trainees.

2.3 Process

The two projects were designed to work in parallel with each other: they had similar overall aims, namely to enhance the level of teacher training with regard to the two specialist areas. They also had similar sets of desired outcomes: that cadres of specialist trainers would, as a result of the projects, be actively engaged in disseminating expertise gained through the project, through teacher education activities such as in PRESETT programmes and INSETT courses; also that they would undertake research and would form into national and regional networks to support each other and in ensuring dissemination of expertise in the wider community.

2.3.1 Two-phase structure

After the pre-initiation period, the two projects were each divided into two phases. In Phase 1 (April–July 2000) the emphasis was on providing specialist theoretical input, and in Phase 2 (September 2000–June 2001) the participants carried out and wrote up their own research projects. The TEHC and TEYL projects were designed and managed by members of the British Council Czech Republic ELT coordinator team (Jane Nolan, Helen Silvester and Frances Child). The specialist input in Phase 1 was provided by two external UK-based consultants, Dr Deidre Martin (University of Birmingham) for TEHC and Dr Janet Enever (University of North London) for TEYL, who were recruited by open tender. In Phase 2 the above British Council staff took full responsibility for supporting the project members in carrying out their research projects.

The specialist input was provided at two residential seminars totaling 12 days. During Phase 2, participants worked between sessions on an individual project which aimed to provide an opportunity for them to apply the theoretical knowledge in practice through classroom research. Training and ongoing support in research skills, together with feedback and consultation, was provided at three separate weekend workshops between October 2000 and June 2001 when the finished projects were presented.

2.3.2 Group divisions and interaction

Both groups, TEYL and TEHC, followed parallel programmes although the content was different. Seminars and workshops for the two project groups were held in the same venue either simultaneously or timed so as to overlap. Interaction between the two groups was formally built into the programme and also actively encouraged by the coordinators and experts. Moreover, interaction between members of the two sectors, INSETT and PRESETT, was also both formally and actively built into the programme, for example through sharing of experience and cooperation on tasks.

Throughout Phase 1, the participants were divided into two separate groups according to the project specialisation, either TEHC or TEYL. The original project plans had intended that for Phase 2 they should be regrouped into two sector groups, i.e. one group of INSETT trainers and one of PRESETT, and thus the two specialisations would be mixed. It had been assumed that the training and support for the research stage would need to be different for each of these two groups. However, formative evaluation at the end of Phase 1 showed that the INSETT/PRESETT mix was greatly appreciated by the participants and thus the plan to change the groupings was dropped (BC Docs 3, 4).

Both projects finished in June 2001 with participants giving presentations of research findings based on their investigations in either heterogeneous classes or young learners issues. Some of these findings were published as articles in *Perspectives* and professional newsletters or presented at conferences. Six participants from the two projects took part in a new British Council project called TRANSKELT (Transitional Skills for ELT – see Chapter 3). This supported ongoing dissemination of expertise in the form of participants' own initiatives based on skills developed during various previous British Council projects (including TEHC and TEYL). So, activity in these areas did continue after the life of the TEHC and TEYL projects and made the expertise available to a wider audience. Dissemination projects developed by the former TEHC and TEYL group members included a dyslexia website for ELT teachers, an INSETT framework project for TEYL (for which Ministry support was successfully negotiated in Spring 2002), two local-level TEYL INSETT needs analyses followed by courses, and the publication of a set of guidelines for teachers on SpLD in ELT.

3   Methodology

The study has two areas of focus:

- The experiences and perceptions of INSETT and PRESETT teacher trainers regarding cooperation with each other
- INSETT and PRESETT teacher trainers' self-confidence.

I wanted to find what impact, if any, the training provided by the British Council had on the participants in that training. Consequently, the main questions which I needed to answer were:

1 What do teacher trainers believe they get out of the Heterogeneous Classes and the Young Learners Projects? (This question should be asked since trainers' self-reports regarding what they believe they gained from participation in the two projects may be an indicator of change in self-confidence.)

2 Was cooperation between PRESETT and INSETT participants expected by the course planners? Why?

3 What were the benefits of and constraints on cooperation?

4 If cooperation between PRESETT and INSETT trainers was indeed reported, how can this cooperation be maintained and developed further in the future?

The survey employed a number of different questionnaires, each of which explored a separate area of focus or a separate research question. Three of these questionnaires are reproduced in Appendices 1–3. With regard to the time constraints,

distributing the questionnaires by e-mail seemed convenient for this kind of evaluation. The total number of responses received is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Questionnaire respondents

Topic	HC group participants (N=17)	YL group participants (N=13)	All participants (N=30)	Trainer trainers (experts and coordinators) (N=5)
Self-confidence	13	6	19	3
Cooperation	8	8	16	4
Dissemination	6		6	–
Total respondents	13	8	21	5

From this table it can be seen that 13 members of the Heterogeneous Classes group responded to a questionnaire on self-confidence (see Appendix 1); they consisted of ten who had completed the course plus three who had dropped out. Six participants who had completed the Young Learners project responded to a similar questionnaire. Three trainer trainers answered another closely-related version of the same questionnaire (see Appendix 2).

The table also shows the response rate to a parallel series of questionnaires regarding cooperation.

Finally, there seemed to be a need to find out more about participants' dissemination of what they had gained from their participation in the project workshops. A very simple questionnaire was designed (see Appendix 3) and distributed to seven people selected at random from all those who participated in the Young Learners and Heterogeneous Classes Project workshops. Six responses were received.

Additional data was gathered from two reports about the YL project from the British Council archives. These are referred to as YL/E/1 and YL/E/2.

I had originally intended to follow up my analysis of these questionnaires and documents with interviews, but time did not permit this[1].

4   Findings

Several of the respondents who took part in this evaluation, both project participants and facilitators, expressed the view that it was important to contribute to the study, perhaps through a sense of indebtedness to the British Council (Respondents HC3, 7, 10, 11, 14; YL12, 13). The respondents' answers to the main questions raised several issues, which can be grouped into three main areas. Section 4.1 provides an evaluation of the projects in terms of participants' perceptions of the practical aspects of taking part: the workload for participants, the content, and access to materials. Next, Section 4.2 deals with mutual cooperation and understanding between participants from the two sectors, PRESETT and INSETT, at three stages: before, during and after the course. The third section, 4.3, concentrates on respondents' perceptions of the extent of professional development gained from taking part in the project in four areas: development of professional expertise, awareness of benefits from PRESETT/INSETT cooperation, participants' self-confidence and dissemination of expertise. Finally, Section 4.4 gives a brief summary of the previous findings.

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1   Details of the coding system used for respondents in this chapter are available from the author.

4.1 Practical aspects of the projects

4.1.1 Workload

According to one of the project facilitators, the workshops organised during the first, more theoretical, phase of the projects were designed so as to provide the teacher trainers who participated with adequate theoretical input in the area of Heterogeneous Classes or Young Learners respectively:

HC3/CE: *… workload was always referred to and taken onto account. Further at the beginning of each course and at various stages during the courses I would give the teachers opportunities to negotiate the workload and timetable so that it remained feasible – once or twice this meant cutting things out and revisiting previous issues.*

Another respondent claimed that *'participants worked hard, but not at an unrealistic level'* (YL4/C).

Some participants thought that the input on the courses was *'hard demanding work but very useful for the teacher training I provide'* (HC2); another respondent said, *'Though quite hard while doing it, of course very useful and worth experiencing in the end'* (HC12).

The differences in the level of the theoretical background of the participants could also be seen in the responses. For example, only respondent HC7 said that she *'would have appreciated it if more theoretical input had been provided'*. Others, however, felt frustration at the large amount of theoretical input:

HC11: *Heavy. Because of the other duties and regular workload.*

HC16: *A lot of theory was discouraging.*

HC15: *Sometimes I felt flooded with info.*

Nevertheless, HC2/C *'was really impressed by what trainers got out of the reading they did.'*

Even though a few participants felt the workload on the courses was very demanding, most of them were able to cope with it successfully.

4.1.2 Content of theoretical input

There were several comments on the relative roles and importance of the two phases of both projects, the theoretical input in either TEHC or TEYL in Phase 1 and the support in carrying out individual research case studies in Phase 2:

HC1/C: *The classroom-based investigations were crucial … they confirmed that the group did indeed have a serious classroom based expertise and not just the theory.*

Equally, the theoretical part of the project was evaluated by participants as a *'good balance between theory, reflection and research'* (HC5) and they appreciated what they had learned:

HC4: *I learned a lot more than I have expected, access to books, sharing experience + doing the research project!*

The ratio of the theory and practice in the project helped participants meet their expectations and show them that *'a bit more theory is useful'* (YL1).

HC1/CE: *Any trainer dealing with topic of TEHC will have to face the fact that there is a lot of 'theory'/complex input for any HC course, but also you can't avoid the question of practice. Theory means nothing on its own.*

However, three respondents stated that they noticed *'one or two individuals in the YL group who felt confused and may not have participated as fully as they could have'* (HC3/CE, YL4/C). The content of the input of the course was perceived to be too difficult for them:

YL1/C: *… in one case a participant was clearly fazed by … theory, whilst in the other, the participant lacked knowledge, understanding and perceptiveness of the classroom reality.*

From these responses we can see that the theoretical content was not easy for the participants. However, except for a couple, most were able to develop their expertise in these areas. They appreciated the balance of both theoretical and practical input of the project.

4.1.3 Access to materials

As participants had to read a lot of materials in their specific areas of interest, they were able to use books from the British Council Resource Centres and, in addition, were given a grant with which to buy specialist titles related to their individual research projects. They were also given some materials by the expert facilitators, for example *'… the materials from the UK which include articles and books'* (HC3/CE). The participants had access to *'… a wide range of materials during seminars'* (HC1).

Other comments on materials included this from HC10, *'Many of these materials were well chosen. They opened new perspectives for my teaching.'*

Yet several people claimed that it was *'… an excellent starting point, but I have searched for more …'.* (Self 02, 03) and another participant expressed her wish for more time to take full advantage of the opportunities:

HC11: *It would need more practice and more time to read resource books, case studies, etc.*

Furthermore, some respondents stated that the materials gained during the projects were still useful resources even after the project had finished:

HC5: *I can still draw upon a variety of mat[erial]s I received.*

HC19: *… as usual I come back to many things only now.*

Two people wrote of their concerns over the difficulty of gaining access to appropriate resource materials in the Czech Republic:

HC3: *There is no book available where are methods and strategies how to teach a foreign language the children with SpLD.*

HC2/CE: *… there is almost nothing available on English learners with Special Needs in ELT literature …*

Although the projects were well supported with resources and materials and participants were satisfied with them, some found it to be just the starting point for their studies, and moreover two expressed their dissatisfaction with the range of published books available which were aimed at TEHC and TEYL.

4.2 Attitudes and cooperation between INSETT and PRESETT trainers

As mentioned in Section 2, the INSETT and PRESETT trainers came from quite different backgrounds and had different experience. This was particularly true in terms of their practical classroom experience and familiarity with theory. With the exception of two participants who had experience of working in both sectors, the INSETT and PRESETT participants had not worked together before as co-participants in professional development. Since this was the first time that these two groups had met to work together on equal terms on the same topics, the projects coordinators were aware of the potential problems that might arise because of the differences between them, such as participants needing to move at a different pace and possibly even some status issues (BC Doc 3 and 4). For this reason, one of the main areas of this evaluation concerns cooperation and understanding between the INSETT and PRESETT members of the projects.

4.2.1 Mutual perceptions of INSETT and PRESETT trainers before the projects

At the first workshops, participants *'all arrived with different aims'* (YL4/C), yet one respondent stated that *'I hoped at least by bringing PRESETT and INSETT together, to stimulate reflection on teaching and learning processes in general'* (HC1/C).

Participants expected *'fruitful cooperation'* (YL1, 16), or *'good cooperation'* (YL8, 10) with *'interesting insights from both perspectives'* (YL9). Respondent YL1/C says that *'… working in relatively small countries has indicated to me that the added value of creating shared understanding across the pre/in-service system … can provide significant local support for taking YL initiatives'.*

In addition, others *'welcomed the opportunity to meet with the colleagues, confrontation, opinion poll, exchange of ideas, supportive and inspiring environment'* (YL2), and were *'looking forward to take advantages of cooperation between INSETT and PRESETT participants'* (YL5).

