

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MODERN LANGUAGES,  
GRAZ; MARCH 1999

# THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY IN MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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WORKSHOP 17/98, NOVEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup> TO 22<sup>ND</sup>  
1998

CO-ORDINATOR: FRANK HEYWORTH

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**THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY IN MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHING – APPROACHES TO  
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY CONTROL**

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There were 34 participants representing 25 different countries and a broad range of professional backgrounds, including heads of teaching departments, ministry officials and inspectors, university teachers and teacher trainers, directors and directors of studies of private language schools. The workshop was held in co-operation with EAQUALS, the European Association of Quality Language Services.

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# 1. THE AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE WORKSHOP

The concept of quality is an important feature of life in present day society. We are all clients and customers for goods and services and desire to obtain the best possible “bargain” for the money and time we invest in obtaining them. This has led the development of industrial approaches to “quality management”, designed to produce products and services of good quality and to guarantee this to the consumer. In turn, this has stimulated the development of methods of assessing and evaluating whether the promised quality is in fact being delivered.

These concerns affect language learning and teaching, too. Education authorities are increasingly applying quality assurance and quality control techniques in their management of schools and teaching programmes. School inspections are, of course, by definition an approach to quality control in education and inspection systems are evolving which seek to promote methods by in which high quality can be produced, rather than simply reporting on its existence or absence. Many language teaching activities take place outside the state school sector and here the dictates of consumer choice come fully into play.

In this context, it seemed appropriate that the theme should be explored in a workshop at the ECML in Graz. The workshop team --Martyn Ellis, Eva Marquardt, Maria Matheidesz, Laura Muresan, Joanna Strange and Frank Heyworth – are all in different ways involved in EAQUALS, the European Association for Quality Language Services, which has developed an auditing system for language schools and a set of seminars on the management of quality. In the workshop, the theory and practice behind these activities was presented with the purpose of exploring with participants, in the majority from the state sector of education, the relevance and applicability to their own working environments. Two of the seminars, “Quality in the Language School” and “Managing the Teaching Team” were presented in full during the workshop, both for their intrinsic content and as examples of training packs which participants could use to disseminate the contents of the workshop.

The workshop was divided into four broad sections:

The definition of the concept of quality

The production of quality language teaching services

The assessment and evaluation of quality in language teaching

Self-help and action plans

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## WORKING METHODS

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The working methods of the workshop were active and participative, with very few plenary presentations and a great deal of group work, based on short input from the workshop facilitators. In the background of the whole workshop was the idea that participants should be reflecting on applications in their own environment and how these might be formulated in an action plan as a follow-up to the workshop. There were opportunities, too, for input from participants on their own rich experience in the field of quality control. At the end of each day’s work there was a short reflective session.

## 2. DEFINING QUALITY

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### 2.1 WHAT DID YOU BRING IN YOUR SUITCASE? – A WARMER ACTIVITY.

MARIA MATHEIDESZ

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The workshop began with a warm-up activity which used the metaphor of the suitcases everyone brought to the workshop to stimulate presentation by participants of the knowledge and experience they were bringing to the event – their luggage as it were – and their hopes and expectations for what they would take away from it – the space left for souvenirs.

The presentations revealed a great heterogeneity of professional background – classroom teachers, university professors, school inspectors, language school managers, ministry administrators – and a broad range of experience in the practical management of teaching. Expectations were focused on the wish for applicable methods of quality audit and assessment and a strong wish to explore the use of the instruments developed by the Council of Europe – the Common European Framework of Reference and the European Language Portfolio – as tools to contribute to quality in language teaching.

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### 2.2 QUALITY IN THE LANGUAGE SCHOOL – A SEMINAR

JOANNA STRANGE

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The seminar provided an introduction to the workshop with a series of activities in which participants explored their own needs and expectations as consumers and applied these to the needs and expectations of language learners. The theory and principles of quality assurance were presented and the final activity was illustrated by a case study describing a fictional language school:

#### Quality in the Language School

##### Case Study

##### *The Sunshine Language School*

In groups read this case study about the Sunshine Language School. You will see the school has a number of problems! Identify the problems and relate each problem to a category on the checklist. Some of the problems may well have more than one cause and relate to more than one checklist category.

##### **Students' perspective**

Students are impressed with the school when they make initial enquiries and when they enrol. The school is very flexible about meeting their requirements (e.g. hours of classes, appropriate level, wide range of courses). Fees compare favourably with other schools in the town - in fact, several schools with fewer facilities are more expensive.

