EFL TEACHER PREPARATION, TEACHER CONCEPTUAL FRAMES AND THE TASK OF IMPLEMENTING PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE: DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE TEACHER EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN TUNISIA

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VOLUME I

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This thesis examines the links between the provision of English as a Foreign Language teacher education and development (EFL TED) and the current situation in Tunisia in a period of educational and curricular change. The study starts by examining issues at the macro level and explores the connection between economic re-structuring, educational policy and the role allocated to English within this reform period. It then describes EFL teacher education and features of the new English Language Teaching (ELT) curriculum in Tunisia. At the micro level, a semi-structured interview is employed to explore the views of fifteen EFL teachers concerning their education, training and development and issues related to the implementation of some innovative aspects of the ELT curriculum.

Qualitative analysis of the data uncovered areas of tension and ambiguity signalling a degree of incompatibility between the teachers' perceptions of learning, teaching and the teacher's role and the concepts underlying the intended ELT curriculum and the educational reform in general. I recommend some strategies that might resolve the mismatch. I suggest ways to strengthen the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) component at university level and to foster teacher reflection at the probationary phase and post-probationary phase. I argue that serious attention needs to be paid to the conceptual dimensions of teaching by strengthening the education of teachers in the area of current issues in the profession and in general education.
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## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Action Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Classical Arabic</td>
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<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Competency-Based</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBTE</td>
<td>Competency-Based Teacher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLT</td>
<td>Communicative Language Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREFOC</td>
<td>Centre de Recherches et de la Formation Continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>Diplôme d'Études Approfondies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>The European Economic Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>English Language Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENI</td>
<td>Ecole Normale des Instituteurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENPA</td>
<td>Ecole Normale des Professeurs-Adjoints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENS</td>
<td>Ecole Normale Supérieure</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENSET</td>
<td>École Normale de l'Enseignement Technique</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESAP</td>
<td>Economic Structural Adjustment Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL/EFL</td>
<td>English as a Second or English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL/EFL TE</td>
<td>English as a Second or English as a Foreign Language Teacher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>English for Specific Purposes</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETS</td>
<td>Education and Training System</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>The European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>Formation Continue</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GURT</td>
<td>Georgetown University Round Table on Language and Linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBLV</td>
<td>Institut Bourguiba des Langues Vivantes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISFM</td>
<td>Institut Supérieur pour la Formation des Maîtres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITE</td>
<td>Initial Teacher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>MNC</td>
<td>Multinational Corporations</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSA</td>
<td>Modern Standard Arabic</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAFTA</td>
<td>North American Free Trade Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>The Organisation of African Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>The Overseas Development Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PES</td>
<td>Professeur de l'Enseignement Secondaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Professeur Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Tunisian Arabic</td>
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<tr>
<td>TE</td>
<td>Teacher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>TED</td>
<td>Teacher Education and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>Teaching English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>TESOL</td>
<td>Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSO</td>
<td>Voluntary Service Overseas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>The World Bank</td>
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<td>WW II</td>
<td>World War II</td>
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This research project is motivated by an interest in the teacher variable in the educational process and especially by situations involving educational change. As we step into the 21st century, there seems to be a universal concern with educational reform and the education of teachers. A special UNESCO report in 1998 was devoted to discussing the challenges that educational systems and educationists face in a world of global economies. The message of the report was that the situation of teachers and their education had not improved in line with the reform recommendations except in a small number of countries in Western Europe.

In Tunisia, the context of this study, education has always been central to political and economic planning particularly since Tunisia's leaders opened up the economy in the late 1980's. Educational reform was deemed necessary under a human resource development and skills upgrading policy ('mise à niveau'). A critical World Bank (WB) report on the system of higher education in Tunisia (World Bank 1998) had identified a number of problems that, from the point of view of the Bank, would hamper the Education and Training System (ETS) in its efforts to achieve Tunisia's economic goals.

Three projects operated so far in Tunisia under a WB loan scheme signal that these general guidelines and recommendations are being implemented: (i) The Tunisia-Secondary Education Support Project (1994) (ii) The Tunisia-Higher Education Reform Project (1997) and (iii) The Tunisia-Education Quality Improvement Program (2000). UNICEF and the European Union are two of the donors for the last project. Together with the changes these projects were meant to bring about, there
has been an accompanying rationalisation of languages-in-education policy. Conscious of the role of English in a globalised world, announcements from the highest level of policy-making\(^1\) were followed by decisions to strengthen the status of English in mainstream education from Basic to Higher Education and for the first time English was introduced in Vocational Education. At present there are signs that the lowering of the learning age is following a steady pace as can be gleaned from the latest presidential decision to introduce English in the seventh form of Basic Education starting the current academic year 2000-2001.

The motivation for carrying out a study on teacher education and development (TED) can be traced back to 1990 when I finished my *CAR*\(^2\) on the communicative teaching of reading (Derbel 1990). It was then that I realised that any change in pedagogy was inevitably going to require a serious examination of the ‘conceptual frames’ of the teachers who were expected to implement it. I use ‘conceptual frames’ after Barnes (1992) who defines them as “the underlying assumptions that influence teachers’ actions in the classroom” (10). Having been nurtured within that same TED system as a learner and as a teacher during the second half of the 1980s, I was aware how difficult it would be for the common denominator teacher to adapt to the prospect of change towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) pedagogy. During the seven years of my teaching experience in a secondary school in the south of Tunisia, I became familiar with the prevailing views among the colleagues I came into contact with in fields of education, language, teaching, discipline, and teacher and learner roles. This awareness of the disjunction between what appeared to me to be powerful established practices at the time and my understanding of the nature of the change to come in pedagogy, raised my interest in carrying out a study on teachers and the process of change. I was certain that this was going to be a central issue in the educational system in general and the biggest challenge for teacher educators in the 1990s.

\(^1\) Traditionally announcement of the sort are made by the President on the occasion of a yearly educational event called ‘*Journée du Savoir*’.

\(^2\) Stands for *Certificat d’Aptitude à la Recherche* which was a pre-requisite for entry to post-graduate studies in the old system.
I was convinced there would be a tension between tradition and innovation especially in the minds of the teachers and I was interested to see how the teacher education (TE) system was going to respond to the situation. My experience both as a teacher and as a recipient of the training provision inspired a somewhat subjective expectation that what trainers would attempt to do is pour new wine into old bottles. Thus, my objective from the outset was to understand, explain, and reflect on the TE practices in the light of the challenges outlined above and explore ways to help improve the situation. I realised later that this type of research was not normally tackled by academics from departments of English. Previous research in TE was exclusively undertaken by ex-trainers (Jrad 1986, Cheniti 1988) or as French doctorates mostly in peripheral areas (Chabchoub 1978, Chamam 1978, Bousnina 1991).

Thus, the present research project would be the first doctoral project on the education, training and development of teachers of English for Basic and Secondary Education undertaken in English and relying almost exclusively on literature in teacher education for English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL TE). I am certain, nonetheless, that my readings of the mainstream literature in general and ESL/EFL TE were necessarily filtered through my experience as learner and teacher, and that my frames of reference have all resulted from various influences throughout my life as a human being in interaction with others. Moreover, this research is the outcome of the belief systems of the researcher and the participants. The final findings are, therefore, the result of my re-construction of the teachers' stories (Denzin 1994). The whole research process is a reflexive search for avenues to improvement in the EFL TED system.
1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As will be explained in section 2.2, the shift from a skill-oriented craft model of TE to the 'holistic' model in the 1970s gave rise to the debate over theory and practice (Strevens 1977, Alatis 1974, Stern 1983, Widdowson 1984, Britten 1985a, 1985b; Richards 1987, Larsen-Freeman 1983) and how the balance between these two components might be achieved (Brumfit 1983, Bowers 1987). Emerging from this debate among the 'holists' was an understanding of teaching as an interdisciplinary activity requiring the interdependence of theoretical knowledge in the classroom situation. This theoretical knowledge came from other disciplines like Psychology, Sociology, the Philosophy of Education, Anthropology, and so on. Practical knowledge came from practice opportunities created in the training situation or in model schools. However, it has been argued recently that the theory/practice dichotomy has resulted in a divide between academics and trainers and an authoritative, unidirectional mode of course delivery by the trainers to the teachers (Wallace 1991). Concern over the teachers' cognitive processes was voiced by educators who attempted, while functioning within the applied science perspective, to focus on changing teacher attitudes and raising their awareness of alternative courses of action (Richards 1987, Larsen-Freeman 1983, Pennington 1989). This trend became more pronounced in the 1980s in research on teacher thinking which focused on the teacher as generator of professional knowledge (ElBaz 1991, Prabhu 1995, Freeman 1996a, Mitchell and Marland 1989). Thus, there has been greater research interest in exploring teachers' thinking processes (Berliner 1987, Clark and Peterson 1986) and the nature of professional knowledge (Shulman et al. 1986, Elbaz 1983, Gudmündsdottir and Shulman 1987, Grossman 1990, Gutiérrez Al-Marza 1992) in order to develop an understanding of the way practitioners link theory with practice.

Besides the interest in exploring the teacher thinking processes, it has become essential that teachers themselves examine their teaching situation and study their own teaching through Action Research (AR) activity (Stenhouse 1975, McNiff 1993, Altrichter et al. 1991). AR has become a component of teacher education courses
aiming to develop the reflective teacher in a number of TED courses today (Wallace 1991, 1998; Nunan 1992, Allwright 1993, Richards and Lockhardt 1996). These developments in mainstream thinking in TE and in TE practice seem to be favouring more trainee-centred practices. However, as Zahorik (1983) points out, these are constructions of what can be gleaned from the literature and reports on experiments and pilot projects in specific contexts. The picture should not be mistaken for the reality of all TE courses in the field. The education and training of teachers in a specific country has to be examined in the light of the educational system in that country and the way the training and education of teachers is organised and practised. Teacher educators in a given country may settle for a craft model in response to structural constraints and logistic limitations. It follows that specific countries might not have experienced all the models I described above and therefore there is room for considering new options.

1.3 THE TUNISIAN CONTEXT: MATTERS ARISING

The educational culture in Tunisia emphasises rationalisation and standardisation of teaching. As part of a centralised system, teachers are encouraged to apply ‘official pedagogy’ to prepare their pupils for national exams. Apart from the selective national exams, school administrators put pressure on teachers to hold common tests at school and district levels in order to ensure conformity in content provision and pedagogical practice. However, this educational culture is being put into question by an ongoing reform of the system of education that aims to promote discovery learning, critical thinking and learner autonomy. As part of this general education reform a new English language curriculum and textbooks being introduced to facilitate a shift towards a communicative language teaching pedagogy.

Beginner teachers in Tunisia are being socialised into the profession following the craft model. Their training is based mainly on observing experienced teachers giving ‘demonstration lessons’ the content and focus of which are controlled by the trainers.
The professional training course is fundamentally the transmission of survival skills to be refined by the trainee-teacher through a process of trial and error in the classroom. Beyond the induction period, the TED system does not focus on meaning generation or engagement in classroom research. Teacher development is reduced to a notion of formation continue (FC) meaning re-training and further training at the level of technique as required by change in 'methods'. Teacher education provision is undertaken in a linear managerial process that openly sets out to inculcate a number of 'desired' pedagogical skills that are perceived to match the national specifications. Customarily, these are spelled out in the text of the curriculum, teachers' manuals ('Guides Pédagogiques') and the inspectors' directives. It has generally been the custom in EFL TED that teachers are 'trained' in the use of one 'method' or another (Jaoua 1981, 1996). Whenever there is a change, experienced teachers are up-dated in the 'new method' through 're-training' interventions. These start with the teaching of particular skills (speaking, reading, writing, etc.) and finish with seminars or workshops on testing to ascertain whether the teachers have grasped the 'method' (conceptualised as techniques and procedures) (Derbel 1990). Thus, the intervention is kept as practical as possible. This approach is evidently a 'deficit' approach to TED (Rubin 1971) because it suits organisational rather than individual teacher needs.

Moreover, trainers who are few in number and whose workload is already heavy (Zribi 1998) have come under greater pressure. The lowering of the learning age for English by two years since 1995 and by three starting the current academic year 2000-2001, has resulted in a massive recruitment of novice teachers to staff the Écoles Préparatoires (EP) at the level of Basic Education. Thus, the problem of low trainer-trainee ratio, already serious before the launching of the reform, has become even more acute. For instance, in the beginning of the academic year 1996-1997, the year when English was introduced in the 8th form Basic Education, the Ministry of Education immediately recruited 617 new teachers without increasing the number of trainers accordingly (see statistics in Appendix 1.1). To cope with the pressure, there has been a greater drift towards a craft model of teacher education and a corresponding de-emphasis on theory. One coping strategy was to invite experienced
teachers to attend 'demonstration lessons' normally held for the neophytes as a form of re-training into the new 'method. Novice and experienced teachers are grouped together for study days and seminars presumably to enhance peer learning. The resources in the libraries attached to the Centres de Recherches et de la Formation Continue (CREFOCs) are out-dated and, therefore, of little help to the teachers (see section 6.3).

The situation described above has resulted in more and more teachers relying on whatever 'wisdom' they can obtain from trainers during the FC sessions or from colleagues following staff room talk. The source of pedagogical knowledge most likely to thrive in this situation is what Lortie (1975) called the "apprenticeship of observation". According to Lortie, this type of knowledge is so powerful that any subsequent TED programs that do not attend to the conceptual level will fail to change practice any significant way. In Tunisia, at least, the teachers' conceptual frames remain completely unchallenged. Indeed, it can be hypothesised that the 'folkways of teaching' (Buchman 1987) are strengthened by the craft-oriented TED practice. Although a 'development' discourse has been adopted recently by EFL trainers, at the level of practice the same procedures prevail. It is against this background that I have set out to explore the views of a small cohort of practising teachers of English in order to gauge whether and to what extent their conceptual frames (Dewey 1930, Barnes 1992) are in tune with the orientations of the innovation in ELT.

The study can be said to have two foci: (i) the training process and (ii) the curriculum translation process. From the participants' descriptions of the curriculum translation process, I identify their 'conceptual frames' and contrast them with the educational values stated in the 1991 reform and the 1995 ELT curriculum. Concerning the training process, I delineate the structure and vision from the official perspective and the teachers' perspectives. In the light of my findings, I reflect on whether the EFL TED process is likely to be effective. In chapter 9 I suggest ways of re-orienting future TED provision. My recommendations are based on a belief that the main
actors in the process, the trainers and the teachers, are after all resourceful independent thinkers who can rely on their existing frames, intuition and practical knowledge to make sense of change and act upon it (Buchman 1987). In this climate of continual change, the ‘ownership of change’ by the teachers is the only guarantee of the success of any country’s attempts to introduce innovation. Therefore, the main assumption underlying my recommendations is recognition of the interdependence of TED and curriculum innovation. The following quote from Widdowson (1993) is a reminder of the need for a linkage between TE provision and curriculum innovation:

“...(W)hatever proposals are made at the macro-level of educational policy depend for their effectiveness on the interpretation by teachers at a micro-level of pedagogic practice and their abilities to carry out the proposals. So whatever is proposed for language education as policy carries clear implications for language teacher education as well” (260).