Nevertheless, some worries about the commitment to the projects and the level of knowledge were expressed:

YL3: *Měla jsem strach, že tam bude příliš mnoho teorie a že na to nebudu stačit. (I was afraid that there would be too much theory and I would not manage it.)*

YL4: *The only thing I feared was that I did not have particular experience with teaching YL themselves and therefore I felt a deep respect towards INSETT people.*

The responses revealed the wide scale of feelings towards cooperation at the beginning of the project, a few mirrored a kind of uncertainty, but mostly participants welcomed the uniqueness of this opportunity.

4.2.2 Attitudes during the projects

Some respondents expressed the opinion that in the beginning of the project *'there proved to be a lot of uncertainty within the group'* (YL4/C), and also commented on *'the degree of anxiety and lack of confidence of most INSETT about the investigations'* (HC2/C). One respondent stated:

YL3/C: *I had expected that PRESETTERS would have greater knowledge and experience in theoretical aspects of TEYL.*

Nevertheless, 11 respondents gave clear evidence of the cooperation between INSETT and PRESETT, especially *'práci ve skupinách'* (group work) (YL3), *'mixed groups'* (YL4), *'shared experience'* (YL6, 13, 15), *'creating instruments for action research'* (YL5), *'differentiation of tasks'* (YL9), *'discussions'* (YL10, 13, 15) and *'various projects'* (YL16). One respondent said that *'… both groups benefited from the experience of the others'* (YL/E/02).

YL1/C: *Working together on collaborative tasks provided space for them to get to know one another.*

HC3/CE: *I really appreciate the mixture, having a chance to talk to INSETT and PRESETT, having a chance to share …*

Several respondents were aware that the group dynamics went through certain critical stages because of differences in the pace and style of work between INSETT and PRESETT members, and therefore they recognised that there was a need to work hard to maintain the cohesion of the group:

YL1/C: *… the course leader and programme manager worked supportively to overcome the difficulties and maintain group cohesion.*

HC1/C: *… the whole group was going through a steep learning curve …*

YL3/C *… we were a little disappointed that people tended more to gravitate to PRESETT or INSETT cliques unless manipulated by the tutor.*

YL/E/1: *… as PRESETT trainers tended to gravitate naturally towards other PRESETT trainers and the same for INSETT …*

One respondent, in particular, commented negatively on the PRESETT/INSETT cooperation:

YL11: *They (PRESETT) didn't think our work is useful.*

Despite the fact that there were some problems, there were comments giving *'very positive feedback on PRESETT and INSETT being together'* (HC/1/C), particularly after the first phase:

HC1/C: *… It became less PRESETT and INSETT, than a group of people going through a shared learning experience – the group identity became very strong.*

The initial plan as laid out in the project documents (BC Docs 1, 2) – to change the organisation of the two groups so that in Phase 2 there would be two groups divided by sector rather than by specialisation – was not carried out in the end. Thus the two groups, each specialising in either TEHC or TEYL and consisting of both PRESETT and INSETT participants, remained the same throughout the whole project.

HC1/C: *Partly for practical reasons … and partly due to the very positive response at the April course to INSETT and PRESETT trainers working together, it was decided that the July course would continue the pattern of the YL and HC groups meeting separately. This was a change from the original plan where it was intended that the July course would be split into two groups, PRESETT and INSETT, across both YL and HC.*

The style of cooperation developed in such a way as to bring about positive outcomes since the INSETT and PRESETT groups continued working together. Otherwise, a feeling of frustration could have appeared as respondent YL2 pointed out when she said that having changed the style of the work on the project *'might have caused tension and provoke[d] a feeling of inadequacy in some of the participants – personally in myself'*.

The variety of these responses shows that the development of working relationships between the PRESETT and INSETT participants was *'a step by step process'* (YL1/C), yet it led to many positive aspects which were appreciated by the majority of respondents. Once the participants of the project got used to working together, they were able to take advantage of the opportunities for mutual support between the two sectors.

4.2.3 Attitudes at the end of the projects

Perceptions of attitudes and cooperation between INSETT and PRESETT trainers

Most of the participants of the projects commented that the cooperation between the INSETT and PRESETT groups was a very significant unpredicted outcome of the projects.

YL3/C: *the COD [coordinators] team had always assumed that mixed groups would be a big risk when in fact it turned out very well.*

HC1/C: *… to be honest that might be tricky and not work as there were certain stereotypes on both sides.*

HC8/CE: *I didn't expect such good cooperation between INSETT and PRESETT.*

YL2/C: *At the final meeting members of both groups mentioned the value of the cooperation between the two groups.*

Four other respondents claimed that *'It fulfilled my expectations'* (YL1, 2, 6, 7), and some were really pleased that the INSETT and PRESETT groups had worked together:

YL4: *I found out INSETT people would not eat me and would not laugh at me – I found wonderful people among them willing to share.*

YL8: *I learned a lot from PRESETT people.*

YL15: *I enjoyed the theoretical knowledge of the PRESETT members.*

YL16: *… we really enriched each other and shared our experience.*

However, there was one respondent who did not enjoy the style of the project work:

YL11: *The PRESETT had completely different attitude and wishes.*

And another was unsure of its success:

HC1/C: *I wonder whether the stereotypes have really been broken and whether assumptions and practices have changed.*

We cannot say that all the respondents felt an absolute satisfaction with the cooperation between the INSETT and PRESETT groups, but the majority indicated that they highly appreciated it.

Hopes for future cooperation between the INSETT and PRESETT sectors

Respondents to the questionnaires expressed their vision of possible future cooperation between the PRESETT and INSETT groups of trainers. One respondent was not sure about cooperation in the Czech situation:

YL1/C: *At some point this has to become an individual initiative. If such initiatives are not taken, presumably this is because the culture of education within the Czech Republic is currently working against such principles.*

Nevertheless, 15 respondents could clearly envisage future cooperation between INSETT and PRESETT, either in a formal or informal style, in the areas of summer schools, courses, AMATE (Association of Teacher Educators) membership, the TRANSKELT (Transition Skills for ELT) project and so on.

HC1/C: *There's one TRANSKELT project which is mixed YL/HC INSETT/PRESETT.*

Respondents YL1, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 14 referred to working on courses together, summer schools and membership in AMATE.

YL2, 4, 3/C: *Organising workshops, presentations at conferences, publishing, producing materials, designing syllabuses.*

YL16: *INSETT trainers presenting at Ped. Facs and PRESETT running courses for practising teachers.*

YL/E/2: *Probably the most significant outcome of the Young Learners project is the plan to run a Young Learners Forum at the National Conference Zlin in September.*

YL2/C: *I'm sure it will now happen informally … there is a good pool now of people who are convinced of its usefulness … role for AMATE?*

As we can see, most respondents had a clear idea about future INSETT/PRESETT cooperation, its directions and style. They were aware that this style of work might be very useful for the training they provided. They also suggested potential roles in supporting this cooperation for the new teacher educators' organisation, AMATE, and the British Council TRANSKELT project.

Section 4.2 has dealt with the attitudes and working relationships between participants on the TEHC and TEYL projects. Although at the beginning of the course, the two different groups of teacher trainers came with different expectations, in the course of the project they were able to cooperate, develop mutual understanding and appreciate each other's expertise.

4.3 Perceptions of professional development and self-confidence

This section will discuss the process of professional development experienced by the trainers participating in the projects. It will look at the development of expertise; the participants' awareness of the benefits of mutual cooperation; the development of their self-confidence and the dissemination of expertise which they carried out after the projects.

4.3.1 Professional development in the specialist areas

The two projects aimed to support participants in developing their professional expertise by providing theoretical input, which was then put into practice by undertaking a research project. At first this input was presented in a common core for either TEHC or TEYL. Later the trainers were required to select an area of interest to explore in more depth individually: the input would then provide the theoretical background to their own research. Their progress was commented on by respondent YL/E/2: *'All participants were very definite that their professional development had been enhanced by the project.'*

Two others added their points of view:

YL/E/2: *… trainers have indeed become experts … they have consolidated their knowledge and expertise in areas of TEYL.*

HC3/C: *… a clearer understanding of knowledge, teaching skills and teaching materials around HC and dyslexia as well as action research.*

A few other respondents wrote that they *'gained new knowledge'* (HC1, 7) and *'better insight into'* (HC1) a broad range of HC and YL issues, for example:

HC2: *I learned a lot.*

HC3: *I understand more the pupils with learning difficulties …*

HC4: *insight into theoretical background*

HC8: *I learned the basic principles of differentiated teaching …*

As the participants' knowledge and understanding expanded, so they began to bring about some changes in their working methods:

YL3: *Snažím se pod praxí hledat teorii. (I try to look for theory in practice.)*

YL4: *I have started using more theoretical mini inputs during my workshops.*

YL9: *I feel more sure that I am not talking about something that does not exist in 'real life'.*

YL13: *I can use the 'transferred insight' and experience of the Insetters.*

HC10: *I became more aware of what happened in lessons.*

Several respondents realised that even though the delivered input was demanding, as stated in Section 4.1, they needed to work on themselves, and they felt the necessity to investigate their areas of interest more profoundly both during the project and after.

HC10: *I worked on myself a bit.*

HC2: *All the areas need more thorough investigation.*

HC12: *I needed it (areas to investigate) for my research.*

HC13: *… the area of research tools (formulating interview questions, questionnaires, etc.) and also the area of coursebooks used at schools currently, the area of children's psychology, etc.*

HC14: *The questions of implementation of cross-curricular approach …*

In this sub-section we have had a look at participants' professional development and one respondent claims that *'it (the HC project) helped me to be a better teacher'* (HC3). We can find evidence in these comments to suggest that trainers had enhanced their understanding of the practical parts of teaching HC and YL and realised their strength in the theoretical background. They became aware that substantial progress towards sharing and consolidating knowledge was accomplished.

4.3.2 Awareness of the benefits of INSETT and PRESETT groups working together

Respondents mentioned a further great advantage in style of work which enabled *'lots of discussions, sharing views, experience'* (YL 13, 15).

Two respondents commented:

YL1/C: *Almost all participants rapidly came to appreciate the value of maintaining group cohesion and of extending their shared knowledge with one trainer as expert in each of the fields of study.*

YL2/C: *I imagine they had already realised how useful it (In/Pre) might be.*

All but two of the others pointed to the ability of the group members to gain and share information and resources, to discuss YL and HC issues, and to acquire better skills for dissemination by exchanging *'ideas with other participants'* (YL4/C). Ten participants as well as the project coordinators, and also the British Council evaluation documents, speak in concordance about the positive aspects of INSETT and PRESETT sectors working together. For example:

YL2/C: *Preparation of action research: I observed a Presett trainer giving an Insett trainer advice about some methods to help her give a presentation effectively … the Insett trainer gained confidence and I think both benefited from the experience.*

YL4: *It somehow stemmed naturally from the nature of the course. I wanted to ask and know things I felt they could answer.*

YL7: *… we were able to describe the situation in a common classroom and they were able to help us with some more theoretical items.*

YL2/C: *Presett gaining new mentors, etc. Insett gaining insight into teacher training issues, sharing of expertise generally. Confidence boosting for both groups.*

Even though it was not the original idea to have mixed sector groups throughout the whole project (see Section 4.2.2), participants' *'increased awareness that each could learn from the other'* (YL1/C, 2, 6) *'was both useful and enjoyable'* (HC5).

YL2/C: *… they were manipulated to do so but I think once they got used to working in mixed groups, they could gain from sharing experiences and getting ideas from each other.*

Both groups of YL and HC PRESETT and INSETT became aware of similarities and differences in their work; they got to know each other and found that they had much in common. Both groups benefited from this unique project:

YL5: *… experience of tolerance and understanding people is valuable for any personal and professional circumstances.*

4.3.3 The growth of self-confidence

A thread concerning the development of trainers' confidence can be identified running through the whole of this section. YL3 commented on their feelings at the beginning of the course: *'Měla jsem strach, že tam bude příliš mnoho teorie a že na to nebudu stačit.' (I was afraid that there would be too much theory and I would not manage it.)*

This quotation shows uncertainty about readiness for the course and a lack of self-confidence in theoretical issues.

The growth of participants' self-confidence was really remarkable in terms of their gaining of knowledge, and their sharing and disseminating of expertise:

YL1/C: *… participants benefited from each others' experience, increasingly shared ideas to create a fuller understanding of YL training and classroom issues.*

HC1/C, 2/C: *… they were fully confident in terms of giving general support in the classroom to children with SpLD and … differentiating tasks …*

At the end of the project *'both knowledge and expertise positively shone out of the trainers at the June meeting'* (HC2/C) and moreover, *'the presentations were excellently delivered'* (YL4/C).