Once students start classes, however, several begin to feel disappointed. Most of the teachers are well qualified and experienced. They are friendly to students in class, but they often seem exhausted and the classes aren't very dynamic. Teachers only use the coursebook which can get very boring. There are mixed levels in classes and students often have quite different needs. For example, students taking exams are mixed with students who want a general course focusing on speaking skills. Sometimes

teachers arrive late for the beginning of classes - they explain that the school has four sites and they have classes on the different sites. At the end of the lesson they are usually in a rush to get to their next class, so it's difficult to ask individual questions about language problems, progress etc. Sometimes no teacher appears at all! Students are told later that the teacher was ill but the Director of Studies didn't know. In these cases the school doesn't make up the lesson. On other occasions, when the DOS knows a teacher is going to be away, the lesson is taught by a substitute teacher. These teachers sometimes aren't as experienced as the normal teacher, and they give one-off lessons not connected to the work students have been doing in the previous lessons. When students, or the parents of younger students, try to discuss their concerns with the DOS, they find she is difficult to get hold of as she is very busy and moves between sites.

### **Staff perspective**

In the early days of the school teachers felt very motivated. The school was small, with a friendly atmosphere. Teachers were given lots of challenges - a range of courses to teach, responsibility posts - and staff were committed and dedicated. The enthusiasm of the teachers carried things forward.

However, as the school has grown, teachers have become increasingly exhausted and demoralised - they have to teach more and more classes and cope with a wider range of course types. They don't feel they have time to prepare lessons adequately or give students their best in class. They have to rush from one site to another, and teach such a wide range of classes that even the most experienced feel stretched to the limit. They don't feel they are developing as teachers either - they don't have the time or energy to exchange ideas among themselves, and the school doesn't set aside time or money for regular paid staff development sessions in house, or attendance at external courses and conferences. Teachers have very little to do with the owner/manager of the school - they have little opportunity to tell him their feelings or pass on feedback from students. They feel they get very little information about what is happening in the school as a whole, and aren't consulted about future plans. They like the Director of Studies but she too is very stretched - it's difficult to get to see her to discuss problems and she hardly ever comes to the staffroom. There is a system for lesson observation but the DOS is often too busy to observe teachers regularly. She usually manages to observe new teachers at the beginning of their contract, and others only on an ad hoc basis.

In addition, there are increasing tensions among staff. Native speaker teachers earn more than local staff, even if they aren't so highly qualified. Teachers with responsibility posts have very little time to carry out their duties and resent those who just come in to the school to teach. There is also hostility between administrative staff and teachers. More and more administrative staff have been taken on. Their terms and conditions of employment are good and they get on well with the owner. But they feel that the teachers look down on them and don't appreciate their work.

### **Owner/manager's perspective**

The owner is proud of the success of his school. It has grown rapidly and there are now four sites. He believes in being in close touch with the market and offering customers what they want - flexibility in terms of hours, a wide variety of courses, and value for money. In a highly competitive market, he feels his school offers more than others in the area - for example, a new computer department and fully equipped self-access centre.

The owner spends a lot of time on PR and marketing - developing local contacts, keeping in touch with the competition, travelling abroad. Because he is away from the school a lot he relies heavily on his Director of Studies to act as his deputy.

Recently the owner has been concerned that student numbers are stagnating. Reenrolment levels have dropped, and the DOS has reported a number of complaints from students and parents. The owner is

surprised about this as he makes a point of recruiting highly qualified and experienced teachers who seem fully committed and put in a lot of extra time and effort.

\*The complete seminar "Quality in the Language School" is published by EAQUALS

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## 2.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY CONTROL – THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

FRANK HEYWORTH

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### 1. AN OVERVIEW OF QUALITY CONTROL CONCEPTS

The concepts of Quality Control, Quality Assurance, Total Quality Management (TQM) originated in industrial contexts, initially during the Second World War where the reliable production of armaments and aeroplanes was a major concern. Ways of reducing the number of defects were developed through a systematic study of design, of production processes and of quality control. The techniques were developed further in the post-war renaissance of Japanese industry and have now spread to generalised use in industry and have been extended to service industries, where the concept of satisfaction with services provided is introduced.

In **Total Quality Management (TQM)** a distinction is made between the techniques employed to establish quality and the people who have to carry them out. Quality has to be ensured both in technical and human terms.

In manufacturing industries, QA is achieved technically by a series of processes of which the main ones might be summarised as follows:

- (a) thorough analysis of function
- (b) careful design of components
- (c) working to agreed standards and measurements
- (d) standardisation of the process of production
- (e) checking the finished product
- (f) finally, vitally, seeking, listening to, and acting on customer feedback

QA is enhanced humanly by means of

- (a) informing all members of the team of the common aims and objectives
- (b) ensuring that all members of the team are working to common standards
- (c) encouragement of small teams where
  - considerable scope is given to self-organisation
  - individual initiative is welcomed
- (d) flexibility of work
- (e) team responsibility for their own Quality Control i.e. from within

However, in the service sector, in which teaching can be included, strict measurement of production processes, which is a sine qua non for the industrial sector, is rarely possible and even more rarely appropriate or applicable. In the service sector the pivotal notion is that quality assurance can only be obtained through the rigorous development of the concept of satisfying customer expectations, which *must* be met or exceeded.