1.4 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the theoretical assumptions outlined above and considering the specific context of this study, I intend to address the following research questions:

1. What views of language learning and teaching emerge from the teachers’ accounts of previous learning experiences as learners and during the probationary phase of their career?

2. What do the teachers see as the knowledge base for teaching English in the Tunisian context?

3. How do the teachers understand and implement some aspects of the recommended CLT pedagogy?

As a follow up to the findings related to the above questions, I will attempt to address a further question:
4. Does the innovation match the teachers' conceptual frames and what could be done to improve EFL TED provision to match the two, if necessary?

1.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS INCLUDED

The thesis, made up of nine chapters, can be seen to consist of two parts (see representation of the whole structure of the thesis and the connection between the chapters in Figure 1.1 below). The first three chapters present the theoretical framework and context of the research. Chapter one clarifies the research questions and the issues I address. In chapter two I discuss teacher education models from a global perspective to establish a framework that can be used to progress with TE in Tunisia. Chapters three and four introduce the context of the study. Chapter three deals with the economic and political situation in Tunisia as a motivating factor in the policy vision of the educational reform initiated in 1991. It also presents an overview of trends in ELT provision in Tunisia and describes the salient features of the new ELT curriculum initiated in 1995. Chapter four describes the process of EFL teacher preparation at the academic level, the professional phase and the further training phase. It also discusses the issue of teachers and the management of change and identifies discrepancies in TED. These two chapters situate the research in the overall political, economic and educational context of Tunisia. They highlight the specific characteristics of the TED tradition and the values attached to present TE practices.

In chapter 5, I discuss issues of methodological orientations and choices and explain the rationale and reasons behind them. I give justifications for the choice of methodology and the sample and describe the research design and procedures used. I contend that because of the focus of the study, and my interest in teacher perspectives, interviewing (the semi-structured interview) is a suitable technique for my research as it will help me collect the kind of data I am interested in to answer the research questions posed. The second part of the thesis is made up of four chapters. Chapter 6, 7 and 8 present the data analysis while chapter 9 concludes the thesis. In this final chapter I summarise the findings of the research and establish connections
between the major findings in the study. I finally propose a number of suggestions and recommendations for future action and research in the area of EFL TED.

**Figure 1.1: Framework of the thesis**
CHAPTER TWO  
MODELS AND PRACTICES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

With reference to the history of scientific revolutions Kuhn (1970) used the term ‘paradigm’ which he defined as an “accepted model or pattern” (23). This term proved a useful one in the conceptualisation of changes in the processes and practices in the field of TE (Zeichner 1983). The examination of teacher education from a historical perspective also shows that the same observation Kuhn made about the history of science can be made about TE. In a particular period of time the main problem can be shortage of teacher supply and therefore a system that produces as many teachers in the shortest possible time can be endorsed as the ‘best’ model or pattern. As priorities change in a particular time and context, the dominant view may be perceived as inadequate and a search for new solutions will give rise to a new “model or pattern” as pointed out by Kuhn. He also explained that ‘paradigms’ dominate until they are replaced by new ones:

“Paradigms gain their status because they are more successful than their competitors in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute. To be more successful is not, however, to be either completely successful with a single problem or notably successful with any large number” (23).

The way governments and/or teacher educators view teaching and teachers changes over time as new ideas, procedures and practices stand out in a particular context as the ‘best’ way. The presence or absence of guidelines from a governing body or institution providing TE, the type of trainees that come into the courses, the time, equipment and resources made available all combine to determine the type and quality of the provision. As attested by teacher education historians (Ögren 1953, Dent 1977, Thomas 1990), political and demographic factors can be the causes of change in the types of questions asked about TE and the solutions proposed to solve them. These studies also show that the overall educational policy in a given country,
the education tradition in place and the structure and organization of training institutions influence the way teacher educators approach their work.

In language teacher education for ESL/EFL, reviewers working from a historical perspective share the view that at least three perspectives have dominated the field of teacher education (Zeichner 1983, Britten 1985a, 1985b; Wallace 1991). Different labels were given to these trends. Zeichner referred to them as ‘paradigms’, Britten as ‘approaches’ and Wallace as ‘models’. Britten (1985a), for instance, distinguished between two approaches to TE course design: the ‘competency-based’ (CB) and the ‘holistic’ approach. The CB approach focuses on a set of competencies identified via an analysis of the job role to generate the performance criteria to be used in assessing the outgoing trainees’ mastery of teaching (Britten 1985a: 113). In contrast, the ‘holistic’ approach widens the scope of the course by adding an ‘education’ element to it to allow “the development of personal qualities of creativity, judgement, and adaptability” (Britten 1985a: 113). Thus, a course designed from a CB perspective focuses on the practical (professional) side of teaching and aims to help trainees reach qualification level with reference to pre-determined criteria (see section 2.1.3). A course designed from a ‘holistic’ perspective tends to have a built-in theoretical, professional, and attitudinal component. Suggestions in Strevens (1974), Alatis (1974) and Larsen-Freeman (1983) are illustrative examples of these attempts to translate the approach into tangible course descriptions. Wallace (1991) referred to this model as the ‘applied science’ model (see section 2.2) on the premise that it proceeds from theory to practice in a top-down fashion. In Zeichner’s (1983) conceptualisation of the American TE context, four paradigms are believed to be discernible: the ‘behaviouristic’, the ‘personalistic’, the ‘traditional-craft’, and the ‘enquiry-oriented’ (see Figure 2.1). Though he starts out with four paradigms, he then groups them along a continuum with at one end a ‘received’ model and at the other a ‘reflexive’ model. Unlike Wallace (1991) who focuses on the ‘craft’, ‘applied science’ and ‘reflective’ models of TE, Zeichner does not deal with the ‘applied science’ and only mentions in passing that CBTE implies a view of teaching as ‘applied science’, which he employs in the same sense as Wallace (1991).
Figure 2.1: Conceptualisation of paradigms in TE in the United States (based on Zeichner 1983)

Starting from Zeichner's description of the 'personalistic' paradigm, it appears that it is the antithesis of the 'behaviouristic' and yet suffers from the same imbalance in content. He comments that courses conceived within the 'personalistic' paradigm "emphasize the reorganization of perceptions and beliefs over the mastery of specific behaviors, skills and content knowledge" (4) (italics in original). Thus, paying overmuch attention to developing the individual qualities, he contends, leads to a neglect of the professional (skill) aspect. While he describes the 'traditional-craft paradigm' as based on the assumption that teaching can be learnt by imitating a master and by trial and error, he insists that the inquiry-oriented paradigm does not neglect technical skills. He defines its aim as "fostering the development of orientations and skills of critical inquiry" (6). What is of interest in Zeichner's conceptualisation is the way he places the four paradigms along a continuum, thus falling back into a dichotomy with a 'received' system at one end and a 'reflexive' one at the other (see Figure 2.1). In this sense his categorisation bears comparison with Wallace's (1991) distinction between sources of knowledge for teaching (pre-training, 'received' and 'experiential') and the interaction between these and the day to day practice-reflection cycle.

The different perspectives on TE can be distinguished from one another on the basis of how teacher educators working within each perspective understood teaching, 'good' teacher performance and learning to teach. Strevens (1977), for instance, believed that programme designers have to start from a conception, not necessarily
14 overtly expressed, of an 'ideal' teacher while Freeman (1994) would argue that in accordance with current trends the focus is on learning to teach. The salient developments in the field of teacher education and the changing orientations emanating from changing conceptions of teaching teachers and teacher learning will be the focus of this chapter. The intention of this brief summary of conceptualisations of the developments and trends in TE was to provide points of reference for the forthcoming analysis and discussion of theoretical underpinnings of the major trends in TE as understood today. In my view, reflecting on past conceptions, practices and procedures will facilitate an appreciation of present views and practices. In the remainder of this chapter the features, processes and practices of the three 'established' models of TE, the 'craft', the 'holistic' and the 'enquiry-oriented', will be delineated. The ultimate aim of this chapter is to provide a framework for the purpose and focus of this research project. Firstly, the discussion of general models in TE will serve as a reference point to situate the Tunisian TED tradition within a wider global perspective and to discuss its underlying philosophy in the light of current trends in the field. In that sense, theoretically the project can be seen as situated in relation to issues common to all TED contexts. Secondly, the framework helped identify issues at stake in the Tunisian context thus informing the choice of issues raised in the semi-structured interview used to collect data from teachers. Finally, it will serve as a reference point in framing a proposal for future EFL TED in Tunisia. The alternative will be conceived on the basis of the research findings and the researcher's knowledge and awareness of the options available and ways to adapt them to the specific characteristics of the TED system in Tunisia and the main actors in it. The forthcoming discussion will focus on the craft model, the applied science model and the enquiry-oriented model of TED.

2.2 THE CRAFT MODEL

This is a model based on a view of teaching as 'craft'. That is, a view that equates teaching with other 'guilds' like pottery or masonry. The way to learn a craft is generally done by sitting with an experienced practitioner ('master') and 'picking up' the 'tricks of the trade'. The learner of a craft observes the master, perceives the
model and practices through trial and error until performance of a practice approximates the master. The ‘gifted’ learner might outperform the master but this is extremely rare. This model was practised in a teacher training orientation for teacher preparation programmes in the early days of public education and extended in many different forms as part of the ‘professional’ component of wider TE programmes. The following discussion of ‘apprenticeship’ schools, Micro-teaching and Competency-Based Teacher Education (CBTE) will illustrate that the three share a common assumption about teachers, teaching and the way in which teaching ‘expertise’ should be developed.

2.2.1 THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM

As pointed out by teacher education historians and researchers (Ögren 1953, Thomas 1990, Dent 1977; Britten 1985a, 1985b), the 'apprenticeship' model was identified as the predominant model for teacher education especially at the beginning of the twentieth century. The apprenticeship model was applied in order to produce teachers as quickly and cheaply as possible at a time when there was no state educational provision. In Britain, for instance, benevolent educators Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster started in 1810 a training institution in which the apprenticeship model was used with young pupils so that they become teachers of other children. The training of these pupil-teachers consisted in placing them as apprentices under the supervision of a master teacher, a monitor, whose role was to transmit to them his pedagogical skills. David Stow, another benevolent educator, ‘improved’ the model by introducing in 1826 the technique of observing lessons in model schools along with the requirement of performing a ‘criticism lesson’ (Dent 1977: 31). The feedback in ‘criticism lessons’, he comments, consisted in telling the trainees what should or should not be done during the lesson. Therefore, the model is made up of three major procedures: ‘observing’ a master (skilled teacher), performing by emulating the model demonstrated by the master, receiving feedback in the form of ‘criticism’ with reference to the model and finally corrective practice to draw nearer the ‘aspired’ model of teaching. Evidently, the system assumes ‘conformity’ and adherence to ‘norms’ external to the trainee. Not surprisingly these ‘apprenticeship’
schools relied heavily on ready-made solutions in books on teaching methodology. Thomas (1990) reported on the attempts to include what was perceived as 'theoretical' input:

“...(The) theory and practice of education taught was excessively repetitive and formal with students using manuals of teaching method with such titles as *Introductory Textbook of Method and School Management* (by Gill, 1857, 1858, 1860, and 1891), *Practical Hints on Teaching* (Menet, five editions from 1867), and *The Philosophy of Education or the Principles and Practice of Teaching* by Thomas Tate, first published in 1854” (6).

Thus, these books provided the same 'input' normally provided by the 'masters of method' in written form. The perspective then remains purely and solely a 'training' perspective. What is interesting to note is that the 'apprenticeship' orientation survived as part of the professional component of the training schemes in the Day Training Colleges established in Britain in 1889. Though courses in Day Training Colleges included an academic component thus remedying to the limited intellectual input of the classical example of an 'apprenticeship' school, the professional course was run by mentors called 'Masters/Mistresses of Method' from former training colleges or elementary schools (Dixon 1986: 11). Thus, these 'masters/mistresses' of Method perpetuated the older practice of 'apprenticeship' schools through the supervision of teaching, the model lessons they gave, and the 'criticism lessons' over which they presided (Thomas 1990). This is only understandable considering the impact of frames of reference on practice. As argued by Barnes (1992), teachers' frames are generated and shaped in context as a result of their interaction with the people they work with and the values of the institutions where they work. To place such courses along Zeichner's (1983) continuum mentioned earlier, the trainees were kept solely on the 'receiving' end, absorbing input and following models of teaching as presented by their Masters/ Mistresses of Method.

In the 1950's, other fields like psychology and mainly behaviourist ideas of human learning started to influence the views of craft teaching/training outlined above. Though they did not challenge the main assumption of learning to teach, two important innovations in teacher education emerged and gained ground worldwide. These are Micro-teaching and CBTE. It must be pointed out, however, that while Micro-teaching can only be regarded as a procedure for professional training, CBTE
In that sense Micro-teaching is another top-down procedure. The trainers are in full control of the training process and the trainee learning through the continuous observation-feedback cycle. The assumption is that the trainers as engineers of this professional learning procedure, 'know' what skills there are for the trainees to learn.

When Micro-teaching was first used in teacher education\(^3\), it was included in the pre-service training phase as part of the professional component. It was administered upon completion of the 'theoretical' part of the methodology course as a transitional course preceding the field experience\(^4\) in model schools. The Micro-teaching clinic was meant to be a transitory non-threatening environment where teacher trainees could apply the ideas 'received' in the 'theoretical' part of the methodology course and benefit from plentiful practice opportunities while receiving the necessary support from the supervisors. The pedagogical assumption underlying the Micro-teaching clinic was that, freed from the pressure of real teaching situations, the

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\(^3\) According to Geddes (1979) and Stoddart (1981), Politzer was the first to apply the technique in EFL training in 1965.

\(^4\) In the American context the blocked teaching practice placement is called 'field experience'. In the British system it is called 'teaching practice'.
is a self-contained vocational training course. Nevertheless, these can be seen as examples of a revamped craft model. This position will be made clear in the following description of the philosophical underpinnings of Micro-teaching and CBTE. An overview will also be provided of the modifications introduced to Micro-teaching as a technique for skill-training throughout the decades (Stoddart 1981) but it is difficult to appreciate the quality of the changes in old practices without understanding them in their original form. It is, then, worthwhile to dwell on the original model to appreciate the contribution of proponents of the original idea. I will then turn to a detailed analysis of CBTE as another example of a craft-oriented model of teacher preparation.