HC5/CE: *In terms of the confidence … in their knowledge of the nature of SpLD … the investigations played a major role here.*

YL/E/2: *Sharing with colleagues was extremely important factor in the group's strong feeling of confidence in this aspect.*

Respondent HCI states that *'nebýt této prezentace, tak bych nebyla schopna tu prezentaci do Maďarska a pak do Plzne připravit.' (Without this presentation I would not have been able to prepare the presentation for Hungary and then Plzen.)*

On the other hand, the level of confidence was not all the time the same, for *'everybody went through several episodes of catharsis in order to get through to the end'* (HC2/C). Several members of the groups had to overcome these difficulties because they *'felt involved, don't like giving up, interested'* (HC11), considered it moral to finish the course, or they could see *'no reason to give up'* (HC17):

HC10: *I like finishing things.*

HC7: *I felt obliged to.*

HC14: *If not for anything else then just to pay back at least a part of investment of time, energy and effort of all BC coordinators.*

Having analysed the responses, we can conclude that the presentations at the June meeting completed the participants' two years' work in YL or HC issues. They were able to introduce their presentations with self-confidence in a way that the others in the groups could enjoy.

4.3.4 Dissemination of expertise

Dissemination of knowledge and expertise from the projects by the participants represents proof of the extent to which they had gained in self-confidence. At the time of carrying out this evaluation research, trainers, both INSETT and PRESETT, gave evidence of drawing on the knowledge and experience gained through the project: in conference presentations (five); delivering seminars, workshops and courses (nine); articles for different periodicals, e.g. professional newsletters (three). Two participants were still struggling with articles for magazines. Several said that they had had informal discussions and continued to share with colleagues. Here are some examples of responses:

HC1: *Conference presentation – IATEFL Nyiregyhaza 2001, Plzen 2001, article in University of West Bohemia proceedings*

HC5: *Insett workshops (Ped.centrum), MSATE conference in Zlin 2001, proceedings – Sborník z konference CAPU, 2001 [Conference proceedings of the Czech Association of the Pedagogical Research], cooperation within Socrates – published on the web*

HC14: *I organised the International Workshop 26 September 2001 Praha.*

YL3: *Kupodivu spolupráce s pardubickou univerzitou na projektu metodického videa pro studenty učitelstvi, teď děláme druhou část. (With surprise, cooperation with University of Pardubice on the methodology video project for student-teachers, we are doing the second part now.)*

HC3: *seminars, workshops and summer courses for teachers*

HC11: *a series of workshops for Ts, an article in ATE Newsletter*

Only one respondent out of 19 who answered the questionnaire about their self-confidence said that she had *'no measurable results'* (HC8). Two experienced difficulty in being able to undertake dissemination: one mentioned *'time constraints only'* (HC7) and the other the concern that *'not many teachers are prepared to invest more time and energy into their work'* (HC14).

A follow-up questionnaire revealed that dissemination was a pleasant experience for respondents and they expressed their satisfaction:

Self5: *It is always pleasant if you have something to share.*

Self2: *The experience was generally pleasant.*

Two respondent felt both the positive and negative sides of such dissemination:

Self3: *Both, pleasant in terms of learning and working with other people from the same professional area, unpleasant sometimes when the accumulated stress and frustrations from work were topped with more work at weekends …*

Self4: *Pleasant, the feedback from participants was very positive, I have learned a lot designing and delivering the course. Unpleasant – too much travelling.*

Also trainers have in mind future intention of various types of dissemination as they consider it natural:

Self3: *Of course, it is my job.*

Self2: *… my further involvement depends on whether I have got something to say, so it's an ongoing process of learning – and nourishing that process of learning on my part …*

From the above it is clear that trainers who participated in this project felt a great deal of confidence about disseminating their knowledge; they enjoyed sharing experience with colleagues, and they spoke confidently about their expertise in the fields of TEYL and TEHC.

4.4 Summary of findings

The findings of this study can be presented as three main areas, which are mutually connected. Section 4.1 deals with the projects themselves, pointing to the workload, the content of the course and the materials given to participants. We can see that the workload was demanding and participants had to face up to this, but they coped with it in a more or less successful way. The same may be said about the professional input on the project, yet all but two respondents found their own way of assimilating the input and appreciated the balance between the theoretical and practical aspects. Materials, resources and books were highly esteemed, even though in some cases respondents considered them to be just a starting point. Two respondents were not satisfied with the range of published materials on offer in the Czech Republic related to TEHC and TEYL. It is necessary to discuss the content, workload and materials of the course as they form the frame for the next two chapters.

The second area of interest, Section 4.2, concerns the issue of attitudes and cooperation between PRESETT and INSETT participants before, during and after the project. Respondents commented on the opportunity, unique in the Czech Republic, to bring two groups of teacher trainers together. A wide range of feelings towards the cooperation between INSETT and PRESETT participants, uncertainty, enjoyment, etc., was displayed in the responses. This 'step by step process' led to many positive outcomes which were valued by the majority of respondents. Very largely, trainers claim that they felt satisfaction with the experience of working with colleagues, sharing experiences and cooperation between INSETT and PRESETT. Moreover, it is reported that the group cohesion was maintained and difficulties were overcome. At the end of this section, we see the majority of respondents giving a clear picture of their possible cooperation in future which mirrors their mutual tolerance and understanding.

The third area of this study, Section 4.3, concerns perceptions of the extent of professional development and development of the trainers' self-confidence in the specific areas of interest. The respondents claimed that their professional growth had been enhanced by the project; they had understood the practical aspects of teaching heterogeneous classes and young learners, they had realised their strength in the theoretical background, and they had consolidated their knowledge. The majority of respondents realised that even though there were both similarities and differences, they could benefit from each other since they had much to share.

The development of self-confidence was clearly evident in the participants' final research presentations at the end of the project. Furthermore, the investigations into specific areas of teaching young learners and heterogeneous classes were appreciated by respondents. The self-confidence in these fields gained by respondents led to a considerable amount of dissemination of expertise at different events.

5 Discussion and conclusion

This evaluation of the TEHC and TEYL projects deals with the projects run between 1999 and 2001. These projects arose from the needs of the Czech teacher trainers and seem to have had a great impact on participating teacher trainers.

In this chapter, I have presented my findings concerning two main areas of focus in the TEHC and TEYL projects: that of teacher trainers' self-confidence (both INSETT and PRESETT) and that of the experience and perceptions of INSETT and PRESETT teacher trainers regarding cooperation with each other. I approached 25 participants, two experts and three coordinators for responses to my different types of research instrument. The data was collected from the responses from 21 course participants, two experts and three coordinators in addition to six follow-up responses and British Council archive reports.

When analysing the responses, I found three broad concerns emerging from the data. First, respondents reacted to the workload, content and materials on the projects. All participants were full-time teachers representing all three levels of the educational system in the Czech Republic and some pointed to the fact that the work had been hard and demanding, but very useful. Some considered it to be a starting point for further study. Nevertheless, nearly everybody realised that it had been necessary for them to tackle the theoretical input because it led on to the practical part – their own investigations. Also they were able to benefit from doing such hard work in their subsequent dissemination of information and expertise.

Next, the cooperation between the INSETT and PRESETT participants was an issue which it was important to analyse. Nearly everybody felt and continues to feel very positive about the mutually positive attitudes, cooperation and good working relationships between the two groups of teacher trainers, PRESETT and INSETT working in the field of ELT methodology. The appreciation of exchanging ideas and experiences runs like a thread through Section 4.2 of this chapter. Most participants expressed a genuinely positive and welcoming attitude to future cooperation: this means that they see cooperation between the INSETT and PRESETT sectors as advantageous to both groups.

Finally, the third group of issues concerns the participants' perception of their professional development and increased self-confidence and the study reveals that most of those who finished the projects found that their understanding of TEYL and TEHC had been enhanced to a considerable extent. They gained an insight into the theoretical background, and, moreover, they were able to disseminate their knowledge by means of articles, seminars and workshops, and also in conferences in the Czech Republic and abroad. They consider dissemination of expertise as a part of their professional duty.

This chapter acknowledges that life-long learning is necessary for all teachers, either in-service or pre-service. Teacher training is essential and all participants confirmed that they themselves had obtained much both from disseminating the expertise they had gained and from the dissemination of their colleagues. The crucial issue of team flexibility is also pointed at in order to ensure the theoretical and practical issues of courses. It was a challenge for the organisers to meet the expectations and needs of the groups. Nevertheless, overcoming hurdles and a certain amount of distrust brought satisfaction to INSETT and PRESETT teacher trainers and experts.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that running such a cross-sectoral project provides a great opportunity for participants from different educational institutions to meet and work together. It will be a challenging task for future organisers to be able to fulfil all the expectation of participants. In the Czech context this organiser could be AMATE, the Association of Teacher Educators, which has the opportunity to bring people from different educational institutions together. It is important to plan cooperative projects such as summer schools, seminars and presentations of various kinds, and in particular these should be carried out for the benefit of all participants.

Summing up this evaluation, we can see that on the basis of the content, materials and workload of the project, the majority of respondents found that cooperation, mutual respect and close working relationships were a really positive experience and proved to be successful. They became self-confident enough in their areas of interest to be able to disseminate widely their knowledge and their experience.

References

BC Doc 1   (1999) *Project Document: Teaching English in Heterogeneous Classes* British Council Czech Republic

BC Doc 2   (1999) *Project Document Teaching English to Young Learners* British Council Czech Republic

BC Doc 3   (2000) *TEHC Phase 1 Evaluation* British Council Czech Republic

BC Doc 4   (2000) *TEYL Phase 1 Evaluation* British Council Czech Republic

BC Doc 5   (1998) Lindeman, J *Report on the Consultancy to the British Council on Specific Learning Difficulties in ELT in the Czech Republic*

BC Doc 6   (1998) Vémolová, V and Tauchmannová, V *Specific learning Difficulties in ELT: Baseline Evaluation Study* British Council Czech Republic

BC Doc 7   (1999) *Terms of Reference: consultancy in TEHC, TEYL* British Council Czech Republic

Appendix 1

Questionnaire for former participants in Young Learners Programme activities

Young Learners Programme evaluation

Dear colleagues,
I am doing a study of the Young Learners Programme on the basis of the BC courses in 1999–2001. This project is organised by the British Council, and it should point out what has been achieved so far.
Would you be so kind as to devote some time to answering these questions? All the information gained will be confidential. Thank you in advance.
With friendly regards,
Alena Literová

1   Are you an INSETT or a PRESETT teacher trainer? INSETT / PRESETT

2   Why did you take part in the British Council Young Learners programme?
    Please specify the reason.

3a What were your expectations before starting the programme?
3b How were your expectations met?

If you did not meet your expectations, what was the difference between your expectations and the reality?

4a Did you find the amount of materials received during the programme for you:
    plenty of materials   appropriate amount   not enough
    Please explain your answer.
4b How did you find the workload during the YL course:
    too heavy   heavy   about right   light   too light
    Please explain your answer.
4c Can you express whether, if at all, the materials and the workload of the course helped you see your way in the area of YL? Yes/No
    Could you characterise to what extent?
4d) Did you finish the course? Yes/No   If not, why?   If yes, why?

5) Doing your research (case study) in the field of YL, did you find any areas which you had to investigate more profoundly?
    If yes, which and why?

6) Have you disseminated gained knowledge? Yes/No   If yes, how?   If not, why?

7) Have you experienced any difficulties in disseminating your findings? Yes/No
    If yes, please, specify.   If not, why?

8) Was any area of teaching YL particularly important for you? Yes/No   If yes, which area?   Why?

9) Would you like to add any other comments you consider relevant to the YL course?

Thank you very much for your help with the evaluation and your time spent on filling in the questionnaire.

Appendix 2

Follow-up questionnaire on professional development for Young Learners and Heterogeneous Classes Programme coordinators

Would you be so kind as to devote some time to answering these questions? All the information gained will be confidential. Please, use as much space as you need for answering these questions. Thank you in advance for your time spent on filling in the questionnaire.

1) Which phase of the project did you coordinate? Phase 1   Phase 2   (Please tick one or both.)
2) What were your expectations before starting the YL/HC programme?
3) How were your expectations met?

If you did not meet your expectations, what was the difference between your expectations and the reality?

4) Did you find the amount of materials given to participants during the programme:
   plenty of materials   appropriate amount   not enough
   Please explain your answer.
5) Did you find the workload for participants during the YL/HC course?
   too heavy   heavy   about right   light   too light
   Please explain your answer.
6) Can you express whether, if at all, the materials and the workload of the course helped participants see their way in the area of YL/HC? Yes/No
   If Yes, could you characterise to what extent?
7) Did you notice any significant rise in participants' knowledge? Yes/No
   If Yes, can you comment on it?   If No, what were the reasons?
8) Could you comment on the level of participants' knowledge in YL/HC programme at the beginning and at the end of the project?
9) What were your impressions from the participants' presentations?