The idea of meeting or exceeding the customer's expectations is central to the development of quality assurance in service industries. It assumes that customers choose providers on the basis of how far their needs are met. This concept is quite complex in a language teaching context. In state school systems, most learners have no choice of teacher, method or content. Is the customer the child, the parent, or more broadly the society expressed through government policies? In the adult sector, many learners are financed

by their employer and there can be conflict between satisfying the needs of the individual with the specific requirements of the one who is paying.

The additional concept of internal and external customers\* is one which can also be used productively in language teaching activities. They are never isolated initiatives, but require the contributions of experts, administrators, teachers, and publishers, examining boards. A rigorous analysis of who are the internal clients of each link in the chain, of the needs of those for whom services are being provided and of systems for feedback to check that this is happening would be an important contribution to the achievement of improved quality.

\* external customers are those from outside an organisation who purchase or use a service. Internal customers are those within an organisation who provide a service to colleagues and contribute in the service chain to the quality of the service delivered. In this definition everybody in an organisation provides and receives a service for/ from someone

The quality of services is often defined by promises or guarantees to customers – a customer charter or service contract which tries to specify the way in which needs are being addressed.

#### *Discussion*

*The relevance of these principles to language teaching was discussed. It was agreed that there are important similarities which can contribute to good language teaching – especially the need for proper needs analysis and for coherent descriptions and design of the components of the language teaching process. It was likewise considered useful to consider language learners as clients and the language learning process as a service provided.*

*Nevertheless, there are clear limits to the analogy – language teaching is a creative process involving the interaction of learner, teacher, the social and cultural environment and cannot usefully be reduced to a purely mechanical set of procedures, however well designed.*

*The need for quality assurance procedures adapted to language teaching was seen as essential in the state sector of education, as well as in the market driven private sector. The general principles of quality assurance and quality control in non-educational sectors provide a good starting point.*

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## THE RELEVANCE OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

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An essential feature of quality assurance is the setting and checking of standards. In order to be able to do this, a common language is required. The Common European Framework of Reference provides a comprehensive and coherent description of the field of language learning and teaching and in this way is an invaluable instrument for the clear definition of components and the analyses of functionality which are requirements of quality assurance. The Common Scales of Reference can be used to define aims and measure achievement in a standardised way. Together with "A Quality Guide for the Evaluation and Design of Language Learning and Teaching Programmes and Materials"\* of the European Commission, C.E.F. could – if it becomes more widely known and used – be a basis for serious quality initiatives at local, national and international levels. Projects seeking to apply the C.E.F. in a range of different contexts feature prominently in the action plans presented by participants.

# 3. PRODUCING QUALITY

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## 3.1 MANAGING THE TEACHING TEAM- A SEMINAR

MARTYN ELLIS

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No initiatives in producing quality can be carried out without the involvement and commitment of the people responsible for the teaching and learning process. This section of the workshop presented the EAQUALS seminar "Managing the Teaching Team"\* and explored the issues involved in the way groups of teachers function as a group.

The following topics were dealt with:

- 1) **Focus on the team** – the needs of the task, the team and the individual in the workplace. The team and the manager
- 2) **Focus on the manager** – an overview of the key elements in effective team management. The Personal Qualities of the manager. Decision making and degrees of team involvement
- 3) **Focus on service standards, systems and procedures** – Managing and monitoring service standards. Systems and procedures to ensure quality control. The manager as monitor. The EAQUALS checklist.
- 4) **Focus on the individual** – Identifying and rectifying problems, resistance to change, activating the team. Case Studies.

\*The complete seminar "Managing the teaching team" is published by EAQUALS

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## 3.2 FOCUS ON CLASS OBSERVATION

EVA MARQUARDT & LAURA MURESAN

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### 1. Training and Development: Focus on Class Room Observation (CRO)

#### What?

Within the greater area "Producing Quality" we considered teaching as a very important issue. In order to fit in with learners wishes, to guarantee quality teaching and to prevent teachers experience from becoming pure routine the teaching itself should be object of observation and improvement. During the session the following aims were pursued:

- awareness raising concerning the teachers' perspective and situation
- to understand the teachers learning process and the implied preconditions
- to increase awareness concerning the question whether we can talk about "good teaching"
- to reflect the role of the observer during the whole process of observation

- to think about constructive feedback for the observee
- to reflect the participants competence with regard to class room observation
- to outline the complexity of teaching and the necessity of mutual agreement of focussed observation and feedback

### **How?**

The session combined input with group, pair work and individual reflection. The intention was

- to collect the participants own competence and experience in the area
- raise awareness rather than inform
- to provide information about procedures and strategies which can be adapted to the specific situation
- to provoke individual reflection

Some of the worksheets from this session are included in Appendix 2.