2.2.2 MICRO-TEACHING

The original model of Micro-teaching was designed and applied in 1963 at Stanford University as a skill-training technique in professional education. It developed out of an attempt to find an alternative to the 'demonstration lesson' then performed by trainees. The term " was coined by the Stanford team to denote "the scaling down of practice-teaching situations in terms of time, class size, and goals or tasks" (Phillips 1975: 120). The Stanford team conceived the course in stages or 'cycles' whereby the participant in the programme goes progressively through stages from controlled practice in scope and situation towards a higher mastery of the skills to be learnt in more open-ended situations (the 'autonomy' stage). A Micro-teaching course is planned following a number of stages (see Figure 2.2). Trainers play a central role as planners and implementers of course content. Besides having to set up for the teaching-practice situation (classroom, students, materials, equipment, etc.), they also have to scale down the content of teaching, formulate the skills to be performed, translate the skills stated into specific teaching tasks, observe the performance of the trainees to provide immediate feedback, and attend the necessary number of re-teaching sessions. The role of the trainee is to keep on trying through repeated practice of the same skill until reaching what is judged 'satisfactory' performance as defined by the course designers.
trainees could concentrate on the material to be dealt with and the techniques to be employed to teach the items assigned. The second principle consisted of a belief in the necessity of providing prompt feedback. The training team employed technical equipment such as video, audio recording and circuit radio to allow trainees to observe and appraise their performances under the guidance of trainers.

To locate the procedure within the framework of the earlier discussion of perspectives on teacher preparation, Micro-teaching as a course relies similarly on 'fixed' models of performance. To familiarise trainees with the skill to be performed, a video-taped chunk of a lesson or a demonstration by the trainer was used. Specifically, the trainers presented only 'good' models of teaching in the form of carefully selected video-taped demonstrations. Many problems, however, arise out of the issue of modeling. Besides the obvious drawback of modeling as a teaching pedagogy and the problems of copying associated with it, what can be considered a 'good' model is a subjective choice. A philosophy that believes in models has to start from an assumption that schools, teachers and pupils are homogeneous and their reactions to teaching as similar. It also has to start from the assumption that performance criteria are stable and transferable from one context to another. The other major problem is the question of whether it is possible to determine all the skills required for a particular teaching situation. It has, therefore, to function from a limited scope of minimum threshold level. As Allen and Ryan (1969) clarified:

"The Micro-teaching clinic does not pretend to equip the beginner for all the skills of teaching. For one thing, they have not all been identified and perhaps never will be. The intention is to give the beginner facility with several key skills and to give him understanding of how and when they can be suitably applied" (63).

Aware of these pitfalls, teacher trainers who resorted to Micro-teaching in Britain and abroad in the 1970’s, introduced variations into the original model (Stoddart 1981). An instance is Wallace's (1974) 'exploratory' model of Micro-teaching and the adaptation of the procedure within his more recent reflective teacher training course (Wallace 1991). O'Brien (1981) who used Micro-teaching in Morocco, recommended that the trainer demonstrates the skill with the trainees playing the role
of pupils and provide them with an opportunity for experiential learning. Phillips (1971) who used it with Greek-Cypriot teachers of English opted for lecturing (input) as well as demonstration by a trainer (the foreign specialist) with the participating teachers playing the role of students. To bring the local context into the picture, he added demonstrations by local teachers working with their own classes and using teaching materials from the textbooks in use. Morwood (1976), fearing possible prescription resulting from modelling, resorted to several demonstrations of the same skill and left it for the trainees to adopt or reject any of the models. Carver and Wallace (1975) avoided demonstration and chose to provide explanation as to the skill and what is involved in teaching it. These attempts recognise the contribution of the trainee by involving her in ‘understanding’, reasoning and negotiating the performance. The criteria for performance are made flexible, personalised and contextualised. Stoddart (1981) interpreted these modifications as resulting from an interest in changing trainee perceptions rather than in modifying their behaviour signalling a shift from a behaviouristic model of Micro-teaching to a cognitive one.

Another thorny issue related to the adoption of Micro-teaching as a training technique was that of deciding what skills to include in a particular course. Carver and Wallace (1978) based their choice of skills on the weaknesses emerging from the teachers’ performances. Even though the approach can be criticised as starting from a deficit view, the course was designed starting from the trainees (bottom-up). Another problem with this option might have been that the course finally dealt only with the weaknesses that surfaced during the performances. On the other hand, it can be argued that there was an improvement in the sense that the trainers explored what trainees needed to know and started with a list of concrete problems to be dealt with in the Micro-teaching clinic. In the original model the targeted performance is drawn in ‘abstract’ regardless of what trainees are likely to join the course. The approach of the Stanford team to course design was original despite its restrictive nature and overt emphasis on behaviour modification. In the instruction phase there was a new concern with the cognitive aspect of learning to teach but conceptualising the skills to be learned were believed to precede observing and performing them. It was assumed that trainees learn to teach by integrating what they have been told about the skills and what they have observed as techniques to operationalise them in real performance. The main criticism that can be voiced against Micro-teaching,
especially in its original 'classic model', is that it underlies a view of the teacher as executor of routines and automated action based on ideas of teaching conceived by 'experts'. Though these views and models give the impression of being scientific, they can be criticised for over-emphasising the technical in teaching, it took in its revised forms (Carver and Wallace 1975, Brumfit 1979, Phillips 1981) an 'exploratory' and 'participatory' focus. Thus, if adapted with caution and if a cognitive dimension is added to it, Micro-teaching can be an invaluable training technique especially for university-based initial teacher education (ITE). A variety of Micro-teaching procedures emerged out of these attempts to adapt the model to different training contexts. The strength of Micro-teaching as a technique also lies in its systematic character and observable immediate results.

I have so far analysed and discussed the apprenticeship school process and the Micro-teaching process. I grouped them under the craft model on the grounds that they focus solely on the skill aspect of teaching. They rest on the assumptions that teaching is skill-based, that it can be demonstrated and observed, that the criteria of 'good' teaching can be captured and 'fixed', and that mastery of teaching comes from repetition and corrective practice. It is only to state the obvious to say that this orientation is heavily biased towards a behaviouristic view of teaching and learning to teach. They both overlook the mental processes involved in teaching and learning to teach. As will be confirmed in the forthcoming section on CBTE, cognitive theories of learning still have not taken hold of the imagination of teacher educators and Behaviourism still dominates in some contexts. It is of interest to revisit this 1960’s invention called CBTE and explore the rationale underlying it and describe the procedures it sought to apply in the training situation. It seems that government policies are in tune with this model nowadays (UK and Tunisia). The forthcoming analysis might contribute to resolving the puzzle.
2.2.3 COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

CBTE as a system of training was first employed in industrial and military settings in the United States. Its introduction into the field of education came with the establishment of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education by the US Office of Education which was assigned the task of designing courses to train teachers of vocational subjects. CBTE (also Performance-Based Teacher Education) courses were therefore designed starting from a 'systematic' and 'scientific' search for the required teaching performance criteria. On these grounds Richardson (1990) and Fanselow (1977) found that this systematic approach to course design engendered a body of research on teaching to inform teacher educators. CBTE course designers proceed in accordance with three phases of curriculum development:

(i) A research phase which consists of exploring performance elements, organising them into categories and developing criteria for each performance element;

(ii) A development and testing phase which consists of testing prototype modules, revising and refining the modules;

(iii) A dissemination and implementation phase which consists of disseminating materials and implementing them in pre-service and in-service courses; and

(iv) An assessment of performance phase leading to qualification upon demonstration of satisfactory performance.

It can be inferred from the principles and course design procedures summarised above, that CBTE is qualification-centred as the objective of the whole programme is to 'produce' qualified teachers by meeting fixed teaching criteria. A cardinal principle of CBTE is that the criteria for measuring competency in teaching tasks, the conditions for assessment, as well as the level of mastery expected to be made explicit to teachers had to be fixed beforehand (Tuxworth 1982). For this purpose assessors relied on performance checklists (see Appendix 2.2 for a sample). The
approach claimed that it ‘individualised’ instruction on the grounds that the particular skill to be mastered is revised and adjusted accordingly depending on the trainee’s achievement following a ‘scientific’ assessment of the particular trainee teacher’s performance. The performance of trainees was monitored closely in order to proceed to the next module the trainee was required to complete successfully the previous one.

In terms of training pedagogy, CBTE is based on the assumption that teachers learn through watching others (trainers or peer teachers) demonstrate a lesson or a chunk of a lesson. This way, a trainee will be provided with an illustration to reproduce (imitate) the procedures employed by the model as a starting point for further controlled practice until the performance standard is achieved. Thus, CBTE differs from the apprenticeship model only in the sense that it has a research basis to it. The apprenticeship conception of learning to teach is based on performance in the ‘crude’ form, the criteria of which, remain implicit and subject to the observer’s ability to infer them. CBTE rationalises the process of skill identification, modelling and replication of the model.

However, the criticism voiced against CBTE during the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) convention in 1976, reported in Fanselow et al. (1977), was an indication of dissatisfaction with the model. It was criticised for failing to take into consideration the complexity of teaching situations (Blatchford 1977, Diller 1977) and for overlooking these in the assessment of teachers before qualification (Sherwin 1977). Blatchford (1977), for instance, questioned the very validity of competency specification:

“The isolation of discrete units becomes absurd as it breaks down the content of a lesson into parts and ignores the whole. Who can say which competencies are important? Can there be universal competencies when one task of a teacher is to adapt his teaching to a particular class, let alone to the individual in that class?” (192)

Indeed, the need to have ‘certainty’ about what criteria to use in one particular teaching/learning situation assumes that classroom events are recurrent and
predictable. Aspects of teaching such as intuition, improvisation, and individual style are necessarily overlooked in order to preserve the rational aspect of the model (Eisner 1983). The major criticism of CBTE can be found in Fuller and Bown (1975: 43) who identified a number of shortcomings. For one, it stands in the way of the teacher trainees developing their own system of beliefs and actions. Second, emphasising a given set of performance criteria is a way to hold the teacher responsible for learner achievement. And third, teachers are assessed relying on observable behaviour while the interpretation of the assessor might not coincide with the real intention of the teacher performing.

Views of teaching as a 'generative' and 'innovative activity started to surface in the 1970's as can be deduced from the proceedings of the 1976 TESOL convention (Fanselow 1977). This view became more pronounced in the 1983 Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics Conference (GURT '83) reported in Alatis et al. (1983). A change in paradigm was underway to borrow the Kuhnian notion again. The craft model of teacher education as exemplified by the apprenticeship tradition, the Micro-teaching clinic, or the CB vocational course were based on a view of teaching as a craft and of the teacher as an executor of pre-set, controlled teaching moves. I have already mentioned how a number of teacher educators have previously distanced themselves from a purely skill-based behaviouristic view of training by introducing a cognitive touch to Micro-teaching (see section 2.2.2.). To avoid the possible pitfalls of modelling and the imposition of content and performance criteria on trainees inherent in the original model, Wallace (1974) developed an 'exploratory model' of Micro-teaching and initiated a "behavioural-cognitive" hybrid (see Wallace1974).

The debate over the adequacy of the 'atomistic' view of teacher preparation embodied in CBTE gave expression to what is now referred to as the 'holistic' approach to teacher preparation (Britten 1985a, Pennington 1989). Teacher educators working from a 'holistic' perspective start from an intention to go beyond a view of teaching as a craft by including an 'educational' component in the courses (Widdowson 1984). Though the issue of theory/practice is far from being resolved in the profession (Richards 1990), it is an approach that aims to design courses that
integrate and balance ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ (Brumfit 1983, Celce-Murcia 1983, Larsen-Freeman 1983, Bowers 1987). In practice, it could mean focusing on the vocational phase in the beginning of the course and proceeding to an ‘education’ phase. The ‘holistic’ movement is at times associated with an ‘applied science’ (Zahorik 1986, Wallace 1991) model of TE. According to Wallace within the ‘applied science’ model there is a running tension intermingled with issues of knowledge and power between the academics engaged in theory generation and practitioners (teacher educators and teachers) engaged in day to day, down-to-earth ‘practice’. The question occupying the centre of the debate was whether teacher preparation should be about ‘training’ or ‘educating’ teachers. The ‘education’ of teachers can be understood in this context as an attempt to enrich the teacher preparation course with some form of intellectual ‘input’. It must be emphasised that in the optimistic spirit of the time the intention was to create a relationship of balance, complementarity, interdependence and mediation rather than one of tension. It will be instructive, therefore, to consider how the ‘education’ orientation to teacher preparation was articulated in the beginning, consider its contribution to the field and perhaps outline what problems arose from this theory-practice dichotomy.

2.3 THE ‘HOLISTIC’ MODEL OF TEACHER PREPARATION

It has been pointed out above that the craft model of TE deals merely with the technical aspect of teaching and consequently, if teaching is understood in more holistic terms, it becomes difficult to consider skill-based courses adequate for the preparation of the ‘whole’ teacher. It is this qualitative move towards developing a teacher who is more than just a craftsperson that is going to motivate a number of teacher educators to propose alternatives along ‘holistic’ lines. For instance, Larsen-Freeman (1983) proposed four foci to a teacher preparation course: (i) awareness of alternative ways of behaving and viewing situations, (ii) attitude to different choices and patterns of action, (iii) knowledge related to teaching and learning, and (iv) skills. The two last foci are a replication of the usual dichotomy knowledge and action or rather ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ but concepts like ‘attitude’ and ‘awareness’
aim to develop the personal aspect. Through these two foci there is an attempt to foster alternative ways to approach teaching.

‘Educating’ TESOL teachers as a principle translated in attempts to design TE curricula that incorporate ‘input’ from academic subjects like educational psychology, pedagogic principles, and theories of language learning. These subjects were believed to be relevant to teaching on the basis of a belief that these subjects contribute to teacher knowledge and inform practice (Alatis 1974, Strevens 1977, Halliday 1982, Sinclair 1982, Larsen-Freeman 1983, Widdowson 1984, 1990). Strevens (1974) stated:

“The applied Linguist needs to be aware of developments in theory as well as of practical problems, so that he can use insights from the former to assist the latter- and sometimes vice versa” (25) (Emphasis in original).