Appendix 3

Questionnaire on dissemination of workshop experiences

This is a question I would like you to think a bit more about:

1) Have you disseminated anything that you gained (e.g. knowledge)?   Yes/No

2) If not, why not?

3) If you answered Yes to Question 1, please explain:
   – where you carried out the dissemination.
   – how many listeners/participants there were.
   – what the topic of your dissemination was.
   – whether the amount of material and sources obtained in the HC/YL course was sufficient for the presentation.
   – whether you managed to deliver what you wanted.
   – whether the experience was pleasant or unpleasant and why.
   – whether you have any plans to carry out further dissemination activities in future.

CHAPTER 9

Courses for teachers of English for Specific Purposes

Daniela Bísková

This chapter describes a qualitative study of the impact of training for university teachers of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The focus is on training provided by the British Council but taught largely by Czech trainers. The study investigates how the teachers' approach to teaching changed after their training and how they disseminated what they had learned during the training. Findings indicate that teachers enjoy their work and that they appreciate the training for a number of reasons; they also try to share new ideas with colleagues. However, it is not easy to find a direct link between training and changes in teaching practice.

1   Introduction

The chapter is divided into several sections. First, I briefly describe the situation of teaching English for Specific Purposes in the language departments at universities in the Czech Republic before 1997 and why there was a need for ESP teacher training.

My aim is to find answers to these questions: 1 How did teachers' approach to teaching change after attending an ESP course? and 2 How did teachers disseminate in their departments the information and methodological approaches gained while attending ESP courses? The way I tried to answer these questions is described in the section *Methodology*.

The main part of this chapter is Section 4, *Findings*, where I look at different aspects of the impact of the ESP courses: How has the attitude of ESP teachers to teaching changed after attending a British Council ESP course? What is the participants' perception of the course they attended? I will also discuss whether and how much they have gone back over the materials obtained on the ESP course they attended, how they shared their experience of the course with their colleagues in their departments, and, finally, what effect, if any, the course has had on their teaching or on their colleagues in their departments as far as using teaching materials or aids, or designing syllabi are concerned.

The results of the analysis are summarised and then the chapter ends with a brief discussion of implications.

I have decided to use the pronoun *she* throughout the chapter when speaking about an ESP teacher. The questionnaire sent to respondents is to be found in the Appendices. The complete archive of the study will be kept by myself; its electronic version is stored by Hywel Coleman in Leeds and at the offices of the British Council in Prague.

2   Context: the ESP trainer training project

This study is concerned with the impact that ESP teacher training, delivered by Czech ESP teacher trainers, had on tertiary ESP teachers.

A need for ESP teacher training in the Czech Republic was perceived by the British Council ELT coordinators. This was after a period of several years during which they had investigated the situation and needs in the language departments at technical universities, law faculties, humanities and science faculties and other higher education institutions where English was taught other than as a main subject. Coordinators' regular reports from the period 1996–97 reveal that several departments were lacking in resources and teachers specifically trained to teach ESP, rather than in general English teaching methodology. Therefore, having identified this great need, the British Council decided to set up a new ESP project focused primarily on professional development for teacher trainers. The aim was first, to provide training in ESP and then, to identify a possible cadre of ESP teachers who could go on to be trained to become ESP teacher trainers. The process started in February 1998 and in the following four years, 16 ESP trainers, who came from diverse ESP backgrounds, were trained to plan and deliver courses for ESP teachers.

In this study I concentrate on the impact of three courses for ESP teachers. They were planned, organised and delivered by the Czech ESP teacher trainers either through team-teaching with British Council ELT coordinators or under their guidance and with their support.

It is important to highlight the significance of these three courses in relation to their overall position as part of the process of this ESP trainer-training. They formed the third stage in the project, an important stage when the trainers gained practical experience in applying the skills and expertise they had been acquiring.

In Stage one, the two main focuses of the project were: 1 identifying needs through extensive consultations with departments and at networking meetings, and 2 providing input in methodology areas which had particular relevance to ESP, such as syllabus design, needs analysis, testing, genre analysis and materials design. This input was given through two intensive winter courses, one in 1997 the other in 1998 for 30 and 45 participants respectively – all experienced tertiary level teachers. In addition, seven teachers were sponsored by the British Council to attend intensive ESP summer schools in the UK in 1997.

In Stage two, 17 teachers from among the Stage one participants volunteered to go forward and take part in trainer training courses delivered by a team from the Institute of Applied Language Studies (IALS), University of Edinburgh. They had two professional input courses and then went on to put into practice what they had learned through a programme of supported experience. The Czech trainers taught ESP methodology on an intensive course for other teachers and were co-planning, team-teaching and receiving feedback from the British Council ELT team.

Stage three, spread over a year and a half from September 1999 to February 2001, concentrated on providing further and more independent practical experience, which included the three courses under investigation in this study. These were designed and taught by the Czech trainers themselves. Support and guidance was provided by the British Council coordinator team who organised and facilitated a series of planning workshops, which included some additional sessions of methodology as required.

The first two courses lasted three and a half days each and took place in January and February 2000. They were aimed at experienced tertiary ESP teachers and provided input in materials development and syllabus development respectively. British Council coordinators, after having designed the courses, invited the Czech ESP teacher trainers to volunteer for those sessions for which they wished to be responsible. The participants, who attended the courses free of charge, were nominated by a wide range of ESP departments

Two groups of ESP teacher trainers (16 people altogether) and the British Council coordinators met twice to prepare sessions for the two courses, once for a weekend and once for a single day. Some ESP teacher trainers worked in cooperation with a British Council coordinator, some worked with a colleague, others prepared sessions on their own, depending on their wishes or circumstances. The two courses were attended by 14 and 15 ESP tertiary teachers respectively from different language departments (including for example agriculture, business, computing, economics, electrical engineering, law, medicine and textiles). The sessions covered aspects of methodology relevant to ESP: needs analysis, evaluation, syllabus development, materials development, genre analysis and task chaining. Furthermore, all the participants worked on projects on materials or syllabus development.

The third course took place in February 2001. It was a three-day course, planned, organised and delivered by six Czech ESP teacher trainers who were supported by a British Council coordinator. The ESP teacher trainers planned and delivered their sessions individually. However, during the preparation they consulted each other about their plans so as to ensure the

coherence of the course. The aim of the course was to build on the participants' skills and knowledge of ESP methodology which they had gained on a previous British Council ESP course. Sixteen tertiary ESP teachers from different language departments attended the course. The sessions comprised materials development and syllabus design, genre analysis, how to give oral presentations, and using video in teaching. All participants worked on projects during which they developed a teaching plan or an activity which they could take back to their departments and use in their teaching. The projects are discussed in more detail in Section 4.3, *Handling course materials,* later in this chapter.

Since then, in what could be called a post-project Stage four, Czech ESP teacher trainers from this project have gone on to organise more workshops and seminars, for which the British Council has provided funding. (Details can be found in ESP files in the offices of the British Council in Prague.)

3   Methodology

The objective of this investigation is to find out if ESP teacher training had any impact on teachers in language departments at the tertiary level. To be able to establish the possible impact of ESP courses, I asked these questions: 1 How did teachers' approach to teaching change after attending an ESP course? and 2 How did teachers disseminate within their departments the information and methodological approaches gained while attending ESP courses?

I decided to ask the ESP teachers who attended one of the two ESP courses in Unhost (January and February 2000) or the ESP course in Podebrady (February 2001) to respond to a questionnaire. It was designed so that the questions encompassed the situation before the course, the course itself, and the situation after the course (see Appendix 1). I piloted the questionnaire with my fellow ESP teacher trainers (ESP teachers trained by the British Council between 1998 and 2001). Because of the diversity of faculties the teachers work in and the easy access to e-mail addresses, I decided to contact everybody by e-mail, except for one participant for whom only a postal address was available.

First I sent out a preliminary letter to which the addressees were invited to reply if they did not wish to receive the questionnaire. Then I distributed 28 questionnaires and in due course received 14 responses. To clarify some answers, I had to ask follow-up questions of ten respondents (see Appendix 2) and I received nine responses. I then asked further questions of six respondents and received six responses. Another source of data is my notes from a visit to the language department of a faculty.

I found these instruments (the questionnaire, follow-up questions and a departmental visit) sufficient for this study, which was carried out under severe time constraints. If time had allowed, it would have been beneficial to access more data through interviews, especially in order to ask further questions regarding issues which arose from the questionnaire responses.

4   Findings

My task was to find out what impact, if any, ESP teacher training had on ESP teachers from university language departments. I have concentrated on a rather brief period of two years, i.e. three courses for ESP teachers in 2000 and 2001, because these were the only courses that were planned and led by Czech ESP teacher trainers either in cooperation with the British Council coordinators or on their own, but, of course, with the British Council's support.

The main finding which became clear from the data was that the respondents – ESP teachers who attended the three ESP methodology courses – all claimed to enjoy teaching. All of them had found on the ESP course something which they believed to be beneficial for themselves or their departments. I therefore wanted to know if the courses had influenced their teaching in any way. We will look at the ESP teachers' own perceptions of themselves as an indirect measure of impact.

In this section I will first try to look at the ESP teachers' attitude to teaching. I will also look at their perceptions of the ESP course they attended. I will discuss whether and how much they went back over the materials obtained on the ESP course they had attended, and then how they disseminated and shared their experience with their departmental colleagues. I will also examine what effect, if any, they felt the course had had on their teaching or their departments as far as using teaching materials or aids or designing syllabi are concerned.

4.1 Attitude to teaching

One of the original key questions was concerned with the impact that attending an ESP course had on an ESP teacher's confidence. In the questionnaire I avoided direct questions about the impact on the respondent's confidence. The reason was that I did not want the respondents' answers to be biased in any way; I wanted to find out indirectly, to deduce the impact from their answers to open questions. However, I realised that I was not able to find out much about the respondents' confidence but I was able to discover something about their attitude to teaching. They all indicated that, both before attending the course and afterwards, they found teaching either 'very enjoyable' or 'enjoyable'. Therefore I wanted to know whether their attitudes to teaching had changed since attending the ESP course. In this section I will briefly discuss the reasons given by the ESP teachers for their enjoyment of teaching.

From the respondents' responses I saw that they find teaching either 'very enjoyable' or 'enjoyable' (see Appendix 1, Questionnaire for ESP teachers, questions A4 and C8), though one respondent suggests that teaching ESP *is hard work sometimes'* (Q10/C8). There is no evidence to show that attending an ESP course caused any change to this attitude. Nevertheless, I was able to put the reasons which the respondents gave for enjoying teaching into four categories:

1 Teaching ESP is challenging (and interesting) because there is *'always something new', 'it opens other fields of specific knowledge'* which teaching general English does not offer:

Q14/A4: *I find ESP teaching very challenging and interesting for me as it opens other fields of specific knowledge I want to explore.*

Q09/C8: *... it is both more challenging and more interesting than teaching general English.*

2 Teaching ESP means learning because an ESP teacher comes across new topics that she can study and so expand her knowledge. In fact, an ESP teacher can study things that she never would if she taught general English. Moreover, teaching ESP often means preparing a lot of materials as there are not always suitable books in the departments (Q02/A4) and so it often feels *'like another school'* for the teacher. So although, as mentioned above, teaching ESP *'is hard work sometimes'* (Q10/C8) *it is still enjoyed:*

Q10/C8: *The positive thing about ESP is the knowledge that you expand on. It is usually a new field we do not know much about but is worth finding out. It makes us do and study things we would not if we were teaching just general English.*

Q14/A4: *... it opens other fields of specific knowledge I want to explore.*

3 Teaching ESP is creative because, while preparing materials, the ESP teacher has to *'combine language teaching with interesting topics'* and employ *'analytical thinking':*

Q1/A4/C8: *... creative job ...*

Q7/A4: *... I like the subject and the way you can combine language teaching with an interesting topic, as well as with analytical thinking.*

4 Teaching ESP is rewarding because an ESP teacher can see that it is possible to prepare students for their future career (see also Section 4.5 below):

Q7/A4: *... the students – they mostly have the ability to learn efficiently and they are not hard to motivate.*

Q12/A4: *I found it rewarding as in ESP courses I could concentrate on what was actually related with my students' main subjects or with their future careers.*

Not all the respondents expanded on their answers and so they did not go into a great deal of detail about why they enjoyed teaching. However, I felt a great excitement over these findings, because it became obvious to me that teachers who enjoy teaching and find it challenging, creative and rewarding also attended an ESP course. Their perceptions of the course are discussed in the following section.