# 4. APPRAISING / ASSESSING / CONTROLLING QUALITY

This section of the workshop began with an account by participants in the workshop of their own experiences in quality assurance activities which provided a wide-ranging account of different initiatives, from in-school quality circles, ambitious institutional quality improvement initiatives to national schemes for general improvement of language education.

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## THE CHARACTERISTICS AND PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY SCHEMES: ISSUES RELATED TO THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

FRANK HEYWORTH

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### 1. The characteristics and principles of quality schemes

Initiatives designed specifically to develop quality within a sector require a vision and commitment. As Oscar Wilde said "A map of the world is not worth looking at if it doesn't contain Utopia". An essential starting point is the commitment of the individual, the team, and the institution to excellence. When this is done there is equally a commitment to a change process, asking questions like:

Are we doing the right things?

Are we doing them right?

Can we do things right, all the time every time?

In order to achieve these degrees of excellence an institution needs to have "experts" capable of delivering the services at a level of zero tolerance of error. How do people become experts? The processes include learning techniques and principles, internalising them so that we can solve problems intuitively, reflecting on our solutions to see if they modify our principles.

An effective initiative for quality assurance usually involves a public statement of the commitment – often in the form of a charter, or a code of practice or a guarantee. It also requires ways of verifying and validating the achievement – inspection or audit schemes.

### 2. Differences between public and private sector quality control

These characteristics fit generally well into the institutional cultures of private sector language schools, but much less easily into the public sector. Private sector control is voluntary, connected to marketing and client-related, influenced by commercial considerations. Public sector quality control tends to be often compulsory carried out by "government inspectors", defined by law, influenced by authorities, perceived as threatening since jobs and careers depend on the results, and therefore difficult to implement. There is often confusion between inspecting institutions and inspecting individuals

Nevertheless there is increasing emphasis in national education systems on using the principles of quality assurance to replace bureaucratic systems. The participants' presentations showed how formerly strict control systems are being transformed into mentoring, training and quality promotion schemes. "Formal" inspections are being replaced by projects such as the "School programmes" in Germany, for example, where institutions are given the freedom and the responsibility of defining their own educational mission and their own standards. "Quality audits".

The steps of a quality initiative in a state sector or private school would include the following elements:

Defining the mission – what is the role of the institution? What are the ambitions?

Setting the aims – what does it seek to achieve in the short to medium term?

Producing the promise – what promise or guarantees will it give to its users?

Assessing what we do – observation to get a realistic view of present practice

Measuring the gaps between promise and practice – identifying the areas where improvement is needed

Deciding on measures of improvement – making specific action plans for doing this.

### **Mechanisms for quality assurance**

These can be divided into measures for internal quality assurance and systems for external quality control and assurance.

#### **Internal quality assurance measures**

Self-assessment checklists – using quality checklists as a means of analysing the institutions performance

- Peer observation – setting up regular programmes of peer observation of class teaching with clear criteria for what is to be observed and how feedback is to be given
- Quality circles – a measure borrowed from industry. A quality circle is a small group of, say, teachers, who meet regularly to analyse how they are working and to propose and implement improvements.
- Learner feedback – using questionnaires and focus groups of learners to get feedback on how the teaching and the institution is perceived by the learners and how satisfactory they find these.
- Trends - are we getting better? – using the information from self-analysis and questionnaires over a period of time to identify progress
- Identifying best practice – either internally or with knowledge of other institutions, trying to identify best practice in specific areas of activity and to adopt this
- Establishing benchmarks – adopting measures of best practice as standards by which the institutions own activities are measured
- Setting key indicators – using criteria or standardised information to measure progress in quality assurance – e.g. student satisfaction in questionnaires, the results in public examinations or standardised tests.

### **External quality assurance and control**

Quality assurance must be achieved internally, but external control measures can be used to verify that quality has been achieved and as a motivation for improvement. External systems include:

- Inspection by ministry inspectors – not usually voluntary, but increasingly conducted as constructive, co-operative aids to self-improvement
- "Inspection schemes" such as the English in Britain scheme run by the British Council in Britain; the EAQUALS (the European Association of Quality Language Services) scheme: a number of national associations – SOUFFLE in France, IQ Deutsch, CEELE in Spain, Chambers and Associations of Language Schools in Hungary, Poland and Romania ( see appendix 1) for addresses)

ISO 9000 (the International Standards Organisation). Self-referencing schemes such as ISO (International Standards Organisation) 9000 do not necessarily define quality with reference to any external system or criteria, and tend to place emphasis essentially on procedural matters. They concentrate on whether the mechanisms for quality assurance are in place – procedures for checking defects, putting faults right, proper regulations on processes and procedures. They are "content neutral", not specific to any particular sector, so are sometimes difficult to apply in a teaching/ learning environment. They involve commitment of time and resources, but ISO certification has been achieved with success and benefit by a number of both state and private language teaching operations. ISO 9000 provides interesting and useful mechanisms (such as an internal quality handbook) which have useful applications in the world of teaching and learning modern languages.