With regard to language teachers, he proposed his widely known vision of an EFL teacher education curriculum made up of three components: an information component, a theory component and a skill component (see Figure 2.3). Applied Linguistics includes subjects closely related to the teaching of language, subjects which he defined as a "multiple basis of interlocking disciplines capable of responding in a principled way to any language-related problem" (38). He considered descriptive linguistics, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics important areas of knowledge for prospective teachers of languages but recommended that teacher educators be selective and include only "suitably tailored versions of the multidisciplinary approach of applied linguistics" (Strevens 1977: 80).
To figure out what 'input' is needed he recommended that the TE curriculum planner starts by stating the profile of the 'ideal' teacher (personal qualities, technical abilities and the professional awareness) drawn as closely as possible from the society's vision of the 'ideal' teacher. The 'methods' course provides the rationale for teaching practice and the 'skill' component gives hands-on experience in operating them in teaching situations. The assumption is that the trainee establishes the link between the 'theory' and 'practice' aspects of teaching by applying solutions from 'theory'. The principle of interdisciplinary knowledge did not translate into a dialectic relationship between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. In Stern's (1983) model, for instance, the process is a linear one.

Teaching within this perspective is conceived as the application of background knowledge coming from the disciplines in a practical teaching situation. Teaching in this sense is putting the ideas into operation (Wallace 1991, Prabhu 1994). Therefore, the conviction was that since teachers need to draw on knowledge coming from other disciplines, it was necessary to 'educate' them in these disciplines. Alatis (1974) conceived a course introduced at Georgetown University along these lines. He included an array of academic courses like Linguistics, Anthropology, Psychology, Sociology and Education (LAPSE) and explained the purpose of including these subjects in the following terms:
"(T)o help prospective teachers to understand the nature of language and English language systems, the process of language learning, the interrelationship between language and culture" (9).

Thus, the course is understood as a process of linking between the input in these subjects and the practice component. So there is a flow from the ‘theoretical and methodological foundation’ to the ‘practical experience’ with ‘theory’ informing ‘practice’ and not the other way around. Furthermore, it is assumed that linguistics and theories of language acquisition have direct application to ‘practice’ in the classroom. Thus, the course is based on a belief in the possibility of ‘transfer’ of the ideas to the classroom (Freeman 1994).

Another typical example of the ‘applied science’ perspective to TE is the framework proposed by Stem at the GURT ’83 conference. The process of ITE is conceived as a linear progression with an ‘entry’ and an ‘exit’ level (see Figure 2.4). What makes his framework an ‘applied science’ model is the fact he refers to language teaching theory to make judgments about what to cover and what to focus on in a TE course.

Figure 2.4: A model of ITE as input/output (based on Stern 1983)

Although he recommends that teacher educators make context-sensitive judgements about course content and focus, the answers ultimately come from theory. His model implies that the interaction between ‘theory’ and the demands of the context
influences provision but also frames the teacher educator’s understanding of the demands of the choices available.

**Figure 2.5: The process of course content selection and its relationship to theory**

*(based on Stern 1983)*

In this model research on teaching is accorded special status as it is meant to inform decisions about TE course content. Hoyle and Peter (1995) remarked that the assumption underlying a design approach that proceeds from ‘theory’ to ‘practice’ is one of ‘unmediated’ transfer. They comment:

“(This type of) research-validated knowledge would then become practice-oriented knowledge through a process of transformation by which information would be transferred from one arm of the profession to the other” (49).

Thus, it was taken for granted that the body of theory, say, coming from ‘academic’ research on language acquisition would automatically be converted by ‘informed’ teachers into teaching practice. One important implication of this model is that it puts teachers and teacher educators on the receiving end of ‘theory’, or rather the proliferation of theories, which can be either divergent (Rivers 1990) or debatable (Sheen 1994, Foster 1998) or can even generate ‘mistaken constructs’ (Freeman 1991). Pennycook (1987) added that the submission of the practitioner to ‘theory’ and ‘method’ is the result of a system of domination led by ‘interested’ academics,
ELT project officers, material developers, and publication houses. Teacher educators, especially the ones on the periphery (Kachru 1985), are under continuous pressure to tune and re-tune their TE courses, train and re-train their teachers, revise their textbooks in use to meet the challenge of the latest theory or 'method' (see section 3.4.2 on ELT curricula in Tunisia). Widdowson (2000a) sends a fresh reminder of the need for the mediation of theory by the applied linguist by which he meant the practitioner and teacher educator:

“I want to argue that what the language teacher teaches is not the same as the object of study of linguistics, and that what is a ‘good’ description in reference to ‘sound linguistic principles’ cannot be assumed to be good for language pedagogy, which has its own principles to refer to. I want to argue, furthermore, that this is precisely because there is a necessary disparity between the principles of language pedagogy and those of the linguistic discipline that applied linguistics has a role to play. In this view, the purpose of applied linguistics is not to assume relevance but to question it, not to engage in application, but to inquire into applicability” (22) (Emphasis in original text).

The major problem with the ‘holistic’ approach was then the reliance of its advocates on the academic disciplines for answers to the problems of teaching on the assumption that ‘applicability’ would follow. The motive of the ‘holistic’ model was initially to give prospective teachers a knowledge base to help them become "versatile in the face of change" (Widdowson 1987) and to develop in them the ability to understand and reflect (Marsh 1981). In practice, the process developed in some situations into ‘imposition’ on the grounds of authority (Widdowson 2000).

Researchers and educators interested in studying the teacher as thinker in the teaching/learning process expressed scepticism as to whether knowledge of linguistics and the ‘allied disciplines’ could be of any assistance to the teacher in everyday practice (Shavelson and Stern 1981, Calderhead 1984, Clark and Peterson 1984, Shulman 1986). This new interest in studying the teacher had two implications for TE. It resulted first in research on teachers’ cognitive processes and second, in promoting the idea of developing the teacher as inquirer. Teaching from this perspective is not the result of a ‘scientific’, rational matching of means and ends. It
is rather, the manifestation of ‘implicit’ theories of practice held by teachers. As Carr (1989) explained:

"(P)rofessional knowledge no longer appears an externally produced body of value-free theoretical knowledge but as that implicitly accepted body of value-laden knowledge which teachers use to make sense of their practice" (11).

Thus, the enquiry-oriented model of teacher education is a departure from the previous models in the sense that it works from a multitude of perspectives: teacher thinking, teacher knowledge, and teachers’ development processes. Borko and Putnam (1995) encapsulate the interconnections between these areas of research focusing on teachers:

“Teachers’ thinking is directly influenced by their knowledge. Their thinking, in turn, determines their actions in the classroom. Thus, to understand teaching, we must study teachers’ knowledge systems; their thoughts, judgements, and decisions; the relationship between teachers’ knowledge system and their cognitions; and how these cognitions are translated into action. Similarly, to help teachers change their practice, we must help them to expand and elaborate their knowledge systems” (37).

I will begin by reviewing main trends in research on teacher thinking, teacher knowledge and teachers’ development processes. A number of concepts like ‘teacher growth’ and ‘teacher reflection’, the need to develop the ‘reflective practitioner’, the ‘self-directed practitioner’, the ‘teacher as ‘collaborative’ learners and so on come to dominate TE discourse. I will connect these concepts to the enquiry-oriented model of TE and delve into the issues raised by the new TE agenda.

2.4 THE ENQUIRY-ORIENTED MODEL

The preparation of teachers within this paradigm can be described as a TE model, which attempts to prepare teachers through inquiry-oriented courses. The aim of the teacher educator working within this model is to initiate prospective teachers into habits of critical examination inquiry and ‘reflection’ through exploratory research

Research on teacher thinking is useful for this model in the sense that it contributes to TED systems in two ways: First, it examines the relationship between the teachers' minds and their actions and second, it explores what knowledge structures they use in practice. The first focus, research on teacher cognition, examines the teacher thinking processes and the second the nature of teacher knowledge and how it develops in the teachers. A possible focus of research on teacher 'knowledge' comes in the form of longitudinal research on how novice teachers acquire 'expertise' (Calderhead 1989) and process different forms of knowledge as they come into contact with schools and classrooms (Grossman 1990, Gutiérrez AlMarza 1996). Another useful research area focuses on tracing 'common' patterns of 'development' experienced by teachers during particular phases of their careers (Huberman 1989, 1993, 1995, Fessler 1995). These studies share a common interest in studying the teacher.

Interest in studying teachers can be traced back to two seminal works. The first is Philip Jackson's (1968) Life in Classrooms and the second is Lortie's (1975) Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study. These two researchers relied on descriptions of classrooms and the thinking processes of teachers in them. Their verdicts on teachers were not particularly encouraging. Lortie's (1975) work advanced the notion of the 'apprenticeship of observation', a powerful socialisation mechanism that promotes conservatism and the perpetuation of traditions. Jackson (1968) argued that teachers were not prone to engage in rational thinking. Kennedy (1991), on the basis of research by the US National Centre for Research on Teacher Learning, points to the power of the 'apprenticeship of observation' on the teachers entering the ITE course and recommends that this construct be taken seriously by teacher educators:
"The pervasiveness of teachers’ experiences during their apprenticeship of observation, both across grade levels and across subject areas, coupled with the sheer volume of time spent observing, yields in teachers (and in other adults, for that matter) a deeply entrenched and tacit set of beliefs about what can and should happen in schools: about the nature of school subjects, about the teacher’s role in facilitating learning and about the pedagogical implications of student diversity” (7).

Other teacher educators expressed similar views and suggested that these ‘images’ be taken into consideration and dealt with in ITE courses (Calderhead 1988, Elbaz 1991, Freeman 1992, 1996) rather than assuming that a teacher comes as clay ready to be ‘molded’ during a TE course in whatever ‘desirable’ form.

2.4.1 RESEARCH ON TEACHER THINKING

In the broadest sense then research on teacher thinking is an attempt to find out what goes on in the teacher’s mind and how it relates to their actions or to their contexts. In their review of research on teacher thinking, Clark and Peterson (1986) identified three different areas of research on teachers’ thought processes: research on teacher planning, research on teachers’ interactive decision-making, and research on teachers’ implicit theories and beliefs. Research on teacher planning generally focuses on three thinking processes: the teacher’s ‘preactive’ (prior to teaching), ‘interactive’ (while teaching) and post-active (through recall) thinking. An example of a study that sought to establish this type of link is Clark and Yinger’s (1987) study of the planning and instructional behaviour of experienced teachers. The study showed that teachers participate in the study plan in a cyclical way and resort to revision and elaboration strategies in the course of the lesson. The findings of this project contradicted the ‘rational’ means-end view of teacher planning which assumed that teachers proceed through a pre-determined plan in a linear way. Assertion to the contrary from research on teacher decision-making puts into question procedures for dealing with planning in TE courses, which start from the view of planning as linear.

5 This was conceived on the basis of the Tyler model of planning which begins with behavioural objectives, moves to determining the approaches/procedures to achieve these objectives and culminates in selecting from these alternatives (Clark and Yinger 1987: 90).
In Calderhead’s (1988) study of novice teachers, he asserted that novice teachers develop ‘practical knowledge’ by employing ‘metacognitive processes’. He defines them as:

“(T)he processes of abstraction, comparison, analysis, and evaluation that operate on different images of practice or on a variety of knowledge bases to generate usable practical knowledge” (60).

In other words, Calderhead confirms that ‘theory’ and ‘prior knowledge’ of classrooms and teachers are not transferred intact. They are transformed in action and filtered through ‘metacognitive’ processes. It follows from his analysis that ‘practical knowledge’ is learnt by doing and in context. Freeman (1994) confirmed the same process but referred to it as the interpretative process of learning to teach. He argues that teachers operate with understandings and interpretations of their world of teaching:

“(T)hese understandings are personal, specific to a time and place, and they evolve through experience in particular settings, in particular classrooms, schools, and communities” (10).

Within the same cognitive orientation Mitchell and Marland (1989) conducted a longitudinal study to explore the implicit theories of classroom questioning employed by three “experienced” and three “inexperienced” social science student teachers. The researchers interviewed the teachers before and after teaching and collected comments on teaching they had made during a simulation session. In this study there was an interaction between two knowledge structures, the personal (implicit) and the practical, as dictated by the situation. The interview data indicated that the participants coped by drawing on "schemata" or "frames of mind" along with a set of routines. In a study of teachers’ thinking about children’s minds, Strauss (1993) analysed his data by distinguishing between teachers’ ‘espoused’ theories and their theories ‘in-use’. This distinction is particularly significant in conceptualising teachers’ theories because it takes account of the ‘unconscious’ and ‘explicit’, the ‘observable’ and the ‘inferential’. Strauss’s study confirms the complex nature of teaching as an activity and recounts how the teacher balances all aspects of
knowledge, 'espoused' and other, and links them with the learners in the teaching situation.

A study that examined the personal and contextual bases of teaching (Bullough and Baugham 1995) revealed that the 'schema' and 'expertise' of one experienced teacher, valid in one context of work, were not transferable to another teaching situation as she moved to a different school. They concluded that the acquisition of 'expertise' in teaching was a process resulting from an interaction between the individual and the work place and also from the ability to revise schemata. Thus, a theory of teaching as an interaction between teacher personal knowledge, knowledge of the subject taught and the conditions of the work environment emerged, with each aspect becoming the focus of a number of studies. Besides revealing that teachers base their classroom decisions and judgements on these personal 'schemata', or 'maxims' as Richards (1998) prefers to call them, research on teacher thinking revealed that knowledge in teaching is developed and generated in context.

Studies particularly focusing on identifying the domains of teacher knowledge studied 'expert' teachers to identify categories that distinguished them from 'ordinary' teachers (Shulman 1986b, 1987; Berliner 1986). These studies yielded different categories and components of teacher knowledge systems. Elbaz (1983), for instance, showed that this knowledge is idiosyncratic and 'practical' (tacit) in nature, developed as the teacher strives to be herself or chooses to identify with a particular school culture and its ethos. Shulman (1987) whose work has inspired a number of researchers and TE course designers (Grenfell 1998) identified seven categories of knowledge of the 'expert' teacher:

- Knowledge of content;
- General pedagogical knowledge;
- Knowledge of curriculum;
• Pedagogical content knowledge;
• Knowledge of learners and learning;
• Knowledge of educational context; and
• Knowledge of educational goals and aims.