4.2 Perceptions of the ESP courses

This section will deal with some of the participants' perceptions of the three ESP methodology courses mentioned above. It can be taken as a delayed evaluation, as one or two years had elapsed between the course and this evaluation project. The respondents participated in one of the three courses and I investigated their perceptions of the ESP course they had attended in order to be able to answer the question I had asked at the beginning of this project, i.e. what impact if any ESP teacher training had on ESP teachers in university language departments.

Even after a year or two, all the respondents remembered something from the course they had attended. Their memories were mostly of meeting other ESP teachers, of the friendly atmosphere and sharing ideas with others (see the questionnaires in the

Appendices). Meeting others, finding a new stimulus and motivation were in fact the main reasons why the respondents found the course beneficial to themselves or their departments. In fact, their responses can be classified into three basic groups: 1 networking, 2 a new stimulus, motivation and insight, and 3 project work.

As I have already mentioned, **networking** was a very important factor in their perceptions of the course. Here are a few examples from a large number of comments the respondents made:

Q1/B1a: … *sharing ideas and discussing common problems, learning about 'how they do it somewhere else'.*

Q4/B1a/Resp.7–2: … *Meeting new people – ESP teachers … Exchanging our experience was probably the most important thing there.*

Q12/B1a: *Meeting colleagues from different universities and sharing experiences.*

Networking was a very important point because people share ideas and so get a new insight into teaching ESP and it motivates and stimulates them, as we can see from the respondents' comments:

Q1/Resp 3: … *I believe that the ESP course helped me to realise that needs analysis is an important issue when designing a course …*

Q4/B2a: … *It gave me a brand new insight into my work. From then on, I have been doing everything in a different way.*

Q10/Resp 6: *The Podebrady course was a kind of stimulus for me to work harder on myself as an ESP teacher.*

A major component which was integrated into each of the three ESP methodology courses was work on a project (see the next section for details). The importance of this emerged very clearly. The participants found work on the project enjoyable and interesting because they had an opportunity to work on topics which they found important for their own teaching or departments:

Q2/B2a: … *the projects were concrete, people worked on topics they found important for their departments …*

Q1/B2b: *I was doing something useful for my actual teaching.*

Not only was it something the participants enjoyed doing, but they also found it useful:

Q12/B2a: *It was an enjoyable and challenging work as we received a feedback throughout the process of creating the final product.*

In many cases they said they have used the whole project or part of it in their teaching (see Section 4.3).

However, some respondents found the project work problematic, either because being from different departments/faculties made cooperation difficult, or because they wished there had been more time for a follow-up discussion:

Q2/B2a: … *group of people from different faculties or departments could hardly ever work on a concrete and useful syllabus for everybody.*

Q1/ B2a: *There wasn't much time to speak about them and to analyse them, which was a pity.*

One respondent thought that it was not beneficial for the participants to use the input from the course in the project:

Q6/B2a: … *I did not like the fact that everyone (well, the majority) did presentations and basically copied what was said in the sessions. I think that could not have been very beneficial.*

At the beginning I had thought that this part of the questionnaire dealing with the ESP course itself, i.e. Part B, was just a 'filler', a bridge that would take the respondents back in time and help me get their reactions to the next part of the questionnaire, which dealt with the situation after attending a course. However, when analysing the data, I saw that it was a necessary link in the study; there was so much material and interesting data that it gave my analysis a new direction.

4.3 Handling course materials

In Section 4.2, I mentioned the importance of the project work because the respondents found it useful and in many cases they reported having used the whole project or part of it in their teaching. Their responses indicate that all respondents have made further use of either their projects or the handouts and notes from the course they attended. In this section I will discuss the projects the respondents worked on during the course and the handouts or notes they have returned to (and their significance in teaching).

As noted earlier, all participants worked on a project where they individually or in small teams designed a syllabus, developed teaching material or planned a lesson, etc. The respondents reported that they had returned to their project after the course and used it in whole or in part during their teaching or when designing a syllabus or materials. Another reason given for returning to the project was professional development:

Q4/B2d: … *it proved an excellent grounding for our work. I personally profit from it very much as I continue to work this way and can see progress in my teaching techniques as well as my knowledge of English.*

Teaching giving presentations is often part of an ESP syllabus and the projects seem to have been a good source of materials and ideas for a variety of skills and classroom activities. Examples cited include making effective oral presentations (Q5/C3), role plays (Q7/C3) and interviewing skills (Q13/C3).

Others claimed that the project was useful in an unspecified way:

Q12/C3: *I have used the whole project.*

Some respondents reported that they have also used ideas from other people's projects because they felt that their own materials would be enriched in this way:

Q3/C4: *to enrich my repertoire*

Q7/C4: *Use of journals in class, Panel discussion … I adapted it to the specific needs of my classes.*

Q10/C4: *Warming up exercises others used in their presentations … To start off the lesson, to make students participate actively.*

On the other hand, some respondents did not find other projects interesting (Q6/C4), some did not take notes (Q1/C4) or they felt that the topic would not be appropriate for their students (Q8/C4).

There are, however, two respondents who say that they have never returned to the project, the reasons being no opportunity (Q10/C3), or not having access to the necessary facilities in the department:

Q6/C3: *Cannot use video as we have only two and my lessons are not in the classrooms with a video.*

The ESP course participants referred back to course handouts and materials for a number of different reasons, including:

1 seeking information about methodology

Q6/C2: *To remember points about presentations and also to use some materials at lessons. Especially, there was a session based on application letters and I used that in my lessons.*

Q11/C2: *How to work with texts …*

2 looking for new ideas

Q2/C2: *… material concerning general ideas about reading activities …*

Q4/C2: *… For ideas, for help …*

3 as part of a process of reflection, feedback or evaluation

Q14/C2: *Because they help my students identify their needs and can be used for reflecting/feedback as well. … I can find more about my students and they can better realise what they want.*

4 when designing syllabi or materials

Q10/C2: *When looking at the difference between aims, goals and objectives.*

Q12/C2: *To those on materials design.*

One respondent (Q1/C2) said that she returned to the list of course participants for contacts.

Having discussed the different reasons why participants on ESP courses refer back to the handouts, notes and projects from the course, as all of the respondents have done to some extent, it seems that my key question about what impact, if any, ESP teacher training has had on ESP teachers can be given a positive response. The course enriched the participants by giving them fresh ideas for their teaching, helping their professional development, encouraging them to reflect on their teaching and making them aware of colleagues in other faculties.

4.4 Materials and aids used in teaching

We have already seen that ESP courses have influenced the respondents' teaching in some respects. In this section I would like to investigate if any change in materials and aids used in teaching was brought about directly by the course and if teaching experience played any role in it.

From the questionnaire we can see that fewer than half of all the respondents (42%) said that they started using different materials and aids after attending an ESP course (Appendix 1, Questions A2 and C6). Among those who did claim to be using different methods and aids, the following respondents explained why they were now making use of the video and OHP respectively:

Resp 2: *… I found ways how to use video effectively.*

Resp 3–2: *… I hadn't used OHP before Podebrady at all. But there you showed me how it can be used and I thought it's a good aid.*

Another respondent claimed that the ESP course influenced her way of using teaching materials:

Q9/B1a: *I really enjoyed the chance to work on new materials development. I've been using everything I developed in Unhost in my classes.*

Some respondents said that although they started using an OHP after the course, they cannot say if this was a direct influence of the course:

Resp 7–2: *… Somebody must have told me it (OHT) is useful.*

There is no evidence to indicate that there is a correlation between the length of teaching experience (Question A1) and

changes in using teaching aids and materials (Questions A2 and C6). I have to conclude, therefore, that we are not able to say very much about the impact which participation in an ESP course has on teachers' use of teaching materials and aids.

4.5 Syllabi and the ESP course

In this section I will investigate what impact participation in an ESP course has on the ways ESP teachers design their syllabi. We will look at the changes that occurred after the participants attended the ESP course, why they changed their ways of designing syllabi, and whether the ESP course played a role in those changes.

Most respondents, ten out of 13 (Appendix 1, Questions A3 and C7) claimed that there were changes in the way they designed their syllabi before and after attending the ESP course. Both in questionnaire responses and in their answers to the follow-up question, some respondents stated that the change was needed because they were not fully satisfied with the way syllabi in their departments had been designed:

Resp 1: … *I have realised that the syllabus given in the book is not always appropriate to my student's needs.*

Q2/C2: … *I changed a bit my attitude towards syllabuses and I prepared them in a more detailed way.*

Others claimed that they had not designed syllabi previously.

Syllabus design was one of the main themes of the ESP courses and the participants say that they benefited from the sessions on this issue. In response to question B1b (What sessions were most beneficial to you/your department? Why?), the respondents gave these answers:

Q5: … *preparation of syllabus. It was the most useful for me.*

Q14/A3: … *I especially concentrated on the sessions dealing with syllabus designing.*

Many respondents (50%) say that they have started designing their syllabi on the basis of needs analysis (Appendix 1, Questions A3 and C7) because, as one of them (Resp 3) says, *'the ESP course helped me to realise that needs analysis is an important issue when designing a course'*. The ESP course seems to have had a direct influence on the way syllabi in ESP departments are designed because the respondents say that they were inspired by their projects, (which concerned syllabus design), or that they have been using their projects, *'with minor modifications'*, as the basis on which to build their courses:

Q2/C4: *I got a better idea in general how to prepare it, or at least which approach to take.*

Q12/C3: … *it was a syllabus design, I have used it for my courses with only minor modifications.*

Of course, it is not likely that all the changes in the way syllabi have been designed have been brought about by participation in the ESP course, but we could perhaps say that the participants' awareness of the importance of needs analysis when designing a syllabus was raised:

Resp 1–2: … *I am sure it was not the influence of the ESP course in Unhost that I started to use needs analysis in designing syllabi, it only enhanced me in doing so …*

Resp 6–2: … *it was partly the influence of the ESP course that I started using needs analysis in designing syllabi.*

Some respondents did not indicate any change in their approach to syllabus design, either because they did not feel any need for a change: *'I do not have to make severe changes to the syllabus in terms of redesigning it completely. I do use a needs analysis but it usually means slight adjustments of the syllabus design'* (Q8/C7) or because syllabi were already based on needs analyses in the respondent's department even before they took part in the ESP course (Q13, Appendix 1, questions A3–C7).

From this section we can see that participating in an ESP course had an impact on the way ESP teachers designed their syllabi.

4.6 Dissemination after attending ESP courses

Dissemination of experience or knowledge stands high on the agenda of all activities supported by the British Council and therefore we shall look at the ways participants in ESP courses shared in their departments their experience from the ESP course they attended, what their colleagues' reaction was and what difficulties the participants faced.

On the evidence of the respondents' responses in the questionnaire and from the notes from a visit to a language department of a faculty, it is clear that dissemination really did take place. It can be thought of in three ways: formal dissemination, informal dissemination and dissemination through introducing ideas.

As an illustration of the first of these modes of dissemination, two participants say they were able to share their experience of the ESP course at a staff meeting:

Q2/C1: *There was a department meeting where we discussed things … we could use at our department …*

Other participants say that they found opportunities to share their experience informally, whilst others made the materials from the course available to their colleagues:

Q1: *Just occasionally I told some of them about a few ideas …*

Q12: *After attending a course we share our experiences with our colleagues at the department and make all materials available to them.*

From some responses we can see that the participants introduced ideas from the ESP course to their department and their colleagues were happy to use the materials or techniques:

Q9/C1: *I incorporated the results of our Unhost project into our classroom activities … my colleagues were happy to use the materials and activities I developed on the basis of the project.*

In general, it appears that dissemination of materials and ideas from ESP courses was well accepted in the departments:

Q1: *[They] were interested … took it as inspiration …*

Q12: *They were particularly interested in some ideas concerning materials design.*

However, some participants appear to have had problems with sharing their course experience. Reasons given include issues of time or lack of interest among colleagues:

Q5/C1: *I didn't have this opportunity. As the summer semester started immediately I returned from the course, there was not enough time to talk about it.*

Q1/C1: *I told some of them about a few ideas. But nothing much due to rather little time and interest.*

Five respondents (38%) report that their colleagues have used ideas brought back from one of the ESP courses:

Q9: *Most of the teachers at our department have successfully introduced task chaining.*

My own field notes from a visit to an ESP department record that ' … X shared her ideas with others in the department (also with the teachers of French and German) and they have been using it, too …)'.