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# THE MECHANICS OF QUALITY SCHEMES – INSPECTING, GRADING, STANDARDISING, REPORTING –

MARTYN ELLIS

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The purpose of the session was two-fold: to explore what are the qualities of a good inspector, and how are these qualities exercised in the various stages of an inspection. The main focus was on how the skilled inspector arranges, manages and reports back on class observation.

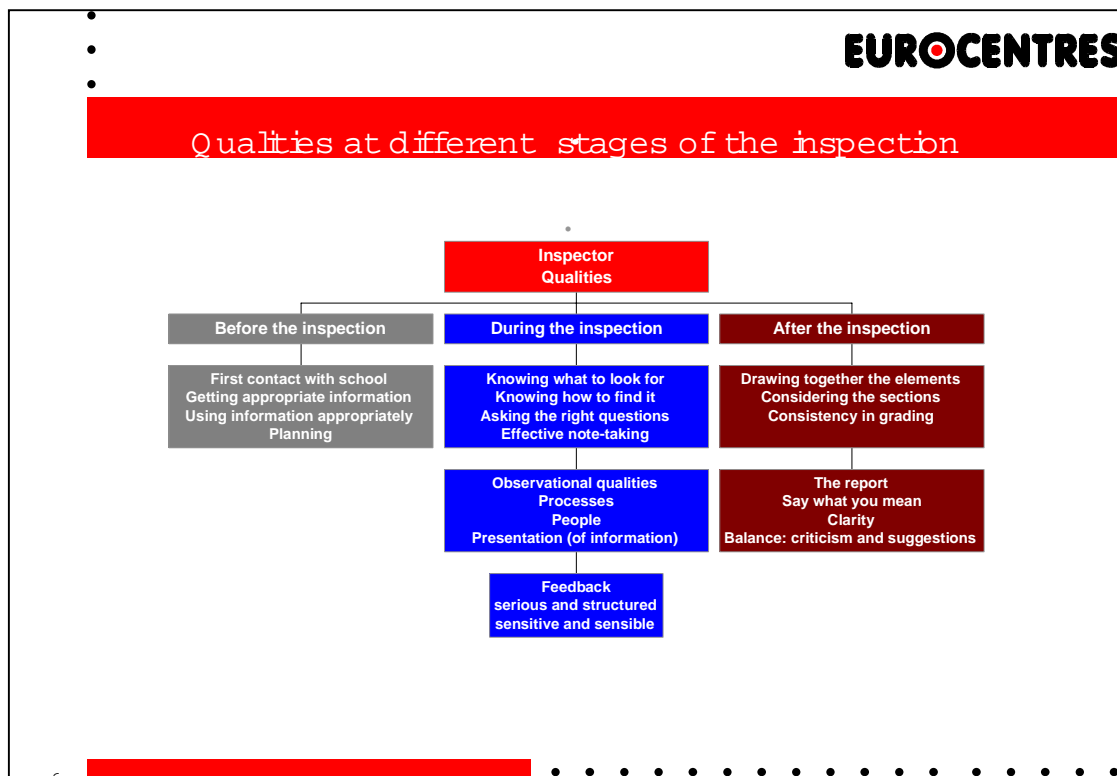
## 1. The tasks and qualities of an inspector are:

- to establish whether minimum standards are being met by the member school.
- to contribute towards the raising of these minimum standards
- = continually improve quality

Inspection should be seen as a collaborative activity with the aim of quality improvement rather than a test, a battle, a trauma, a necessary evil.

This means that the inspector must possess:

- knowledge and experience: *know what to look for and where/how to find it*
- personal and relational qualities: *investigate in a thorough but non-threatening manner*
- organisational qualities
- observational qualities: *processes, procedures, people, presentation*
- clear expression in speaking and writing: *say what you mean - mean what you say*



## **2. Observation of classes**

An inspector needs to observe clearly...

- what people do
- how they do it
- why they do it
- the effect of what they do on others
- the way it fits into an overall plan or system
- whether it is worth doing

### **Procedural questions include:**

- do I see all the teachers? for how long?
- what proportion of inspection time is spent in class?
- does the teaching follow academic guidelines?
- what information do I require from the teachers before I visit the class?
- what information do I need from academic managers regarding course and class organisation?
- how can I best collate the information?
- what categories do I use in feedback?
- how do I draw attention to weak teaching?
- how do I identify general strengths and weaknesses in the organisation?