These categories might be helpful as guidelines but the content of each component can be specific to the teachers that Shulman studied. Questions can be raised about the transferability of the content of each component to other subject areas and school contexts. For instance, Grossman (1990) narrowed down Shulman’s list to four and elaborated on the components of the sub-categories. Her model recognises that these knowledge domains are interconnected in teaching (Figure 2.6). For example Subject-matter Knowledge encompasses the syntactic structures, content, and substantive structures of a particular school subject. General Pedagogical Knowledge includes knowledge of learners and learning, classroom management, curriculum and instruction, and the like. Pedagogical Content Knowledge consists of the teacher’s conception of and purposes of teaching the subject, itself, encompassing three sub-themes (see Figure 2.6). Finally, the construct Knowledge of Context which, refers to the teacher’s knowledge of the community, district, and school. These attempts to identify categories of teacher knowledge and to identify the content of each component can be of great assistance to TE. The findings of these studies generate what Shulman called the ‘knowledge base’ for teaching, which can serve as a framework for designing subject-specific and context-specific TE courses. The categories can be helpful for structuring courses but it might be necessary to define the content of each by taking into consideration the specific nature of different school subjects and school settings (e.g. Grossman 1990, Strauss 1993, Guðmundsdóttir and Shulman 1987).
2.3.2 RESEARCH ON TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Another perspective from which researchers looked at teachers was the developmental perspective. Researchers working from that perspective sought to investigate the process of teacher ‘development’ and ‘growth’. Descriptive models of the ‘development’ of teachers can be undertaken following two distinct traditions, one that looks at the career stages and phases of ‘development’ (Huberman 1989, 1993, 1995; Fessler 1995) and another that looks at the cognitive processes of a teacher during particular phases of their career (Kremer-Hayon et al. 1993). These
were mentioned in the previous section. A number of longitudinal studies of beginner
teachers focusing on the investigation of the cognitive processes involved in
‘becoming’ a teacher. They are generally longitudinal studies that attempt to trace
the ‘development’ processes of student teachers during their methodology course and
into the practicum (Shulman 1986a, Mitchell and Marland 1989, Calderhead 1989,
1990; Gutiérrez AlMarza 1996) or throughout the first year of their teaching
(Grossman 1990). These novice teachers are of interest to these researchers as they
can tell the story of their own ‘professional growth’ (Elbaz 1991). Gutiérrez
AlMarza (1996) found that the four student teachers she studied drew on different
sources of knowledge: knowledge from their pre-training experience, knowledge
received on campus, and the knowledge related to the ‘method’ prescribed during
teaching practice. Gutiérrez AlMarza (1996: 63) identified the ‘knowledge growth’
of the participants in her study consisted of a process of transformation, modification
and reconciliation a body of knowledge received from different sources in the
teaching situation.

‘Life Cycle’ researchers looked at teachers at different stages of their careers to
construe general patterns of a teacher’s career cycles. The researchers generally
include divisions over periods of time. Consider one of the early models by Uruh and
Turner (1970) who broke down a teacher’s career into three periods of development:

1. An ‘initial teaching’ period between one to five years;

2. A ‘confidence building’ period from six to 15 years; and

3. A ‘maturity’ period from fifteen years upwards.

The above stages are perceived as unproblematic as inferred from ‘confidence’ and
‘maturity’; words that carry positive connotations.

Huberman (1989, 1993, 1995) has introduced in his studies of Swiss teachers more
complexity in the presentation of career paths and trajectories. In an earlier work
(Huberman 1989) he started off with seven constructs compiled from previous
research on teacher life cycles. These were:
1. **Career entry**: a phase of ‘discovery’ and ‘experimentation’.

2. **Stabilisation (3 to 5 years)**: a phase of career concerns having to do with ‘commitment’, instructional mastery and assertive autonomy.

3. **Diversification and change (less than 10 years)**: a phase of experimentation with new materials, different groupings, new assignments, new combinations of lessons and exercises.

4. **‘Stock-taking’ and interrogations (12-20 years)**: a problematic phase of interrogation usually following a life ‘crisis’ that leads to interrogations about one’s future as a teacher.

5. **‘Serenity’ and affective distance**: a self-accepting phase with teachers “working more mechanically” yet feeling more effective in the classroom.

6. **Conservatism**: a phase of increasing level of rigidity and dogmatism mixed with prudence, resistance to change, and nostalgia for the past.

7. **Disengagement**: a phase of gradual withdrawal in preparation for retirement.

It is worth noting that Huberman switched from using ‘age’ as demarkation to using ‘length of experience’ in the division of the later periods (category 5 to 7 above). Nevertheless, in his late work, Huberman (1993) explored the influence of personal, environmental and institutional factors in determining how a career stage lived and experienced by a teacher. He was also able to identify recurring patterns of coping strategies, especially for mid-career teachers. Fessler (1995) who built on previous models including Huberman’s to develop her Teacher Career Cycle Model, asserted that the teachers’ career development cycle is

“a dynamic ebb and flow...with teachers moving in and out of stages in response to environmental influences from both the personal and organizational dimensions” (187).

Life Cycle studies look at the life of teachers from a psychological, sociological and organisational perspective. They draw attention to the impact of the contextual and environmental factors surrounding teachers and influencing development possibly in
negative and/or positive ways. In Huberman’s view, Life Cycle studies have direct relevance to policy on teacher development:

“If large numbers of teachers traverse similar phases, we can begin to identify modal (sic.) profiles of the teaching career and, from there, see what determines more and less “successful” or “satisfactory” careers. We can also identify the conditions under which a particular phase in the career cycle is lived out happily or miserably and, from there, put together an appropriate support structure” (Huberman 1995: 194).

Indeed, these studies can supplement research on teacher thinking which focuses on the decision-making process, which presents teaching as resulting from a mixture of routines and reactions to situations arising in the classroom and thus, does not provide any insights about the backgrounds of the teachers, the pupils involved nor insights about the institutional factors influencing teacher decision-making processes. The two perspectives of research on teachers send a clear message about teacher ‘development’. It is an organic process originating in the teachers within particular contextual settings. To positively influence teacher development, it is necessary to identify how the system works, what elements of the ecosystem can ‘go wrong’ or be enhanced and under what conditions they do so. Life cycle research overlaps with research on teacher knowledge growth and provides an information base about the factors and preconditions that facilitate natural and ‘genuine’ development (Gore and Zeichner 1995).

Research on teacher thinking demonstrated that teaching is a complex activity during which the teacher perceives, interprets, and acts according to the learning situation, and thus shapes and reshapes practice. Yet, by the nature of their line of inquiry, these studies tended to focus on a limited number of teachers and tackle very specific problems (Clark and Peterson 1986). Therefore, it can only have an impact on teacher education through a cumulative body of inter-related studies of the type undertaken under the Teacher Knowledge Growth project conducted by Shulman (1986b). Research focusing on the knowledge systems can also be problematic in that it can become another equivalent of the list of competencies. The work of Shulman (1986b, 1987) has been criticised for working from a prescriptive view of the
'expert' and a deficit view of the novice (Elbaz 1993). Nevertheless Floden and
Klinzing (1990) believed that research on teacher thinking had potential to inform
teacher education practice in four ways:

(i) By identifying teacher schemata which can be synthesised and included as content
in teacher education;

(ii) By describing the practice of expert teachers which can serve as exemplars of
'good' practice;

(iii) By delineating the features of the common types of teacher routines which can be
used to reorient the content of teaching practice courses;

(iv) By studying teacher planning, which can be used to inform decisions about what
to include in teacher education.

The contribution of research on teacher thinking is that it drew attention to the
complex ‘metacognitive’ processes that come into play in the process of learning to
teach and transform the outcome of any externally-generated TE intervention
1996). The body of research on teacher thinking highlighted the impact of teacher
schema on their practice. This research movement established two facts about
teachers, namely that teachers are thinkers and decision-makers. Teaching, and
learning to teach for that matter, are highly complex cognitive processes that need to
be understood thoroughly in order to understand the teaching/learning process.
Research on the structure of teacher knowledge, the content of that knowledge and
the process of ‘knowledge growth’ in teaching confirmed further that ‘old’, ‘existing’
and ‘received’ knowledge come into interaction to generate new and usable
knowledge for teaching (Elbaz 1983, Shulman 1986b, Gudmundsdottir and Shulman

These ideas echoed views about education, teaching and learning advanced by
Dewey (1916, 1933). In Dewey’s (1916) view of education, learners develop
knowledge from experiences that are meaningful to them and while participating and interacting with a community of learners. That is, learners 'construct' their own knowledge through interaction between existing and new knowledge. Dewey's view of teaching is conceived along the same lines. He distinguishes between two levels of action: routine action and reflective action (Dewey 1933). Reflective teaching is testing of the underlying principles and consequences of one's actions. In his words:

"Reflection is an active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds supporting it and future conclusions to which it tends" (6).

Schön later revisited and elaborated the concept in his two books; The Reflective Practitioner, 1983 and Educating the Reflective Practitioner, 1987. Schön's explanation of 'reflection' was based on a distinction between 'reflection-on-action' which is developed as a result of repetitive experiences of a specific professional practice and 'reflection-in-action', which is employed to solve problems arising in the situation. The latter form of reflection is an integration of knowledge and action that draws on the intuitive and unconscious ('tacit') knowledge of the practitioner. While engaged in solving professional problems, the reflective practitioner makes, thus, new sense of the situation as a result of this process of 'sense making' and discovers alternative ways of viewing a professional situation (Schön 1983, 1987). This process is in total contrast to a view of teaching as technical rationality.

When the notion of 'reflection' was transferred to the TE field, different meanings of it emerged resulting in different emphases in course content and organisation (Zeichner and Liston 1987). For example, some teacher courses were based on Van Manen’s (1977) three levels of 'reflection: the 'technical', the 'explanatory' and the 'critical'. McIntyre (1993), for instance, operationalises 'reflection' by drawing on Van Manen’s levels of reflection to sequence a course that targets the development of reflection in beginner teachers. It can be argued that this was close to Schön's notion of 'reflection' and how to put it into practice. He suggested that students of professional practice be first introduced to the technical side of the profession, to be 'coached' into thinking like professionals, and to enable them to develop new forms of understanding and action (Schön 1987: 40). Attempts to implement the concept of
'reflection' whatever meaning is attached to it and whatever decision is taken about its operationalisation seem pessimistic about the success of such courses (e.g. Korthagen 1985, Zeichner and Liston 1987). In my reading of the courses available that claim to 'educate' the reflective practitioner, I find much more evidence of a focus on the 'technical' aspect of reflection (Wajnryb 1992, Nunan 1992, Richards and Lockhart 1994, Nunan and Lamb 1996, Wallace 1998). According to Grimmett and Erickson (1990), there are three discernible perspectives to promoting 'reflection' in TE courses: reflection as instrumental mediation of action, reflection as deliberating among competing views of teaching, and reflection as reconstructing experience. The fact that the concept 'reflection' is operationalised differently raises questions about which type of 'reflection' to adopt, which level of reflection to emphasise (if ever Van Manen’s classification is adopted) and especially, how a prospective teacher is expected to 'progress' from one level to another.

2.4.3 THE TEACHER AS RESEARCHER IDEAL

Advocating the involvement of teachers in research activities in the work place was attributed to the influence of the ideas of social psychologists like Lewin (a social psychologist), Schwab (1970) and Habermas (1972). It was believed that studies of educational practice could benefit from ideas and research traditions in other fields such as sociology, social psychology and anthropology (McTaggart 1991). In Britain, for instance, interest in educational change in the 60's and 70's gave way to greater interest in the idea of teachers as researchers. This was exemplified by the influential work of Lawrence Stenhouse, who was involved in the School Council Humanities Curriculum Project (1967-1972), and John Elliot who was involved in the Ford Teaching Project (1973-1975). Stenhouse (1975) argued the case for the teacher-as-researcher drawing on Hoyle's concept of the 'extended professional' (see Hoyle1975)

Action Research at the school level is generally understood as the deliberate involvement of practitioners in projects carried out at the level of their institutions
with the aim of dealing with problems encountered in the school. The essential ideological motive behind AR is the involvement of teachers in the educational process as active agents of change. In principle, AR is teacher-initiated and teacher-led. It is a form of expression of the teachers’ voice (Elbaz 1991) and a way for them to take control of their professional lives. The solutions proposed stemming from teacher reflection and enquiry were believed to bring about positive, worthwhile change. McNiff (1993) argues that AR is an avenue for educational improvement.

“The way to improvement is not through trying to copy what other people do, but by the critical understanding of one’s own practice... I might make my immediate situation better, but, unless I understand why I am acting the way that I am, I will not develop, personally or professionally” (13).

Allwright (1993) sees teachers engaged in ‘exploratory teaching’ by integrating teaching, research and pedagogy. He explains:

“(The research element) is there in order to enable the teacher to better understand what is happening in the classroom (and elsewhere in the overall pedagogic enterprise). In making possible this enhanced personal pedagogic understanding, it becomes central to professional development” (126).

For Stenhouse (1975, 1981) who defended the idea of teacher participation in curriculum development, teacher research is the way to bring about viable curriculum change. By attributing this role to teachers, he upset the customary pyramid of curriculum development. He went as far as suggesting that the researcher (outsider) be accountable to the practitioner (insider). In his words:

“...(T)wo points seem to me clear: first, teachers must inevitably be intimately involved in the research process; and second, researchers must justify themselves to practitioners, not practitioners to researchers” (Stenhouse 1981: 113).

Thus, teacher research is perceived as directly linked to participation and school improvement. Stenhouse and his colleagues saw in AR a source of input into the process of curriculum revision and a way to bring about change from within. It also brings about improvement in the status of teachers as professionals by attributing value to teacher theories generated from research activity.
2.3.3.1 THE TECHNICAL ASPECT

McNiff (1993) describes Action Research in educational settings as a loop process (refer to Figure 2.7). The research cycle is triggered by the identification of a problem in the teaching situation. The teacher/group of teachers try first to find an explanation of the situation by collecting some background data about it (fact-finding). The data is then analysed in order to formulate a preliminary solution (analysis) which is then applied (implementation) and critically examined (evaluation). Based on this initial attempt and depending on the findings reached, a new cycle can be set off consisting of a re-formulation of the problem, revision of action, re-focus of fact-finding, re-analysis, and re-evaluation.

Figure 2.7: The Action Research process as a loop process (based on McNiff 1988)
The AR process is then a quest for ways to improve teaching situations for the practitioner and the people in her trust. It is a search for alternative ideas, which are in turn put to the test and then reconsidered before they are accepted and adopted as alternative solutions. The justification of the solutions and the improvement in the situation are the main object of the action/reflection cycle practised by either the individual teacher or group of teachers involved in a given school. It is clear from the description of the AR process above that it requires of the practising teacher mastery of the 'relevant' research skills. As can be gleaned from the description above of the technical side of applying an AR project, qualitative research techniques will be required to facilitate exploration, analysis and interpretation. Nunan (1990) recognises that

“...teachers need to conceptualise their practice in theoretical terms, they need to be aware of issues amenable to action research, and they need to have skills in data collection and analysis” (62).