On the whole, therefore, we can deduce that ESP courses have had an impact on ESP departments.

5   Summary

In this chapter I have presented findings regarding the impact of ESP teacher training on ESP teachers from university language departments. The respondents participated in one of three courses for ESP teachers (held in January and February 2000 and February 2001) which were partly or fully delivered by Czech ESP teacher trainers under the auspices of the British Council.

Analysing the data was very exciting as it emerged quite clearly that the teachers who attended the ESP courses all enjoy teaching ESP. They find it challenging and interesting because *'it opens other fields of specific knowledge'*. They also say that teaching ESP means learning because an ESP teacher *'comes across new topics that she can study and so expand her knowledge'*. Moreover, the respondents also explain that they find teaching ESP creative and rewarding.

We have discovered that teachers found the ESP course beneficial because it enabled them to meet others, to find new motivation and to undertake project work. The respondents also often mention that after the course they have referred back to their projects and have made use of them in their teaching or when designing materials or syllabi. They also say that they have continued to exploit handouts or materials from the ESP course, adding that they feel that course materials help them to develop professionally, to reflect on their teaching, to improve their methodology, to develop materials and to design syllabi better. Handouts or materials from the ESP course are said to give them new ideas, and, also, are important for maintaining contact with other course participants.

We have attempted to investigate changes in teachers' use of teaching materials and aids as a consequence of participating in one of the ESP courses. It has not been possible to establish that there is such a relationship, however. Although not all changes in the way syllabi have been designed can be attributed to the influence of the ESP course, there is evidence that participants have become aware of the importance of analysing the needs of their students when designing a syllabus.

Dissemination of experience or knowledge always stands high on the agenda of all activities supported by the British Council. From the respondents' responses we can see that sharing experiences with colleagues in their respective departments did indeed take place; it occurred formally, informally and through introducing ideas. The participants say not only that they have

introduced ideas from the ESP courses in their departments, but also that their colleagues were happy to use the materials and techniques.

From the foregoing, we can deduce that the principal finding to emerge from this study is that the ESP teacher training courses had an impact not only on ESP teachers but also on their respective departments.

6   Implications

Although the scope of the study is very limited, there are several points that we can look at in anticipation for the future. One of the main issues is the need for networking among ESP teachers. The respondents who contributed to this survey showed that they liked sharing their experiences with others and found it helpful to see how their colleagues coped with teaching ESP, albeit in different contexts. ESP courses are perceived as a very good means for achieving this exchange of experiences.

Secondly, ESP is usually taught by teachers who are qualified only to teach general English. ESP methodology, however, has its own characteristics. ESP-specific professional development for teachers is very important since students need skills that will enable them to communicate in English in their future professions. Although there are many areas of specialisation within ESP, they share a common methodology. ESP courses delivered through the project were successful, as far as can be judged from participants' self-reports.

In view of the need to share experiences and to provide opportunities for ESP teachers to continue developing on an ongoing basis, it would be desirable for ESP courses to continue to be offered. However, there seems to be *a potential problem about organisation of ESP training in the future*, as the former British Council ELT/ESP coordinator writes *because there is, at present, no suitable structure … this raises the question of finance …*' (Berezai 2001). Therefore, ESP teacher trainers have been encouraged by the British Council to seek a framework which would enable them to continue undertaking their own development and also the development of other ESP teachers in the future. AMATE (Asociace Metodiku/Association of Teacher Educators), established in 2001, of which the majority of ESP teacher trainers are members, might prove to be the right structure to give the necessary support. However, at the time of writing, AMATE has been in existence for less than one year and so it is too soon to see if its support and encouragement will be sufficient.

Another point worth noting is that ESP teachers say that they either *enjoy teaching ESP* or *enjoy it very much*. If that is the case, it would seem to be important to provide opportunities for teachers constantly to update their ESP methodology so that their interest in teaching remains fresh. Finally, it would be beneficial to undertake detailed investigations of the real situation in tertiary ESP departments. In this way, we will be in a better position to know how to make the most effective use of what we learn from attitudinal surveys of ESP teachers and their trainers; this in turn should make it possible for teachers and trainers to develop to their full potential.

References

Berezai, C (2001) *Evaluation Report on the British Council Project on English for Specific Purposes* The British Council, Prague

Appendix 1

Questionnaire for ESP teachers

Would you please take time to answer this questionnaire? It is for all participants of the ESP courses in Unhost, February 2000, and Podebrady, February 2001. Please answer the questions in all three parts (A, B and C) as fully as possible. Feel free to use as much space as you require to answer the questions. Your answers, without your name, will be used to evaluate the ESP project of the British Council. It would be very much appreciated if you would return the completed questionnaire by 3rd December 2001.

Part A *(concerns the time **before** attending the Unhost 2000/Podebrady 2001 ESP course)*

1 How long did you teach ESP before attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course? ……. year(s)
2 What teaching aids and materials did you use most frequently in your ESP classes before attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course (e.g. textbook, photocopied pages, own teaching materials, black/white board, OHP, realia, tape recorder, video, ICT, etc.)? Please underline those that applied to your situation then and add any that are missing:
3 What was the usual way of designing a syllabus in your department?
 Please tick as many as you wish: ✓
 – syllabus from the previous years was reused
 – syllabus based on textbooks
 – syllabus based on needs analysis
 – vocabulary-based syllabus
 – topic-based syllabus
 – functional syllabus
 – other
 Please comment on any aspects of designing your syllabus before attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course:
4 Did you, prior to the course, find teaching ESP (please tick)
                              ✓
 – Very enjoyable?
 – Enjoyable?
 – Unenjoyable?
 – Very unenjoyable?
 – Other?
 Please expand on your answer. What were the reasons for feeling the way you did?

Part B *(concerns the time **at** the Unhost 2000/Podebrady 2001 ESP course)*

1 a) What aspects of the course (Unhost/Podebrady) were the most memorable?
 b) What sessions were the most beneficial to you/your department? Why?
 c) What sessions were the least beneficial to you/your department? Why?
2 a) What do you remember about the project work – your own/other participants' (in Unhost/Podebrady)?
 b) How did you feel at the time of working on your project?
 c) How did you feel at the time of presenting your project?
 d) Did you finish your project on the course? YES/NO (please underline)
   If not, did you finish your project after the course? YES/NO (please underline)
   If not, why not?

Part C *(concerns the time **after** attending the Unhost 00/Podebrady 01 ESP course)*

1 What opportunities did you have to share your experiences from the course with your colleagues?
Please specify:
What was their response?

2 Have you ever returned to the handouts/your notes from the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course?
YES – To what exactly? Why?
NO – Why not?

3 Have you used any part of your project from Unhost/Podebrady in your own teaching?
YES – What in particular?
How did you use it?
NO – Why not?

4 Have you used any ideas from someone else's project from Unhost/Podebrady in your teaching?
YES – What in particular?
How did you use it?
NO – Why not?

5 Have any of your colleagues used any ideas you brought back from Unhost/Podebrady? YES/NO (please underline)
If yes, please give details:

6 What teaching aids and materials in general have you used most frequently since attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course (e.g. textbook, photocopied pages, own teaching materials, black/white board, OHP, realia, tape recorder, video, ICT, etc.)? Please underline those that apply to your situation now and add any that are missing:

7 How have you been designing the syllabus in your department since attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course? Please tick as many as appropriate:

	✓
– syllabus from the previous years is reused	
– syllabus based on textbooks	
– syllabus based on needs analysis	
– vocabulary-based syllabus	
– topic-based syllabus	
– functional syllabus	
– other	

Please comment on any aspects of designing your syllabus:

8 Do you find teaching ESP (please tick)

	✓
– Very enjoyable?	
– Enjoyable?	
– Unenjoyable?	
– Very unenjoyable?	
– Other?	

Please expand on your answer: What are the reasons for your feeling that way?

9 Please suggest any additional points that you think should have been included in this questionnaire:

Thank you for the time you have taken to fill in this questionnaire and for helping with the Evaluation.

Appendix 2

Follow-up questions

Dear colleague,
I am writing to ask you to answer a few more questions, which have emerged from the Questionnaire for ESP Teachers you so kindly filled in back in November 2001. I would really appreciate it if you would answer the questions below as fully as possible and return them to me by 27/2/02.

To Respondents Q1 and Q4: Your answers to questions A2 and C6, which concern teaching aids and materials that you used most frequently before attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course and those you have been using since attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course, show that you have also been using the OHP in your teaching since attending the course.

Could you please explain why OHP has become your frequent teaching aid?

To Respondents Q2, Q13 and Q14: Your answers to questions A2 and C6, which concern teaching aids and materials that you used most frequently before attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course and those you have been using since attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course, show that you have also been using video in your teaching since attending the course.

Could you please explain why video has become your frequent teaching aid?

To Respondents Q6 and Q13: Your answers to questions A2 and C6, which concern teaching aids and materials that you used most frequently before attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course and those you have been using since attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course, show that you have been preparing your own teaching materials since attending the course.

Could you please explain your reasons for this change?

To Respondent Q11: Your answers to questions A2 and C6, which concern teaching aids and materials that you used most frequently before attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course and that you have been using since attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course, show that you have stopped using textbooks, the board, OHP, tape recorder and video, which you indicated you had been using before attending the course.

Could you please explain why you have decided to use only photocopied pages and your own materials since attending the course?

To Respondents Q1, Q4, Q7, Q9, Q10, Q11 and Q14: Your answer to question C7 ('How have you been designing the syllabus in your department since attending the Unhost/Podebrady ESP course? Please tick as many as appropriate') shows that after attending the ESP course you started designing your syllabi also on the basis of needs analyses.

Could you please explain your reasons for this change?

How do you find out what the needs of your students are?

Thank you very much for your cooperation.
Yours sincerely,
Daniela Bísková

CHAPTER 10

The development of ELT in the Czech Republic as reflected by the journal *Perspectives*

Marcela Malá

This chapter describes the development of the English Language Teaching profession in the Czech Republic as reflected in articles written by Czech contributors and published in the British Council ELT journal *Perspectives*. The findings indicate that *Perspectives* was considered a good ELT platform and Czech contributors valued having their articles published in it. Moreover, having an article published in the journal often had an encouraging impact on the authors' future professional writing.

The articles reflect the development of the ELT profession in three important ways. Firstly, most articles describe innovations in different areas of ELT in which the authors of the articles had gained new expertise, provided mainly through British Council training, and which they were keen to share with others. In some cases, the articles provide evidence that the authors had further developed their newly-gained expertise independently. Secondly, the actual process of writing helped the authors to improve their professional skills with regard to writing academic articles. Thirdly, writing about various sorts of teaching practice had an illuminating effect on the authors as teachers, in terms of making them reconsider their professional practice.

1   Introduction

Perspectives – the journal of English Language Teaching and British Studies – was published between the years 1993 and 2001. It was one of several initiatives which the British Council implemented in the Czech Republic (the then Czechoslovakia) after 1991 and was, in fact, included in project implementation plans as an activity under the joint objective *'to promote British EL exams and professional achievements'* (British Council 1993). An important difference between the *Perspectives* initiative and all the other projects was its cross-sectoral nature. Articles in *Perspectives* to a large extent mirrored and monitored all the ELT areas which the British Council projects supported and helped to develop.

2   Methodology

Since the present study explores the development of the ELT profession in the Czech Republic as reflected in articles published in *Perspectives* which were written by Czech contributors, it deliberately does not pay attention to articles wholly written by non-Czech contributors. Three instruments were chosen as being most suitable for collecting research data:

- Examination of the ten general issues plus two special issues of *Perspectives*
- A questionnaire for Czech contributors (see Appendix 1)
- Interviews with Tess Grimshaw (now Tess Slavičková), the main editor of *Perspectives,* and Malcolm Griffiths, the British Council ELT projects coordinator at the time, who was also a member of the editorial board (see Appendix 2).

2.1 Issues of *Perspectives*

Examination of the issues of *Perspectives* provided two sources of data – editorials and articles. Some of the editorials helped to reveal the framework on which the journal was based. The 52 articles written by Czech teachers and teacher trainers were analysed by means of content analysis and were put into categories.