### **Some hints on class observation include:**

- use some of the time to check on other information, put notes in order, etc.
- list and grade categories: class management, material, presentation etc (see next slide)
- don't get actively involved in the class - observe
- ask for lesson plans.

### **Criteria for judging teaching include:**

- planning and preparation

- clarity of aims - achievement of aims
- class management
- record-keeping
- clarity of stages
- variety of focus and variety of task
- checking learning
- material appropriate to the level
- learner involvement
- full coverage of all learners
- full range of skills
- quality of grammar explanation
- clear explanations
- rapport
- attention to individuals
- use of resources
- effective and appropriate use of methods

**The purpose of the feedback should be to:**

- identify trends, strengths and weaknesses
- recommend in-service training areas
- make recommendations for the focus of in-house observation
- discuss any obvious constraints on teachers: materials, space, syllabus restrictions
- to summarise inspectors' impressions - pointing out positive aspects and areas needing attention
- to allow school to comment

***Self-help - setting up an association for quality control, practical issues***

This presentation aimed mainly to report on hands-on experience in setting up the ***Hungarian Association of Private Language Schools*** and working out an Inspection Scheme for Quality Assurance in Hungary and on the establishment of the ***Romanian Chamber of Language Schools***.

The workshop started with a brainstorming session based on a questionnaire, in which the crucial points of setting up a national association had been collected. The discussion was followed by a brief summary of the recent changes in the scheme and the reasons for these changes.

The practical issues related to the setting up of an association were explored. These included the design of quality documents; the teambuilding effect at national level which an association can provide; the setting of national quality standards in relation to European criteria. The creation of the Hungarian and Romanian national associations drew on the experience of the EAQUALS quality assurance scheme, but adapted these to fit local circumstances, while raising these to bring them as close as possible to European standards.

The process of setting up an association involves establishing proper channels of communication, the development of quality related attitudes and skills, the setting of transparent criteria and mechanisms for verifying quality.

The questionnaire in Appendix 3 outlines some of the main aspects involved in setting up an association:

## 5. PROJECTS AND ACTION PLANS FROM PARTICIPANTS

The Action Plans from participants were worked out during the last part of the workshop on the basis of a structured checklist, of which the main points were:

- recognition of the need for change
- a statement of the main objectives
- the commitments to quality and public statements of this
- the procedures for action planning
- the assessment and evaluation of the action

Each participant was asked to provide an action plan, either individually or as a group, outlining a project to disseminate or take further the ideas presented in the workshop.

<b>Description of programme</b>	<b>Delegates from</b>
Improving the quality of school language teaching programmes by introducing the Scales of Reference in the Common European Framework as descriptors for school –leaving certificates. This to be facilitated by an international exchange of materials and work in progress. The wish was expressed that this could be promoted by a follow-up workshop in Graz or elsewhere	Andorra, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, The Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Romania and Russia
Improvement of language teaching provision for adults by the setting up of a national association of language schools, with an appropriate quality assurance and inspection scheme, based on the criteria of EAQUALS and the Romanian and Hungarian Chambers of Language Schools. A request will be made to facilitate this with a regional workshop.	Bulgaria
The introduction of new courses in higher education in the Czech Republic and improving their quality through a system of student feedback based on questionnaires	The Czech Republic
The development of an in-school improvement programme through a systematic application of (1) analysis of books, syllabus and lesson plans (2) demonstration lessons and teacher training schemes to improve practice and a (3) organisation of peer observation	Cyprus
The establishment of a coherent programme of quality control in secondary schools, through systematic observation of teaching and teacher training programmes	Malta
The improvement of quality in a university language department through gathering student feedback, forming quality circles and developing a team approach.	Iceland
A systematic approach to quality development, establishing standards, undertaking training, establishing outside control in a group of international cultural institutes	Austria
Focus on improved quality of classroom teaching in a language school through a 2-year action plan, including an observation system, clear job descriptions for teachers, development of co-operation	Spain

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND PLANS FOR FOLLOW-UP

The questionnaires from participants indicated that they had found the workshop useful and that the focus on quality issues was one which could be applied to most of the teaching / learning environments they were responsible for. Although the input came mainly from the work carried out in the private sector of language schools, it was seen as relevant to developments in the state sector too and to the work to be done in individual organisations. The main message of the workshop was that a vision of what one is trying to achieve and a public commitment to quality are essential first steps. The next essential element is the availability of clear, precise descriptions of the domain of language teaching and learning; the European Common Framework is an invaluable source of descriptors for doing this. There are numerous techniques, procedures and schemes for implementing quality initiatives and some of these were presented during the workshop.