Proponents of AR argue that AR implies a different type of questioning that necessitates a different type of research techniques from the ones used in ‘hard core’ academic research (Pennycook 1989, Lytle and Cochran-Smith 1990, Nunan 1992, Allwright 1993, 1997; Freeman 1996a, 1996b; Gore and Zeichner 1995, Nunan 1997). Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1990) explain that alternative research methods and techniques such as teacher journals, essays, oral inquiry processes and classroom studies are more appropriate to the purposes of AR than the established process-product research techniques.

Furthermore, to engage in such a continual process presumes a high degree of commitment and enthusiasm on the part of the practitioner. It is a lengthy process that will need to be fuelled by practitioner interest and willingness to invest time and effort in the exercise. Grundy (1989) points out that AR requires conscious, responsible, autonomous practitioners whose professional goal and ambitions 'go beyond' the classical meaning of professionalism based on performance criteria fixed by outsiders. Supportive work structures, ‘collaboration’ among colleagues, release time and the prospect of career advancement are factors that come into play to
determine the sustainability of AR projects (Huberman 1993, Hargreaves 1994). Altrichter et al. (1991) find that AR in educational contexts depends on whether teachers:

"a) share insights of experience, and aim for improvement through action-reflection; b) engage in individual and collective data gathering, analysis and synthesis, and work towards establishing a critical community; [and] c) continue to explore new elements in a spirit of open enquiry" (51).

Briefly, AR depends on the availability of a pool of autonomous teachers/researchers. I understand the ‘autonomous’ teacher researcher as someone who is able to initiate a project, design it, collect the data, interpret it, implement the preliminary solution, reflect, re-think the solution, and so on without interference from an outsider. It is not easy to achieve this aim in many work contexts but that does not mean that it is not worthwhile to attempt it. As regards this issue, it is surprising that Wallace (1998) suggests that practitioners abandon the idea altogether if they happen to be working in an environment hostile to AR activity. In my view, the work environment surrounding teachers can be adapted to accommodate the ideal of teacher-as-researcher so that the teacher, the institution and the community at large can benefit from this knowledge generating activity. It will be the role of TED systems to set up a strategy to develop in prospective and established teachers the capacities and appropriate attitude for engaging in research activity. Indeed, teachers should not be left to their own dispositions in this exercise (Widdowson 1993) especially if they have no prior experience of this kind of activity or if they come from educational traditions that do not emphasise enquiry and critical skills. TE has a role to play in equipping the prospective teacher with an understanding of enquiry processes and mastery of practices. It also has a role to play in ‘educating’ practising teachers and ‘initiating’ them into AR as can be illustrated below.
2.4.3.2 AR AND THE TED SYSTEMS IN PLACE

I have explained earlier that the driving philosophy of the enquiry-oriented model in TE is to foster in prospective and established teachers the abilities and dispositions to reflect on practice (their own and that of others) and teaching situations by engaging in research. McNiff (1993) portrays this change in perspective to TE as contrasting with the 'received' model whereby the TE course is the transmission of a system of thinking external to the trainee (see Table 2.1). This is believed to be attainable by involving student teachers in enquiry-oriented activities such as identifying problems, searching for solutions, evaluating the impact of the solution and the like. Concerns over the risk that AR is confined to the technical and the practical (Henson 1996) is expressed by supporters of more radical orientation (Carr Kemmis 1986) with teachers delving into wider issues of policy, educational equity, and social justice.

To prepare prospective teachers with this profile, teacher educators need to resort to training activities and procedures that help trainees explore theories of practice and develop critical skills. As Nunan and Lamb (1996), put it, the aim is to develop reflective teachers

"who are capable of monitoring, critiquing and defending their actions in planning, implementing and evaluating language programs" (120).

Thus, the rationale for adopting an enquiry-oriented approach to TE is a belief in the need to raise the trainee’s awareness of the complexities of life in classrooms, and to help them to integrate theory, research and action (Wallace 1998, Burns 1999). For experienced teachers AR is a way to question taken for granted theories, solutions, and procedures (Kemmis and McTaggart 1982, McNiff 1989). Within this framework, the technical and practical aspects of research have become a new focus of TE professional courses (Wajnryb 1992, Altrichter et al. 1993, Richards and Lockhart 1994, Nunan and Lamb 1996, McDonough and Mc Donough 1997, Wallace 1998, Burns 1999).
Table 2.1: The shift in the teacher education model (based on McNiff 1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E-enquiries model (externalised)</th>
<th>I-enquiries model (internalised)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumption about teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching is a standardised model of teaching stemming from theory</td>
<td>Teaching models are varied and drawn from practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of teacher education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advises on ‘best’ course of action</td>
<td>Helps teachers understand practice</td>
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<td>Characteristics of the model</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutionalised</td>
<td>Personalised</td>
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<td>Expected outcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific solutions</td>
<td>On-going questioning</td>
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However, regulations in particular countries might not emphasise the I-enquiry approach as aims of TED. A good illustration is what has been happening on the British TE scene. The Department of Education has emphasised skills training and revived the apprenticeship model (see section 2.2.1.) via the policy of 'school-based' training whereby experienced teachers are entrusted with the induction of neophytes under the guise of a 'mentoring' and 'collaborative' learning philosophy (Wideen 1992, Carr 1989). It might be the case especially in private institutions that the clients do not see the point in having to learn simultaneously how to teach and how to do research on teaching. In wider school contexts, the school pedagogical traditions might not encourage this perspective. Goodman (1991) calls for emphasis on questioning and problem-solving across the TE curriculum:

"In order to have a more meaningful impact upon future teachers, this orientation needs to be the focus of seminars, supervision, foundation courses, field experiences and methods courses. Without a coordinated effort among each component of a given teacher preparation program, our efforts to prepare more thoughtful and active teachers will be severely limited" (74).

AR projects, whether initiated by a government agency, an academic institution, material developers, or individual teachers, should be regarded as a theory building activity that contribute to the development of a knowledge base about teaching that is
only accessible through the mediation of the teacher as researcher. While it is meant
to free teachers from the passive role assigned to them as consumers of externally
generated knowledge (Nunan 1993, McNiff 1993), it is not as smooth a process as it
seems (Nunan 1993: 4). The teachers’ work is structured and synchronised by
curricula coverage and testing schedules, school breaks, and national exams. In
addition, teachers are brought up on habits of individualism and professional
isolation in schools. They see themselves as responsible for a particular subject,
particular classes, and particular students. Therefore, teachers as ‘islands’ proceed
along their careers without feeling the need to change the world beyond the confines
of their classrooms (Huberman 1993, Hargreaves 1994).

The major hurdle for teachers undertaking or intending to undertake AR is lack of
preparation in the appropriate research skills. Therefore, either provision in this area
is made at the level of the training institution or at university through partnerships
with universities. Burns (1999) suggests that academics sympathetic to the idea of
AR and with a background in this type of educational research can assist teacher
educators and practitioners with the research process itself (design and conduct) and
follow up for publication and dissemination of the finished projects. However, the
‘partnership’ is not always a happy one. Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1990) observed
that “joint projects” involving academics and practitioners turned out to be restrictive
to participating teachers who are generally given the role of data gatherers and
informants but when it came to interpreting the data, practitioners found themselves
excluded from the research process. This problem was also witnessed during the
Human Sciences Project that Stenhouse himself was directing. Kemmis (1989: 28)
reported that teachers ended up playing the role of research assistants (data
collectors) handing the data to the research team who controlled what data was
needed and it what form it should come. Elliot (1990), in turn, pointed out that the
research team failed to take into account the teachers’ frames of reference or abilities
to put the ‘appropriate’ teaching strategies in place. He wrote:
"Both the list of experimental action-strategies and the self-training procedure were structured by the project team's understanding of pedagogical aims and principles. We did not understand that in reflecting about their practice teachers could not only develop their teaching strategies, but also develop their understanding of the aims and principles they sought to realise through them" (16).

These observations show how delicate was the balance of the relationship between the teachers as researchers and the collaborators in the project. It cannot be denied that in the teaching profession the relationship between academics and practitioners is generally marked by a power/knowledge inequality (Wallace 1991, Lytle and Cochran-Smith 1990, Carr and Kemmis 1986); but the researcher-practitioner partnership is vital for the AR process. It will be a framework for the ‘mediation’ of theory and practice with both parties benefiting from the interaction and exchange of ideas (Bialystock and Hakuta 1995, Burns 1999).

I have in the above section discussed AR as an ideal and as a technical process. I have reflected on some issues arising from considering its applicability as an initial and in-service development tool. I have outlined the possibilities as well as the constraints on AR in school settings. Complex issues intervene in the process of practising this type of teacher learning perspective. In ITE contexts, these can arise from conflicting general education philosophies within given institutional cultures and among the individual trainees. In the case of practising teachers, establishing and sustaining interest in AR is dependent on Action-Research-friendly environments (Grundy 1989, Nunan 1992, 1993; Allwright 1993). First of all, the future and place of Action Research in educational contexts will depend on whether it is pursued as a goal by the system in general. Second, it will depend on the quality and type of professional relationships among practitioners in the school community at large. Third, it will depend on the possibility of disseminating the research produced by teachers in the educational community.
It is perhaps worth highlighting at this stage the potential of AR for school improvement and professional growth. As an ITE strategy, it can be a form of knowing/learning that focuses on the active participation of the prospective teacher and the nurturing of habits of interpretation and critical examination of teaching. In the case of the ‘experienced’ practitioner, AR is also a way for them to act upon their work context and themselves produce change. Despite the problems, AR as a principle has the merit of allowing a ‘bottom up’ approach and the potential of formulating teachers’ theories of practice (Nunan 1993: 41). It also looks at teaching and learning situations from a multifaceted perspective. Through the use of ethnographic research methods, it unveils aspects of educational issues that will remain inaccessible without the participation of the teacher. AR should be on the agenda of future teacher education programmes to produce the ‘extended professional’ whom Hoyle (1975) Stenhouse (1975), McNiff (1988, 1993), Grundy (1989), Nunan (1992), and Allwright (1993), to name but a few, had in mind.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The three major models of teacher education surveyed and discussed in this review were closely linked to changing views of what teaching is and the place of the teacher in the process of teaching/learning. Models develop as a result of attempts to respond to issues and questions arising from practice in particular educational contexts. It has been pointed out that teachers have recently been brought to the centre of teacher education activity thanks to research on teacher thinking and teacher development. Action Research has been added to the components of TED in response to the perceived need to develop the ‘reflective practitioner’. The teacher is now certainly being seen from a different angle. The idea that prospective teachers sit to receive ‘wisdom’ about teaching has lost currency among enlightened teacher educators. The prospective teacher is an active participant in the TED situation constructing ideas about teaching. That does not imply, of course, that ‘skill training’ has been abandoned.
In many cases, it is clear that teacher educators consciously mix different perspectives at different stages of a training course to deal with various aspects of teacher competence (see McIntyre 1988, Calderhead 1990) and/or to take into account a particular government's guidelines (Grenfell 1998). In Larsen-Freeman's (1983) proposal a training aspect is retained. Freeman (1989) suggests a 'training' approach at the beginning of the course and a 'development' approach later. Richards (1987) starts by presenting the 'micro' skills and then proceeds to deal with the 'macro' level. Widdowson (1990, 1997) made numerous asides in his writings to recognise that beginner teachers have to be introduced to the 'tricks of the trade' and go through a 'conforming' stage until they gain confidence and find their own individual style. Similarly, Ur (1992) accepts that there is a 'technical stage' in teacher learning:

"The development of unreflective automatic classroom habits is also a necessary part of professional learning. Learned mainly through imitation, trial-and-error, and intuitive habit forming in the course of practice..." (60).

This is plenty of evidence that skill acquisition is still believed to be the foundation of 'expertise' in teaching...

The idea of viewing teacher expertise in terms of 'competencies' has not gone completely bankrupt either. Very recently in Britain the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) stated the requirements for qualification in teaching in terms of 'competencies' (DfEE 1997). What makes a course based on a list of 'competencies' plausible now that the debate of 1970's and early 1980's over CBTE is over? It is simply the obsession with 'efficiency' and 'accountability' as two symptoms of the malaise of modernity (Hargreaves 1994). A list of 'competencies' can produce rationalisation of the work of the teacher and standardisation of its 'product'. The quality of the 'product' can easily be measured by means of checklists of fixed performance criteria, which are, in turn, believed to be highly reliable since they measure what is demonstrable and tangible. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why a system of this kind has such a hold on the imagination of policy-makers and administrators. It fits their vision of what is a 'scientific', 'cost effective' and 'reliable' system. In terms of learning, to fall back on competencies is
an attempt to minimize the role of ‘theory’ and replace it with ‘technical rationality’ (Schön 1983, Young 1998). To avoid becoming repetitive I refer the reader to section 2.2 for a discussion of the arguments for an ‘education’ perspective advanced during the 1977 TESOL convention and the GURT ’83 conference by prominent teacher educators uncomfortable with the dominance of CBTE.

This overview of the development of TE as a field indicates that research on teachers demonstrates that there is more to teaching and learning to teach than the mere acquisition of technical skills. For one, research on teacher knowledge shows that ‘pedagogical knowledge’ is a more complex construct. Consider Shulman’s (1986b) explanation:

“Pedagogical knowledge also includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult; the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons” (9-10).