2.2 Questionnaires

After a piloting stage, the final questionnaire consisted of eight questions – three open-ended and five yes/no questions. Altogether 46 articles and six book reviews with either full or joint (a Czech person together with a British person) Czech authorship were published in *Perspectives*. Some articles were written by more than one author and several people wrote more than one article. The total database of Czech contributors consisted of 55 different names. However, questionnaires could be sent to only 52 people because the addresses of three others were not successfully traced. The questionnaire was administered in November 2001. To encourage respondents to be as frank as possible, they were not asked to sign the questionnaires. In mid January a reminder was sent to a few contributors, chosen at random. By mid February 2002 thirty-two completed questionnaires had been received. The response rate was thus 62%. Each completed questionnaire was given a number from 1 to 32. All the responses were transcribed and incorporated into a single database. The data was then processed and put into categories. Some categories were established by using key words in the questions, e.g. *help,* others were created according to topics covered by several of the questions, e.g. *the role of the British Council.* Thus in the discussion of findings section, the abbreviation Q30/2, for example, means that the quotation used can be found in questionnaire 30 in the response to the second question.

2.3 Interviews

Two e-mail interviews were conducted with the main editor of *Perspectives*, one in November 2001, the other in March 2002, when the necessity of getting further data emerged. In February 2002 a semi-structured interview was conducted with the National Coordinator. This interview was recorded and transcribed. In the discussion of findings, the editor and National Coordinator are referred to as *Int1* and *Int2* respectively. Three more people who worked as co-editors were asked to answer a few questions sent by e-mail. They did not answer despite being contacted repeatedly.

Since both questionnaires and interviews provide self-report attitudinal data, for the purpose of triangulation, both sources were combined with each other and with the documentary data from *Perspectives* wherever possible. In this chapter, attitudinal comments supporting the discussion of findings section are in their original form and are shown in italics.

3   Context and editorial policy

Perspectives first appeared in spring 1993. In the first editorial, Paul de Quincey, the founder of the journal and Deputy Director of the British Council, Czechoslovakia at that time, states: *'It wasn't until we started to look back over the last two years, however, that we realised how little of the work we have done has been documented. It was from this realisation that the idea of a journal came into being.'* The initial intention had been to give an opportunity to the British Council lecturers working on various projects to present and record the innovations being developed: *'what was new, the notion of quality in ELT that came from the British ELT'* (Int2). From the very beginning, however, the journal was open to other contributors too, mainly to teachers and teacher trainers from the Czech Republic and neighbouring countries.

In the years from 1993 to 2001, ten general issues and two special issues of *Perspectives* (one focusing on mentoring, the other on ESP) were published. As can be seen in Table 1, in the first three years, two issues of *Perspectives* were published each year; from 1996–2001 only one a year was produced. The editorial board consisted of one experienced native-speaker editor, who was usually helped by British Council lecturers acting as co-editors in their respective professional areas: ESP, British Studies and PRESETT/INSETT (pre-service and in-service teacher training). There was no Czech representation on the board. The number of copies printed ranged from 3–4,000 for the ten general issues to 1,500–2,000 in the case of the two special issues. Copies of the journal were sent to eight British Council Resource Centres in the Czech Republic (each member of each Resource Centre was entitled to a free copy), the National Library in Prague, universities throughout the country and all the British Council Centres in Europe. The last three general issues were sent, by special agreement, directly to 800 ATE CR (Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic) members in combined distribution with a copy of the ATE CR Newsletter.

Table 1 Articles and reviews, analysed by issue number and by nationality of authors

Issue	Year	Articles					Reviews					All contributions		
		1) Total	2) Czech authors	3) Joint authors	Sub-total (2 + 3)	(2 + 3) as % of total	1) Total	2) Czech authors	3) Joint authors	Sub-total (2 + 3)	(2 + 3) as % of total	Total	Czech & joint authors	% of total
1	1993	8	1	0	1	13%	2	0	0	0	0%	10	1	10%
2	1993	9	0	1	1	11%	2	0	0	0	0%	11	1	9%
3	1994	10	1	1	2	20%	4	0	0	0	0%	14	2	14%
4	1994	11	2	1	3	27%	2	0	0	0	0%	13	3	23%
5	1995	13	3	1	4	31%	3	1	1	2	67%	16	6	38%
6	1995	12	2	1	3	25%	1	1	0	1	100%	13	4	31%
7	1996	11	1	0	1	9%	3	2	0	2	67%	16	3	19%
Special: Mentors	1997	11	9	0	9	82%	0	0	0	0	–	11	9	82%
8	1998	12	4	0	4	33%	0	0	0	0	–	12	4	33%
9	1999	11	3	0	3	27%	2	1	0	1	50%	13	4	31%
Special: ESP	2000	14	8	0	8	57%	0	0	0	0	–	14	8	57%
10	2001	8	7	0	7	88%	0	0	0	0	–	8	7	88%
Total		**130**	**41**	**5**	**46**	**35%**	**19**	**5**	**1**	**6**	**32%**	**149**	**52**	**35%**

Besides articles submitted by people involved in all the areas of ELT that the British Council projects were working in (ESP, INSETT, PRESETT, British Studies), each issue of the journal contained an editorial. Some also contained book reviews (see Table 1). Editorials are a valuable source of background information in terms of British Council goals, priorities and achievements at any given moment. Articles in a particular issue reflected currently prioritised projects. There was a plan to try to make the book review section bigger and also to place advertising in *Perspectives* (Int2). The journal also had an ISSN number, which made it attractive mainly to people from universities who needed to publish in order to further their careers. The main features of the editorial policy of *Perspectives* were as follows:

- With regard to the ten general issues, there was no conscious policy to achieve a pre-determined proportion of native-speaker and non-native-speaker contributions.
- There were always more articles offered for publication than could actually be published, and so *Perspectives* started to resemble a reviewed journal, at least in that respect (Int2). Basically, however, most articles which were sufficiently academic and whose topics were relevant (i.e. relevant to British Council projects) were published sooner or later.
- Articles were content edited with major changes being discussed with the authors.
- The main editor of *Perspectives* took into account the existence of the Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic, in which mainly less formal articles were published, and tried *'to maintain its dual, complementary relationship with the ATE Newsletter'* (Int1).
- Three of the total 12 issues were based on a deliberate thematic policy. The tenth general issue which came out in 2001 was different from the other general issues. The articles were directly commissioned from Czech contributors. *'We wanted it to be all Czech, to represent the kind of state of the art. ... It was a fairly thin edition, but not in terms of content'* (Int2).

Some kind of editorial intervention was also applied to the two special issues. Behind the Mentoring issue was a European Union funded project organised by the Ministry of Education in the Czech Republic. The British Council was involved in enabling participants in this project to take part in a course on mentoring in Britain. Part of the requirement for getting a certificate was to undertake a research project, so the British Council then encouraged the participants to publish their research studies, dealing with different aspects of mentoring, in this special issue. The ESP issue came into being as a result of the greater emphasis that the British Council decided to place on ESP in the late 1990s. This policy was intended to redress a perceived imbalance in relation to other areas (Int2). At LSP Forum, a conference for teachers of various languages for specific purposes held by the ATE CR in Prague in 1999, the British Council coordinators approached several conference presenters whose presentations mirrored the concerns of the Council's ESP project in the Czech Republic at that time. These presenters were encouraged to turn their presentations into articles for this special edition of *Perspectives*.

As well as British Council lecturers working in the Czech Republic and Czech ELT professionals, contributors from other countries were also interested in having their articles published in *Perspectives*. Various ELT or ESP journals were gradually being founded elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe such as Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. After the ELTeCS Teacher Education Conference in Prague in 1998, which was attended predominantly by teachers from Central and Eastern Europe, there were even attempts to have just one regional journal for the whole area of Central and Eastern Europe. This, however, finally proved not to be feasible. *'... One regional journal was not necessarily the right way to go. There was so much happening in each country'* (Int2).

About three years before the last issue, the British Council ELT team began to discuss the future of *Perspectives*. The question was mainly whether it was worth publishing, *'whether it is sustainable. If there's a market for it'*. The feeling was that if there was a market, that market was mainly in the Czech Republic. Thus the Czech ELT community would have to decide whether they needed a journal like *Perspectives* or not, and if so, should take over its publication. The British Council decided it could no longer solely guarantee sustainability of this project because it was interested in launching new projects and initiatives (Int2). The last edition to date came out in 2001 and with no further issues planned, the future of the journal remains unclear.

4   Discussion of findings

Table 1 gives an overview of when particular issues of *Perspectives* were published, how many articles and book reviews appeared in them, how many of these were jointly authored (a Czech person together with a British person) and how many were written solely by Czech writers. Examination of the tenth general issue and the two special issues suggests editorial intervention in favour of Czech contributors as outlined above. With reference to the other general issues, Czech representation does not show any significant pattern. There is a sharp fall in the number of book reviews in the later issues. In some issues there are none at all. Altogether about a third of the book reviews were written by Czechs; one was jointly authored.

Some authors of articles were primary or secondary school teachers working within INSETT (In-Service Teacher Training). Most authors of articles in the issue dealing with mentoring were primary or secondary school teachers cooperating with PRESETT (Pre-Service Teacher Training) university departments from which student teachers came. However, the overwhelming majority of

the authors of articles worked at universities. This seems to support the argument mentioned above that since people at universities need to publish and (because of its ISSN number) a publication in *Perspectives* would count, they made an effort to contribute.

4.1 Categorisation of contributions

Content analysis of contributions in *Perspectives* revealed that they fell into five categories (see Table 2).

Table 2 Categories of contribution

Category	Number of Czech contributions	Number of jointly-authored contributions	Total
Building on experience	23	0	23
Introduction of innovation	8	5	13
Academic articles based on own research	8	0	8
Book reviews	5	1	6
Reporting on experience	2	0	2
Total	**46**	**6**	**52**

The categories can be defined as follows:

Building on experience (23 contributions)

After going through some experience, represented predominantly by training arranged by the British Council, the authors of contributions in this category made good use of their newly gained expertise and did something of their own. They
– designed a course on which they taught, e.g. a course on teacher training, data-driven learning, etc.
– presented an overview of their Masters degree research, research connected with mentoring or other research (see Chapters 4 and 5 in this volume).
– converted a programme started by the British Council to a faculty.
One article is an attempt to propose a system of further education of teachers – again a burning issue that has still not been resolved. Twenty-three out of the 46 articles written by Czech contributors fall into this category.

Introduction of innovation (13 contributions)

Articles deal with innovations in areas such as entrance examinations, curriculum development, microteaching, teaching practice and oral placement testing. One article, written in 1995, calls for standardised 'Maturita' (school-leaving) exams – an issue that has still not been satisfactorily resolved at the time of writing. Five out of the six jointly-authored contributions fall into this category. This could be taken to suggest that the British person brought particular expertise and cooperated with a Czech colleague. Some of the innovations described in articles are based on studying British resources. A few are based on international cooperation.

Book review (6 contributions)

This category contains book reviews on books published in Britain. In one case a review focuses on a book written by a Czech person together with her British colleague.

Reporting on experience (2 contributions)

The two articles belonging to this category deal with what a Czech person supported by the British Council experienced when participating in an event in Britain.

In the four categories mentioned above, the influence of the British Council is often clearly discernible. In the last category this influence is not obvious.

Academic articles based on one's own research (8 contributions)

Four out of the eight articles in this category were written by one person, an experienced researcher. In the questionnaire he states that the editors encouraged him to write more articles after the success of the first (see Chapters 4 and 5).

4.2 Analysis of the data

The main issues that emerged from the data seem to be logically linked and can be organised hierarchically. At the top of the pyramid is the **British Council** with its mission to promote ELT. One way of achieving this mission is the journal ***Perspectives***. Below that in the hierarchy are potential contributors, in this case Czechs. They must somehow be motivated to publish in *Perspectives*. Once they have been **motivated** and have started writing, issues connected with the creation of articles, especially different sorts of **help**, become relevant. The completion of an article might have an effect on an author's **professional skills** and the fact that the article has been published on their **confidence**. Still further down in the hierarchy is the question of whether an article finds its way to potential **readers**. The words in bold are key words of seven main categories, which will now be dealt with in turn. The notion of innovation and newness which seems so prominent in the categorisation of contributions is very strong in most of these too.

4.2.1 The role of the British Council

The role of the British Council in the creation of the articles can be seen from at least three different angles:

1 The British Council created opportunities for Czech people to take part in projects involving innovation. The projects often included some kind of written report:

Q4/1: *This article was one of the results of numerous activities associated with the British Council Cultural Programme Project.*

Q9/1: *It was part of our course in mentoring.*

2 It was part of British Council policy to encourage Czech people to write articles for *Perspectives*:

Int1: *The coordinators and the British Council staff were especially active in encouraging people to submit research or conference papers and ideas.*

Q20/1: *Because members of the British Council invited me to do that after hearing my paper at a conference.*

Q12/2: *I didn't choose this journal. I think the editorial board of Perspectives asked the head of the department to write several reviews.*

3 In the process of writing the British Council provided the authors with various sorts of help:

Q32/5: *I got Guidelines for contributors sent by the editorial board.*

Q12/5: *Yes. Both theoretical – how to organise ideas – and purely practical (help). The editor provided it.*

Q13/5: *... but later – during the Heterogeneous Classes project we were trained how to write an article.*

Q23/5: *The editor provided help. I can't remember her name, but remember her as very kind and patient.*

The notion of help will be discussed again later in section 4.2.4.