Participants expressed the hope that there could be a follow-up workshop, concentrating in more detail on the development of quality schemes in particular areas; the whole question of classroom observation – what can be observed? with what objectives? how can teaching best be analysed for quality? what are the best procedures for giving feedback and reporting on assessment? – could be the focus of follow-up work.

Since the workshop, numbers of participants have reported on follow-up work undertaken to disseminate or apply parts of the workshop content.

The workshop was a very pleasurable and stimulating experience for the co-ordinating team and they would like to thank the staff at the ECML most warmly for their help in organising it, and equally to thank the participants for their enthusiasm and enriching contributions.

Frank Heyworth  
February 1999

## APPENDIX NO. 1

### *REFERENCES FOR CONTACT, HELP AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT*

#### **Inspection schemes / quality audit schemes**

British Council, English in Britain recognition scheme:  
Bridgewater House  
58 Whitworth Street,  
GB Manchester M1 6BB

ALTE  
C/o UCLES  
1 Hills Road  
GB – Cambridge CB1 2EU

ACELS : The Advisory Council for English Language Schools  
36 Lower Baggot Street  
IRL - Dublin 2  
Ireland

SOUFFLE:  
Rue Jean Pétrissans  
BP 133  
F - 83 957 La Garde Cedex

AISLI  
C/o the Cambridge Centre for English  
Via Campanella 16  
I – 41000 Modena

Hungarian Association of Language Schools  
Rath György u. 24  
H – 1122 Budapest

PASE – the Polish association for Standards in English  
C/o ELS –Bell,  
ul. Polanki  
P – 80308 Gdansk

The Romanian Chamber of Language Schools  
C/o PROSPER-ASE,  
Calea Grivitei 2 etaj 2  
Bucaresti 1  
Romania

CEELE, Spain  
E/RE  
C/ Duque de Rivas n° 2  
E – 28012 Madrid

European Association of Quality Language Services (EAQUALS)  
Via Torrebianca 18  
I – 34132 Trieste

ISO  
International Organisation for Standardisation  
1 rue de Varembe  
Case Postale 56  
CH – 1211 Genève

## APPENDIX NO. 2

### 1. WHAT IS "GOOD TEACHING"

#### **Was ist "guter Unterricht"? Wie bewirken Lehrer eine gute Schülerleistung**

- wenn die Schülerinnen und Schüler etwas lernen
- wenn viele visuelle Hilfen benutzt werden
- wenn die Art der Übung sehr häufig wechseln
- wenn das Thema interessant ist
- wenn der Lernprozess richtig strukturiert ist und möglichst exakt dem vorgegebenen Ablauf entspricht
- wenn die Lernenden Gelegenheit zu freien Antworten zu haben
- wenn die Lehrkräfte das Land der Zielsprache aus eigener Erfahrung kennen
- wenn der Lehrer die richtige Methode anwendet
- wenn die Lehrkräfte selbst im Hörverstehenstest der Zielsprache gut abschneiden

Bitte diskutieren Sie in der Gruppe!

### 2. CONDITIONS FOR A CHANGE IN TEACHING PROCESSES

#### **Voraussetzung für eine Änderung des Lehrverhaltens ist, daß die Lehrkraft selbst ganz konkret**

- überzeugt ist, daß diese Alternative besser ist und funktioniert
- erkennt, daß sie bzw. er sich noch nicht so verhält
- ...

### C. HOW TO BE A GOOD CLASS OBSERVER

<b>Der Beobachter sollte</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>+-</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>++</b>
Aus der Praxis kommen					
mit Sachkompetenz und Vorsicht vorgehen					
Menschenkenntnis, Taktgefühl und Zurückhaltung					

mitbringen					
Transparenz, Fairness, Fachinteresse zeigen					
Unvoreingenommenheit, Objektivität an den Tag legen					
Dem Unterrichtenden neutral bzw. positiv gegenüberstehen					
Überzeugendes Interesse an der Beobachtung entwickeln und dies auch vermitteln					
Bereit sein, sich mit der Lehrkraft auf Spielregeln zu einigen					
Informationen über Kurs und Unterrichtseinheit sammeln					
Vor- und Nachbesprechung ohne Zeitdruck in offener, freundlicher Atmosphäre führen					
Keinen auf Kritikanlässe lauern den Blick haben, nicht der beobachteten Unterrichtssituation das eigene Schema überstülpen wollen					
in der Nachbesprechung kein monologisierendes und besserwisserisches Verhalten an den Tag legen					
Möglicherweise bereit sein, sich auch selbst auf den Unterricht vorzubereiten, sich selbst im Unterricht beobachten zu lassen					

## ***An Accreditation Scheme - Crucial points to clarify***

**Fully  
agree      Don't  
agree      Partly  
agree**

### **I. The primary aims of the scheme are to...**

1. Give information to the public about the standards of the language teaching provision.
2. Protect the profession against cowboy organisations.
3. Maintain high professional standards among accredited schools.
4. Upgrade standards.
5. Guarantee minimum standards.