To go into detail about other constructs such as ‘subject-matter knowledge’ or ‘knowledge of learners and learning’, will make it even harder to expect that the component of each can be captured in a list of competencies. Thus, ideas from research on teacher thinking, teacher learning and teacher knowledge inevitably broaden the scope of teacher expertise and by the same token that of TE. In confined conceptions of TE in language teaching, for instance, teacher expertise can be seen as consisting of two components: knowledge of the language to be taught (linguistic knowledge) coupled with a repertoire of pedagogical skills (pedagogic knowledge) (Thomas 1987, Berliner 1986). It must be admitted in the light of this review of mainstream thinking on TE that this latter perspective is dépasse. Emphasis is now placed on the development of ‘metacognitive’ skills, which according to Berliner (1987) require
“the ability to ask questions of oneself as one is performing some activity; monitoring one’s own and others’ behavior in a setting; seeking alternative solution strategies to problems; systematically encoding cues in the environment that provide information about the pace of the activity, sequence of activity, the adjustments to be made in the activity; and so forth” (61)

However, and as pointed out by Elbaz (1993), teachers ‘develop’ within institutional practices. That is, the way they ‘develop’ will be determined by the education policy of the institution and its educational ethos. For example, it is often the case that policy makers determine the number of teachers needed and the time available to train them, as well as the way in which their training will be structured and sequenced (see section 4.2). The role(s) the system expects its teachers to perform might not be conceived with reference to theories of teacher learning or teacher knowledge. In a country with a centralised national system of education like Tunisia, the aims of TED are inseparable from the national educational policy. In addition, the TED system was modeled following the French Ecole Normale (EN) which is a traditional-craft model based on a ‘training’ philosophy. In chapter 4, I will examine the TED system from a historical perspective and contrast its features with the models of TE discussed in this chapter. The next two chapters will set the scene for a discussion of the issues covered in the research and the teachers’ views about them. I believe that the views expressed the teachers in the study will be better appreciated when the reader is presented with a wider picture of the general education and ELT context.
CHAPTER THREE
THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, I describe the context of the study at the macro level. I start by introducing the country, the people and the place of languages in Tunisian society. I will then provide a brief sketch of the economic transformations in Tunisia since the 1970s when Tunisian leaders began to adopt an open economic policy. The international political scene has also changed considerably. The Old World Order with the capitalist camp on one side and the socialist on the other has been replaced by a New World Order dominated by economic blocs and world trade organisations. The global economic situation today is such that trade is carried out with regional trade blocs such as the European Union (EU) or within the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) in an atmosphere of intensified competitiveness. Hirst and Thompson (1996) describe the phenomenon now known as ‘globalisation’ from an economic perspective in the following terms:

“It is certainly asserted that a truly global economy has emerged or is emerging in which distinct ‘national’ economies and, therefore, domestic strategies of national economic management are increasingly irrelevant. The world economy has been internationalized in its economic dynamics, is dominated by uncontrollable global market forces, and has as its principal actors and major agents of change truly transnational corporations (TNCs), which owe allegiance to no nation state and locate wherever in the globe market advantage dictates” (195).

Tunisia has in the past relied on special trade relations with France and other European countries but now urgently needs to diversify its trade relations. It is seeking to establish bonds with North African and other African countries through the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and with other Arab countries through the Arab League. Moreover, fully conscious of the importance of human resources in competition for markets and foreign investment, Tunisia’s leaders have begun to revamp the education and training systems in the hope of developing the workforce needed to meet the demands of the new economic situation. It is important to be cognisant with the changes introduced in the economy to understand the motives and targets of the educational reforms launched in 1991.
The English language has since World War II (WWII) established itself as an international language (Howatt 1984) and is rapidly becoming a global language. This trend is expected to continue over the next century as maintained by Crystal (1997) and Graddol (1997). The teaching/learning of English has become part of the human resource development strategy of many countries in Europe and the Far East. In a country like Tunisia, a policy that favours English can bring about a change in the balance between Arabic, French and English. I think it is premature to interpret these policy decisions as efforts to ‘Englicise’ Tunisia (Walters 1999) and to jump somewhat hastily to the conclusion that English is seriously threatening the special status French enjoys in Tunisia (Battenburg 1996). Nevertheless, it is a unique situation that is currently challenging university-based ‘experts’, teacher trainers/inspectors and teachers (Daoud 2000). Indeed, the present study contributes indirectly to the debate by examining the situation of ELT in Basic and Secondary Education. Furthermore, by focusing on the TE process, it sheds light on the quality aspect of language education. Parallel to the economic and educational changes, a number of decisions in favour of English in education have been taken in Higher Education, Basic and Secondary and in Vocational Education. In Basic and Secondary Education, the levels this study focuses on, a new curriculum for English has been introduced.

To implement the ELT curriculum, teachers are now required to adopt a new pedagogy that departs from previous practices in a number of ways (see section 3.4.3). The new curriculum aims, if translated into practice, may be expected to bring about new classroom dynamics (Prabhu 1992). I will compare and contrast the pedagogical aims of the previous and present English syllabuses (see section 3.3.4) in order to identify the ‘innovative’ for aspects of the ELT curriculum. In the last section of the chapter I will comment on the implications of the introduction of pedagogical ‘innovation’ on teachers. I will also point out the challenges from the perspective of the TED approach and provision. This chapter will therefore serve as general background to the context of the study from a macro level. In the next chapter I will focus on the process of EFL teacher education and development in
Tunisia. It will describe the TED system as a whole and identify its over-riding philosophy (section 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3). I will examine the model in the light of the TED models discussed in chapter 2 and by drawing on the literature on the management of change to point to the challenges facing teacher educators in Tunisia.

3.1 THE COUNTRY, ITS PEOPLE AND THE LANGUAGE QUESTION

Tunisia is a small country at the North Eastern tip of Africa with a total area of no more than 163,610 km² and a population of 9.5 million. By virtue of its geographical position, Tunisia sits at the crossroads of European, North African and Middle Eastern countries. While it overlooks the Mediterranean Sea and the European continent, it has special ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, and political ties with Africa and the Arab World. Tunisia is very often presented as a ‘Westernised’ country. From a Western perspective this might be perceived as an advantage but a disadvantage from the Arab perspective. However, as part of the nation building process, Tunisians have been brought up to think of themselves as Tunisians but also to adopt a pro-western outlook especially through the system of education. As a result of this modernist stance Tunisians are usually open to new ideas and like to think that mixing traditional and Western lifestyles is the way to balance identity and development needs (perceived in modernist terms). It must be emphasised that this approach can produce a dichotomous state of mind (Riahi 1970: 158) and at times radical shifts towards one tendency or the other that can be quite divisive.

Despite the fact that Arabic is the official language of Tunisia, the majority of the inhabitants of Tunisia speak a local variety of Arabic called Tunisian Arabic (TA). Berber is spoken by a tiny 1% of the population. Berber speakers use Berber in the home only and are mostly found in the southern part of the country (Mâamouri 1983: 14). Belâzi 1991 points to a state of diglossia whereby each variety, the classical and the colloquial, assigned a distinct domain:
"While TA, the mother tongue of all Tunisians, is a variety with which one can express with natural ease whatever concepts are related to his or her daily needs, CA (Classical Arabic) lacks totally this function and remains entrenched in an intellectual academic domain useful only for those scholars interested in ancient literature and in religion. (61)"

Mâamouri (1983: 15) makes a distinction between CA and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and maintains that MSA is the predominant and more accessible of the two varieties. He describes it as a moderated form of CA widely used in modern literature, journalism, Arabic-medium classrooms and political speeches. TA (dâriża) is a distinct variety in which are embedded loan words and special morphological features from different codes such as Turkish (typically suffixes to indicate occupations) (Mâamouri 1983: 17). Arabic-French code switching is also a common phenomenon in the society at large and especially among educated Tunisians (Jammoussi-Zaiane 1984, Trabelsi 1991, Belâzi 1991). Arabicization, which, in the Tunisian context, means switching from French to Arabic, became the motto for educational reform especially in the 1970s.

It is notable that after forty years of educational language policy, Arabic (MSA) has finally been recognised as the language of instruction within the framework of the 'Ecole de Base' (Basic Education) project launched in 1991. French retains its status as a second language taught since the third year of Basic Education (grades 3 to 9) but will be the medium of instruction for science subjects beyond Basic Education. English has always been allocated priority status as foreign language over other European languages taught in Tunisian schools such as German, Spanish and Italian. English is a compulsory school subject that is now taught from the seventh form of Basic Education (age 13) while the other languages are optional and can be dropped by the pupils within one year if they choose to. English has also been made a compulsory subject for all university students not majoring in English. It is probable that English will be more widely used in education and in society at large especially if a matching language cultivation strategy is pursued (Paulston 1983) by the Tunisian authorities and the bodies representing English-speaking countries. For the moment it cannot be claimed that English is as widespread in Tunisia as it is in
France (Flaitz 1988, Truchot 1997) or in other European countries (Berns 1995). As far as the speakers of English in Tunisia are concerned, Walters (1999) identified, on the basis of personal observations and contacts, five levels of proficiency in the community of English speakers in Tunisia. Judging from his description of these proficiency levels, it appears that the higher the level of proficiency, the smaller the number of speakers. The majority is therefore made up of “Tunisians who have studied English in school or at university, but have little real proficiency in it and rarely use it” (46).

When the situation in Tunisia is examined against the status and use of English in some European countries (our economic partners), it appears that despite political and societal awareness of the importance of English in Tunisia, there has been no language education policy to date capable of fostering patterns of acquisition, use and interaction found at the European level (Berns 1995, Truchot 1997). In countries of southern Europe like Spain and Greece it is common to find English-medium departments staffed by academics who read in English to keep up with research (Berns 1995: 7). In Tunisia the French medium is used and academics read books translated into French (Walters 1999). In addition, the chances of exposure to formal and informal language use are high in the European context:

“Europeans have contact with native and non-native speakers through face-to-face encounters while travelling and vacationing abroad, or meeting visitors and foreign residents in their home countries. Opportunities for use of English and interaction with speakers are similarly available in such business and professional settings as meetings or conferences and social events, too, where English often functions as an international language” (Berns 1995: 7).

Similar opportunities are not available to the average Tunisian, partly due to the availability of French. In the scientific domain, Truchot (1997) concludes from his findings in a previous study (Truchot 1990) on the place of English in the World that
“(in) international conferences taking place in France, 76 percent (of the French participants) said they used English, and 24 percent French...This shows that scientists, including the French function more as members of an international community having one common language than as members of national communities, both in their writing and in their selection of background readings” (67)

However, contesting the need for English as lingua franca in Europe Fishman (1994) made the following forecast about its future status in Europe:

“...English’s continued major usefulness in world trade and technology (to the point that it is not America’s own trade or technology that are its most significant supports, but rather, the trade and technology of users of English as a second language), plus the essential monolingualism of the USA (and even of England), these together will guarantee that English can and will continue to be a mighty force in Europe even without becoming a dominant or domineering one” (71).

From a global perspective, English as a medium of communication will play an important role in the business domain. Furthermore, a mastery of English is crucial to information technology as 90% of internet communication is believed to be carried out in English (Crystal 1997). The link between ‘globalisation’ and English is a contentious issue. It has been argued that globalisation is a manifestation of cultural, economic and political domination by the economically powerful English-speaking countries. As pointed out by Waters (1995),

“(t)he concept of globalization is an obvious object for ideological suspicion because, like modernization, a predecessor and related concept, it appears to justify the spread of Western culture and of capitalist society by suggesting that there are forces operating beyond human control that are transforming the world” (3).

With reference to ELT writers like Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1987, 1994) contended that ELT projects were vehicles of cultural and political domination. They suggested that these projects were designed with a hidden agenda to serve the interests of the donor rather than those of the receiving countries.
Battenburg (1997) has alluded to the issue from the perspective of ‘donors’ arguing that Tunisian political leaders have used the issue of language competition (French versus English) to press for aid either from the French or the Americans. This calls into question Phillipson’s (1992) thesis of linguistic imperialism. With regards to Tunisia’s current economic situation, if English were to become a ‘mighty force’ in Tunisia as it has in Europe, it would be realistic to expect a diminishing of the status of French. However, promoting another language would result in similar tensions to those generated by the adoption of French. It would be naïve to assume that the learning of a foreign language is value free. The foreign language is bound to pose problems of culture and identity. Yet, the progress of ‘Arabicisation’ within the framework of the ‘Ecole de Base’ project indirectly reduced the status of French within the educational system thus leaving an opening for English. Whether the learning of English will make any headway in Tunisia remains to be seen. I have already pointed out that in a globalized world, policies are mostly dictated by economic considerations. Thus, current language policies tend not to be formulated on ideological grounds. I believe that the decision to promote English was motivated by senior professionals and the general workforce as the economic system is now entering the competition of open economies. A description of the economic situation in Tunisia especially over the last two decades will help clarify the motives behind the school reform and the proposed role of English within it.

3.2 ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Since independence (1956) Tunisia has been through two phases in its economic development (Moudoud 1989, Murphy 1999). The first phase was from independence to the early 1980s and the second from 1987 to the present. The first period immediately after independence can be considered a phase of nation building while the second was a period that witnessed a shift towards a liberal economic policy. Like many newly independent countries, national development was the priority of economic planning. Education of the masses, health and the construction of the country’s infrastructures were the priorities of that first phase. Though the Tunisian leaders were keen on building a nation state that was moderate and open to
the world, its economic policy remained inward-looking. The state owned and controlled key industries, agricultural land and services. A system of taxation and tariffs was also put in place to block the import of goods that might compete with the national products or engender any payment deficit.

Tunisia has also experimented with the cooperative socialism option during what has become known as the ‘Cooperative Period’ (1960-1969). This strategy failed despite the fact that the mastermind behind it, Ahmed Ben Salah, was heading three key ministries: planning, economy and education. Mr Ben Salah, had perceived and promoted ‘cooperatism’ as the “revival of the communal traditions of our people” (cited in Moudoud 1999: 142). However, the effect of this economic policy was the dispossession of the ordinary peasants under the guise of the need to ‘modernise’ agriculture. It was believed that this policy could only be carried out by individual powerful ‘enlightened’ farmers or groups of farmers. In terms of the industrial sector, Moudoud (1989) identified problems resulting from reliance of policy-makers on an inappropriate economic theory that overlooked human, spatial and ecological limitations. The industrial development strategy consisted of the creation in rural areas of high intensive capital industries that “depend(ed) heavily on foreign technology, know-how, equipment and personnel for their inputs and production, and not on the existing resources of their respective regions.” (137) However, it was during the Ben Salah Period that hospitals, schools, roads, housing projects were built throughout the country thus reducing regional disparities.

After the failed experience of a cooperative system, Tunisia's leaders shifted in the 1970s towards a laissez-faire economic policy while, as noted by Zartman (1991), adopting a cautious policy. A number of laws and governing bodies attest to the government’s intentions to liberalise. There was Loi 72-38 (April 1972), Loi 74-74 related to the manufacturing industries, and the creation in 1973 of the Agence de Promotion des Investissements (API), later to become Agence de Promotion de l’Industrie (Baccar 1991: 83). For example, 'Loi 72' was an investment incentive package designed to attract foreign investors to set up manufacturing factories
together with local investors to manufacture goods for export. Such joint ventures mushroomed especially in the area of textile, which at present constitutes 29% of Tunisia's export earnings. It was also during this period (1976) that Tunisia signed an association agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC) revealing its intention to establish an export-oriented economy (Murphy 1999: 59).