4.2.2 Contributors' perceptions of the role of *Perspectives*

Several respondents expressed their perceptions of *Perspectives* and their opinions of the journal were always positive. The comments they provided show that they considered it to be a good quality ELT platform:

Q19/2: *Perspectives was the best platform to address as many interested people as possible.*

Q30/2: *I consider Perspectives a good quality ELT Journal which is read by people interested in ELT. So I hoped my articles would have the right audience. I don't know about any other journal in this country focusing only on ELT.*

Moreover, some comments also suggested that the contributors perceived the journal to be innovative and wanted to have their articles published in it for that reason:

Q11/2: *At that time it was pointless to write these things into Czech journals – they were too new.*

One respondent's comment on *Perspectives* indicates something that the editor was also aware of, namely that *Perspectives* and the ATE CR Newsletter had a complementary relationship. Both were ELT journals. However, each was intended for a slightly different audience. As mentioned previously, the ATE CR Newsletter mainly published articles of a less academic nature.

Q7/2: *I contributed regularly to the Association Newsletter and thought Perspectives could offer a different readership.*

4.2.3 Motivation to write articles

Comments related to motivation fell clearly into two sub-categories: motivation coming from outside and motivation coming from inside. For the purpose of this study they were termed extrinsic and intrinsic impulses to write articles.

Extrinsic impulses to write articles were often named by respondents and many were similar to the following two examples:

Q3/7: *I probably got a few points in the evaluation carried out by the faculty.*

Q32/1: *I was pushed to publish by the institution.*

They suggest the necessity of having something published because publications are one of the criteria universities use for evaluation.

Comments related to intrinsic impulses to write articles are more varied, but at the same time have one important feature in common. There was some kind of internal drive which encouraged contributors to *Perspectives* to share with others what they were doing because they thought it was worth it:

Q32/2: *I wanted to share my perspective that is the one of a common secondary teacher.*

Q25/1: *… for people to know what we did.*

Q11/3: *They seemed to be very burning issues.*

Q32/3: *My article was a response to a similar article published in one of the previous issues.*

Some comments combine the notion of sharing with that of innovation and newness mentioned above:

Q29/2: *I believed our story might be a sort of encouragement for those who were currently being assessed by the Accreditation commission and were experiencing similar problems. … giving some publicity to our new model of the teacher training programme. … It was actually the last opportunity – the last issue of Perspectives and there are not so many platforms available in our country for ELT community.*

Q31/3: *We realised we had been doing something non-standard and perhaps even unique in the Czech Republic. Thus we decided to have it published.*

Q23/3: *The relative newness of the subject.*

Some respondents mentioned both kinds of impulses in their comments:

Q5/2: *The publication gave credit to my work. Might have helped others working in the same field.*

Q30/1: *I wrote two articles. The first was written because I needed a publication. The second because I thought it might be of some interest to the audience.*

4.2.4 Help needed and provided

The area of help has already been mentioned in the category dealing with the role of the British Council because it made the picture there more complete. It is discussed again in this section, partly because help was available not only from the British Council but from other sources too, and partly because the analysis of comments revealed a very interesting dimension with regard to the nature of help needed and provided. What the authors mention in terms of help clearly proves that they had problems not with the content of what they wanted to write, but mainly with how to write it – the form. When a certain kind of help is specified, the comments deal predominantly with form:

Q10/4: *Yes. A native Czech always needs a language revision on the part of a native British editor.*

In almost every comment, expressions like *proof-reading, academic writing style, style and language, I needed somebody to check my English, final editing, polishing my English*, etc. occur.

There are very few comments dealing with help on content. If they occur at all, they only go to prove that as far as the content was concerned, the authors felt quite confident:

Q7/4: *No. I was quite involved in the topic and read a number of secondary material while teaching in-service group at the same time. I felt I could prepare the article without any help.*

4.2.5 Improvement in professional skills

The comments mention a wide range of technical and cognitive skills connected with writing articles that were improved by the experience of publishing in *Perspectives*:

Q9/6: *I had to use a computer.*

Q12/6: *… taught me to condense the content of a book to a short but logical article …*

Q15/6: *It was quite time-consuming to change a conference workshop into an article.*

Q32/6: *… I learnt how to write and organise my writing …*

Q23/7: *I realised how should the article be structured and how poor was mine at the beginning.*

They also indicate improvements of professional skills with a broader appeal:

Q6/6: *I realised a lot of things I should do while training teachers.*

Q17/6: *I was working on the article with another colleague of mine – it was good experience.*

Q7/6: *I had a chance to think the problem over and set up priorities in actual teaching.*

Q32/7: *When I was teaching I was constantly monitoring my material and routines and thought if I am not making the same mistakes which the article criticised.*

Q11/6: *The process focused my thinking and raised some doubts about what I was doing.*

These comments provide strong evidence that writing an article had an illuminating effect on teachers. They benefited from it because it made them rethink their professional practice and realise things that would not otherwise have occurred to them. These comments to a certain extent support the notion of innovation too because they suggest change in the authors' professional thinking.

Only one respondent made a rather neutral comment:

Q19/6: *… it helped me classify different sort of information but nothing more.*

4.2.6 Confidence of the authors

Comments regarding confidence occur in every set of responses, often several times. They refer to a predictable feeling of achievement as is illustrated in the following example, which also gives credit to the journal as an ELT platform:

Q8/7: *I felt flattered that it was accepted for publication in Perspectives.*

Some comments, moreover, show that having an article in *Perspectives* had an impact on the contributors' future professional lives in terms of encouraging them to write more. This was certainly innovative too:

Q31/6: *It was one of my early publications, so I began to feel more courageous to write.*

Q12/7: *… it encouraged my confidence in further writing …*

One respondent expressed some doubts about her professional skills:

Q29/7: *… it is usually terrible to see one's own words in a written and published form (kind of 'How could I have written something so stupid and clumsy' feeling). This was no exception.*

4.2.7 Readership of articles

The comments in this category vary from some reactions from my colleagues, friends, a couple of e-mail letters to more tangible feedback:

Q3/8: *… the ATE CR asked me to allow them to reprint the article in their magazine.*

Q19/8: *A university student asked me for more details. A local government used it as inspiration when starting a new project.*

However, 21 out of the 32 respondents clearly stated that they had not received any feedback from outside and that they were not sure whether anybody at all had read their article. In several editorials the editor encouraged readers to comment on contributions to a particular issue. She never received any formal feedback (Int1). *'We didn't really have very much feedback on who was reading it or how useful it was, although we thought it was a good publication … And there wasn't time to do a proper survey on it'* (Int2).

As mentioned in section 4.2.5, writing an article had a beneficial effect on authors because it made them rethink their professional practice. In this respect the question of whether anybody else read the article is perhaps not so important. The data about the actual readership is rather limited, but reading the bibliography sections after individual articles reveals an interesting aspect of the readership of this journal, namely some kind of internal readership. The lists of references following six articles refer readers to ten articles published in other issues. As mentioned above, the article dealing with standardised 'Maturita' exams is a direct response to another article written in a previous issue. This evidence indicates that the authors of some articles read what the others had written before they submitted their own article.

To complete the picture of the readership of *Perspectives*, it is perhaps worth mentioning that the journal was well received in the region of Central and Eastern Europe: *'… Perspectives got very positive feedback from my counterparts from the other countries. Some colleagues in other countries thought it was the best journal in the region'* (Int2).

5   Implications and recommendations

The previous discussion suggests that *Perspectives* was a valuable platform for people in the different branches of ELT (PRESETT, INSETT, ESP and British Studies), both to present developments within their own individual fields and to learn about other areas of the profession. Moreover, judging from the respondents' comments, the effect it had on the writers was very important, too. Even though to some extent it also covered other countries in East and Central Europe, it was to a large extent an internal journal which mirrored the achievements of the ELT community in the Czech Republic. It is a pity that the wider impact of the journal was not assessed and the readership was not monitored. It is also not clear whether the journal was read

by any decision makers, e.g. by the Ministry of Education. What is clear, however, is that the need *Perspectives* satisfied – to provide an ELT forum – still exists. A cross-sectoral journal of this kind is an indispensable resource for the continued development of ELT in a certain part of the world and as such it should be continued.

The first step towards determining the future of this journal should be a proper user survey which might be targeted at potential readers (Int2). Since ownership of the British Council Resource Centres was transferred to the local authorities in 2002, the survey might be targeted at members of the Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic who, because of a special agreement between the British Council and the Association, were sent a few general issues in the past and should thus be well aware of the quality of the journal.

6   Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the development of the ELT profession in the Czech Republic as reflected in articles by Czech contributors published in *Perspectives.* The findings strongly support the idea that the profession is embracing innovation and they indicate that change and development are occurring in several ways.

The majority of contributors were teachers and teacher trainers working in PRESETT and ESP university departments although INSETT was represented too. In most cases, articles by Czech contributors were written as the result of encouragement by the British Council. Since the reputation of *Perspectives* as an ELT platform in the Czech Republic was very good and the articles published in it could be included in the list of publications university staff submitted for official purposes such as departmental accreditation (see Chapters 4 and 5), it was mainly university teachers who made an effort to write articles.

It was possible to publish more articles of genuine Czech authorship by commissioning them directly.

The journal played an important role in giving the authors a feeling of achievement after they had their articles published, which raised their confidence and in many cases had an encouraging impact on their future professional writing.

The fact that most articles were about building on experience – the authors went through certain experiences provided by the British Council training and then added something of their own – also seems to support the idea that innovations in ELT have been adopted in the Czech Republic and there is considerable progress in the direction of independent work.

Another important developmental feature can be seen in the contributors' eagerness to share with others. They were aware that what they were doing was innovative and they wanted to let others know about it. Since they went through different kinds of training provided by the British Council, they did not have problems with the content of what they wanted to write about. However, they did need some help with the form of writing an academic article, proof-reading and editing. As a consequence, besides improving their writing skills, other specialised professional skills (computer skills, the ability to work in a team, etc.) were developed and improved too.

Probably the most valuable developmental issue is the illuminating effect writing an article had on the authors. All of them were either teaching or doing teacher training. The findings indicate that writing about the innovative experience they had had made them rethink and reconsider whether what they were doing was right. The personal benefit of writing an article was thus significant and remained so even if nobody else read the article.

Finally, there was not enough data to comment thoroughly on the question of readership. The findings show that internal readership of articles by those who contributed to the journal did occur. It is also known that the journal was well received in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, that copies were sent to different places in the Czech Republic where the ELT community was expected to find them and that a few copies were also sent to members of the Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic. A proper user survey on the readership in the Czech Republic has not been done and should thus perhaps be the first necessary step towards securing the future of this journal.

References

Perspectives (all issues)
ATE CR Newsletter, Vol. 8, No 1, Spring 1997
British Council (1993) *New Money 1993/94: Implementation* Prague: The British Council

Appendix 1

Perspectives: Questionnaire

1 Why did you write the article(s)?

2 Why did you want to have it/them published in *Perspectives?*

3 What was your reason for choosing the topic(s)?

4 Did you feel that you needed help in the process of writing the article(s)?
   YES   NO   (please circle the right answer)

   a) If YES, what sort of help did you feel you needed?
   b) If NO, why not?

5 Did you actually get any help in the process of writing the article(s)?
   YES   NO   (please circle the right answer)

   If YES, a) What sort of help was it?
           b) Who provided it?

6 Did the process of writing the article(s) have any effect on you?
   YES   NO   (please circle the right answer)
   Please explain your answer.

7 Did having your article(s) published have any effect on you?
   YES   NO   (please circle the right answer)
   Please explain your answer.

8 Did you learn about any kind of wider impact of your article?
   YES   NO   (please circle the right answer)
   Please explain your answer.

Appendix 2

Perspectives: Semi-structured interviews

Did the editorial board of *Perspectives* apply any kind of deliberate policy?
Did you try to keep a balance between native and non-native speaker contributions?
Did you do anything special to encourage Czech contributors?
Why was the journal not published regularly?
Who read the articles before they were published?
Did you or somebody else make changes in articles? If so,
   were those changes consulted with the authors?
   were the changes made only in the articles written by non-native speakers?