***Your own points:***

### **II. What can an accreditation scheme guarantee?**

1. The same standards in each accredited school.
2. Minimum standards in the accredited schools.
3. Regular monitoring of fixed standards in the accredited schools.
4. The highest standards in all accredited schools.
5. Value for money in all services in the accredited schools.
6. Fairness of information to customers about the services provided in accredited schools.

***Your own points:***

**Fully  
agree      Don't  
agree      Partly  
agree**

### **III. The status of an accreditation scheme among customers and authorities.**

*It is usually believed that it ...*

1. Can give orientation in the selection of courses and schools to the individual language learner.
2. Provides an 'official list of professional schools' to individual students and companies.
3. Gives information on expected services and their standards to customers.
4. Raises the profile of institutions.

***Your own points:***

### **IV. The status of an accreditation scheme in the ELT profession...**

*It is usually believed that it ...*

1. Represents professionalism.
2. Can regulate the profession and exclude low standard operations.
3. Differentiates between professional and unprofessional services.
4. Gives information to teachers about the level of professionalism in a school.

***Your own points:***

**Fully    Don't    Partly  
agree    agree    agree**

### **V. Advantages/disadvantages of a local scheme as opposed to an international one.**

1. It has less prestige than a regional or worldwide scheme.

2. I can take local circumstances into consideration and thus be open to more schools..

3. It is less expensive than a bigger scheme.

***Your own points:***

## **VI. An accreditation scheme should be...**

1. Transparent and clearcut (i.e. well documented) to customers and to institutions.

2. Absolutely objective.

3. Coherent and fairly reliable.

4. Comprehensive (i.e. check all relevant areas).

5. Has to rely on evidence gained in real school-situations.

6. Measure fixed standards.

7. Check whether customers get 'value for money' in all services.

8. Prescriptive as to the criteria of a 'pass'.

9. Able to check the fairness of information about the school and its activity.

10. Just and give fair weight to the main areas of a language teaching operation.

***Your own points:***

**Fully agree    Don't agree    Partly agree**

## **VII. How to measure quality - the inspection**

1. The only way of assessing the quality of services in a language teaching operation is to visit the school and see what is going on.

2. Certain legal and written documents on procedures

are essential for assessing the school's activity.

3. The aim of the inspection is to check whether the practices at the school verify what is laid down in the documentation about the school.

4. The aim of the inspection is not to check everything but to take a snapshot of the school at one given time.

5. The inspection cannot serve the function of professional consultancy.

6. In order to achieve improvement in the schools, feedback has to be detailed and specific.

7. The inspection can never be absolutely objective and reliable.

8. It is always easier to measure what is less important, e.g. the quality of technical equipment, than what really matters, i.e. the quality of teaching.

9. The length of an inspection period should be defined according to the size of the school.

10. The procedures and criteria of inspections should be very clearly specified.

11. The results of an inspection should be documented in a written report.

***Your own points:***

**Fully  
agree      Don't  
agree      Partly  
agree**

## **VIII. The inspectors ...**

1. Should be independent of the institute they inspect.

2. Should have high academic qualifications.

3. Should be well trained and experienced.

4. Should go through regular training.

5. Should have an active role in developing the scheme.

6. Should carry out the inspections in teams.
7. Can guarantee the professionalism of an accreditation scheme.
8. Have their own subjective judgement which will always influence the result of an inspection.
9. If experienced enough, can have a fair judgement of the quality of teaching and how the school is run even if the time of the inspection is limited.

***Your own points:***

**IX. Anticipated points of criticism of an accreditation scheme:**

1. Will inevitably form an 'ELITE CLUB' and exclude some schools.
2. Will break up the profession into cliques.
3. Accredited schools will have unfair advantage.

**Fully agree**    **Don't agree**    **Partly agree**

4. Inspecting each other is incestuous and does not have validity.

5. Schools which do not pass will challenge the objectivity of the scheme.

6. The amount of time inspectors can spend in the school or in the classroom is not enough to form a fair picture about the activity of a school.

7. To run a professional scheme is very expensive and the benefits do not pay off.

8. Accredited schools might feel that they do not want to be identified with some of the other schools accredited by the scheme.

9. The scheme becomes too wide and new schemes will be developed to differentiate more.

***Your own points:***

### **X. The success of an accreditation scheme...**

1. Depends on how the inspections are carried out.

2. Is influenced by the number of accredited schools.

3. Is linked with the professional prestige of the association or institution which is responsible for it.

4. Depends only on the degree of professionalism represented in the documents and by the inspectors.

***Your own points:***

## APPENDIX No.4

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