A more decisive move to open up the economy was launched as part of the Seventh Development Plan (1987-1991) led by the leaders of the New Era with the assistance of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These two bodies are currently overseeing Tunisia's efforts to implement an Economic Structural Adjustment Plan (ESAP) launched as part of the Seventh Plan and reinforced under the Eighth Plan (1992-1997). The aim was mainly to reform the tax system and to remove duty tariffs, price controls and subsidies (Murphy 1999: 108). These efforts to liberalize the economy continued over the Eighth Development Plan with increasing disengagement of the state. Murphy (1999) summarises government action by the end of the VIII plan thus:

To encourage private sector activity, the government began to dismantle state monopolies over exports, while finances of state-owned operations were reformed in an effort to reduce government subsidies...In manufacturing, the plan focused on the dual needs of improving the public-private sector ration of output and increasing Tunisia's export capacity. To do the latter it was necessary to strengthen the competitiveness of industrial firms and improve their access to external markets, while simultaneously protecting them from unfair foreign competition. (136)

In 1995 Tunisia signed a new trade agreement with the EU and took another challenge to open its markets to European manufactured goods. Accordingly, the 'mise à niveau' (upgrading) was adopted as the main theme of the Ninth Development Plan (1997-2001) and became a buzzword especially in the industry and businesses sectors.
Besides the needs to improve its infrastructures, Tunisia is in need to improve its human resources. The broad objectives of the Ninth Plan were the following (Ministry of Economic Development 1999):

- To further open the economy to the outside world
- To develop and modernise the infrastructure to increase competitiveness of the country
- To evaluate and upgrade human resources

The ultimate aim for Tunisia’s economic leaders is currently to attract foreign investors and to curb unemployment. This is believed to be achievable by increasing the country’s exporting capacity by improving the skills of the work force. A necessary supplement to the transformation of the economy is a mastery of information technology and communication tools for marketing and distribution activities. It is also necessary to improve the quality of domestic products, to seek new sectors of production (competitive advantage), and to train multi-skilled workers.

As explained in the overview above, following the liberation of the economy, skill formation is the principal issue for Tunisia, which will have to face global competitiveness and participate in a global economy. Despite the fact that Tunisia has reached 6.2 % annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth (World Bank 2000), it still has many challenges to face. It is important at this stage of the discussion to understand what changes have taken place in the world of work in the context of globalisation. It is argued in the literature on globalisation that at the centre of the changes is a shift in the industrial production process and in industrial relations in the work place from Fordism to Post-Fordism (also referred to as the New Work Order) (Waters 1995, Sabel 1994).

Following the Fordist mode of production a worker is given a precise task on the assembly line. All a worker is required to do is to acquire accuracy and speed. There
is little likelihood that a worker can move from one speciality to another in the production process. Indeed, it is not expected of a worker at one stage of the process to worry about the outcome of the product three steps ahead in the assembly line. Quality control of products is undertaken at the end of the process and senior managers have no interest in a worker’s opinion about future production orientations. Worker-production management relations are hierarchical and roles are clearly divided.

Post-Fordism, in contrast, starts by breaking the linear process of the assembly line in one plant into small production units located or in different parts of the country or different parts of the world. This de-centralisation into units of production makes it possible to work in teams to explore possibilities to create products that have advantages not found in similar products produced by competing firms (Sabel 1994: 102). In this type of arrangement, laboratory researchers, design engineers, production engineers, workers and supervisors collaborate to solve production problems. The mode of operation within units requires team members to possess multiple skills so that they can work in other stages in the production process and take on different tasks as required. This mode of production values multiple skills and flexibility in industry. Thus, employers have started to seek these qualities in potential employees and to encourage their employees to renew their knowledge and skills so that they can be more versatile and creative. In countries where educational planning is tied up with economic planning, the concepts of 'flexible specialization', team-work, and problem-solving are passed to the field of education thus changing the purposes and functions of schooling. Hargreaves (1994) explained how these ideas exported from industry gave rise to the post-modern perspective of education:

Clearly, educating young people in skills and qualities like adaptability, responsibility, flexibility and capacity to work with others is an important goal for teachers and schools in a postindustrial society. So too is the familiarization with new technologies that will increasingly characterize many work environments. This strongly suggests the need for school environments which can generate the autonomous industrialized and meaningful collaborative learning essential for the postindustrial workplace” (50).
It is open to discussion whether the current linkage of industrial goals to educational planning is sufficient. A look at the economic success of the Newly Developed Countries of East Asia shows that cultural and social factors are as important (Green 1999). Green emphasises two aspects of the educational system that might have made the difference: the expansion of educational enrolment and the control of "student flow through different tracks and subject areas" (256) that match the projected demands of the economy. He also notes that the Asian governments are active in the process of creating markets and monitoring skills formation in the workplace. Elsewhere (Green 1998) he has reported on the ways in which many European countries have responded to globalisation. He cites the example of France where over 30 new *baccalauréat professionnel* courses have been created and how in Sweden vocational tracks have been lengthened and up-graded to higher education status. Green (1998) has also identified general trends worldwide:

"In most countries there have been attempts to reinforce the institutional linkages between education and work, through the development of work-experience, work-shadowing, alternance and mentoring programmes. Employers have been drawn more systematically into the process of standard-setting under the *Commissions Consultatives Professionnelles* (CPSs) in France, the BIBB in Germany and the Industry lead Bodies in the UK. Other manifestations of cross-sector collaboration include the numerous Education-Business Partnerships (EBPs) in the UK and the development, in the UK, Singapore and France, of modern apprenticeship schemes which rest on the collaboration of firms, employer organizations and education institutions" (176).

I have, in the analysis above, described some of the responses to the demands of the New Work Order in terms of education and training systems and provided a brief overview of a number of policies adopted by different countries in response to the challenge. This shows the direction in which educational systems have been heading in reforming and renewing their educational and training provisions.

In comparison to the countries mentioned above, Tunisia has been slower to respond to the educational implications of globalisation. The structure of the system has been left fairly intact over the 1970s and 1980s despite the economic changes introduced then. Educational policy makers in the 1970s were more concerned with
ideologically charged issues as I will explain below. In the beginning of this chapter I outlined the major changes in economic policy that have transformed the Tunisian economy in profound ways over the last two decades. It is expected, as is generally the case elsewhere, that the system of education will be called upon to contribute to the country’s response to globalisation. Two important goals closely linked with the ESAP: (i) to develop and upgrade the skills of the workforce and (ii) linking educational provision with the world of work throughout the school system. A WB report (World Bank 1998) focusing on Tunisian higher education identified a number of problems and proposed some solutions in the way of privatisation (see Table 3.1).

It is clear that the proposal would necessitate withdrawal of state funding (and control) in education and would most probably lead to a different type of elitism based on economic income. The restructuring (financial and administrative) would make educational institutions more vulnerable to market forces. Survival of the institutions would depend on the effectiveness of their marketing strategies in generating income. As to the content of educational provision, the proposal entails the introduction of a two-year general education phase followed by a two-year (or more) specialisation phase.

**Table 3.1: Problems, causes and proposed solution for the higher education system (based on World Bank Report 1998)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>RELATED CAUSES</th>
<th>PROPOSED SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High drop out rates</td>
<td>Selective system</td>
<td>Increase streaming tracks and allow for mid-course change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irrational rigid streaming policy</td>
<td>Improve retention rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity-Quality mismatch</td>
<td>Demographic pressure</td>
<td>Encourage input from the private sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structural and financial problems</td>
<td>More financial autonomy to institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under-developed private sector</td>
<td>Resort to alternative sources of funding (cost-recovery mechanisms, fees, fund-raising, income generation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Education</td>
<td>Majority of students following</td>
<td>General basic education followed by specific education (in coordination with business and industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>literary courses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The outcome of the solution will depend on the amount of continuity between the first two years and the specialisation years. Unless there are alternative institutions to supplement the gaps in the foundation phase, graduates might find themselves on the dole. In a country like Tunisia these changes are radical considering the priority given in the past to the education sector by the state. Free education was taken for granted over the decades and it will be difficult to change the frames of minds associated with it. The success of a programme of this sort will depend on economic success and will also bring with it the risks associated with privatisation. To appreciate the impact of the required changes, it is necessary to give a brief outline of the Tunisian experience in education over the past forty years or so to help the reader situate the reforms in the context of previous national educational experiences.

3.3 EDUCATIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS

In the previous section I demonstrated that economic considerations motivated the decision to reform the educational system. Seriously concerned about the problem of unemployment among the young and educated portion of the population, Tunisia’s leaders are aiming to attract foreign investors and multinational companies to absorb the available workforce. Moreover, it is imperative that the local industrial product and the production, management, and marketing systems will have to improve in efficiency and quality so that Tunisia competes with its counterparts in the region. To increase its chances of ever reaching that aim, the educational system will have to vary educational provision in these areas important for an export-oriented economy. However, there seems to be a problem with the quality of an educational system that has been heavily steeped in a human science tradition.

The educational challenge is how to produce this specialised, yet flexible and versatile, workforce as quickly as possible within the proposed two-year general education formula. The educational question is what kind of shift is required in terms of curricula and pedagogy in order to prepare that student for the world of work in a
context of globalized economies and of information and technological change. In a
globalized world, the knowledge and skills needed by individuals are constantly
changing. This has challenged the notions of stability and certainty about the
applicability of 'scientific' solutions to the world's problems. In chapter two I
referred to Kuhn's (1970) concept of 'paradigm' and 'paradigm shift'. The lesson
that can be drawn from his analysis is that faith in scientific explanations of
phenomena depends on the way the community of users perceives and identifies
problems and solutions. He explains how scientific revolutions bring about paradigm
change:

"(Scientific revolutions) necessitated the community's rejection of a one
time-honored scientific theory in favor of another incompatible with it. Each
produced a consequent shift in the problems available for scientific scrutiny
and in the standards by which the profession determined what should count
as admissible problem or as a legitimate problem-solution." (Kuhn 1970: 6)

The same applies to the perception of educational problems and the process of
searching for the 'appropriate' solutions to tackle them. A shift to a post-modern
paradigm in education entails a distrust of solutions proposed from a modernity
perspective. Thus, the availability of information from different sources necessitates
the use of different types of learning processes. This new situation places different
kinds of demands on teachers in the teaching/learning situation. Hargreaves (1994)
encapsulates the nature of the shift from a teaching/learning perspective:

"Processes of inquiry, analysis, information gathering and other aspects of
learning-how-to-learn in an engaged and critical way become more
important as goals and methods for teachers and schools in the post-modern
world" (57).

To understand the implications of the shifts required in the Tunisian context, it will
be necessary to give an overview of some aspects of the Tunisian education system
as Tunisia's aims and purposes for schooling have changed over time under the
impact of political and economic circumstances.
3.3.1 WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM

Three main objectives for the first system of education in the history of independent Tunisia were formulated in 1958. These were: (i) to promote and consolidate an Arab-Moslem identity, (ii) to unify the educational system, and (iii) to provide universal primary education for boys and girls indiscriminately (Secretariat d'Etat à l'Education Nationale 1959). The first reform of 1958 addressed the development needs of the country and was designed with a reconstructionist ideology in mind (Clark 1987: 91) in the sense that it was meant to remedy some of the injustices resulting from seventy-five years of inadequate educational provision under French colonisation. The French left behind a fragmented system classified according to the medium of instruction. There were French schools, French/Arabic schools for boys and French/Arabic schools for girls. As for Secondary Education, there were three types: Bilingual (French/Arabic) type of secondary and technical schools called ‘Sadiki’ schools, Arabic-medium schools of a traditional and religious nature within the ‘Zitouna’ mosque, and French-medium schools known as ‘Mission’ schools.

Thus, the educational reform of 1958 aimed to unify the system. To achieve this, a unified national curriculum for all was instituted through a centralised administration (see administrative chart of the Ministry of Education in Appendix 3.1). Course design, finance, management assessment, textbook production, as well as research in education were placed in the hands of different administrative bodies within the Ministry of Education. Central decisions communicated in the form of circulars, memoranda and various official documents were disseminated via regional administrations situated in major cities.

Meeting development needs was a central concern of the newly independent state. The country was in great need of the cadres essential to its economic progress such as administrators, technicians, teachers, and doctors and nurses. Therefore, a tripartite
system (six primary, six secondary and three tertiary) was put in place to help produce them. A system of streaming into a three-year track *enseignement moyen* or a six-year track *enseignement secondaire long* was put in place immediately after the first national exam at the end of primary education. This exam was called the *sixième*. The *enseignement moyen* comprised three tracks: general, commercial, and industrial. For the *enseignement long* further streaming took place at the end of the first year of common core education followed by a second after two more years of common core education. Appendix 3.2 illustrates the numerous routes, which yielded the *cadres* needed in various domains of public life. It is interesting to note that there were no programmes to train specialists in the industrial sector beyond the diploma level.

Ideologically the creators of the first reform wanted to identify with 'modernisation' and French was believed to be the vehicle for technological transfer and for producing the 'modern' Tunisian citizen. However, they justified their choice on pragmatic grounds as this explanation shows:


Due to the lack of teaching staff with modern training and a good pedagogical qualifications, who are capable of teaching all the disciplines in the national language, and due to the necessity to continue to rely on French teachers or Tunisian teachers trained in France, French has to be retained momentarily as a medium of instruction for certain school subjects for Primary, Secondary, Professional and Technical Education. However, the Arabicisation of education; that is, the exclusive use of Arabic as a medium of instruction, is seriously contemplated" (My translation).
Ten years later the use of French as the medium of instruction had produced disparities among school children. As demonstrated by Riahi (1970), children from the poorer monolingual families were found to be at a disadvantage. In contrast, the qualitative advantages sustained by children from francophone home environments among the richer urban classes was reinforced later in life through the social and administrative networks dominated by the French trained elite (Payne 1983).

Therefore the position to be allocated for Arabic or French in the educational system was at the centre of the debate on educational reform in the 1960s and 1970s. While Mr. Ben Salah, then Minister of Education, decided in 1968 that French should be taught from the first year of primary education, Mr. Mohamed Mzali launched as soon as he replaced him an ‘arabicisation’ and ‘tunisification’ project thus reversing the previous policy. These attempts to position and reposition French and Arabic at primary level resulted from a tension between a utilitarian and a cultural view of French (Ennaifar 1981:69). Interestingly enough, French survived all these contentions. It continues to occupy a privileged position in education and in the society as a whole.

There were many obstacles in the way of achieving universal education. The major problems were the shortage of teachers and the paucity of resources. In the beginning, the government resorted to reduce the number of weekly hours and to creating half-day shifts. Despite their intentions to generalise education, great regional disparities and inadequacies in educational provision and low retention rates dogged the system (Ounalli 1970, Riahi 1970, Sraieb 1974, Bousnina 19916). Nonetheless, education remained the unique route for social mobility during the first decade following independence as the public sector absorbed the graduates of Secondary Education (Bsais and Morrisson 1976: 22).

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6 Published 1981 Doctorat d'Etat thesis in geography from Université Paris I - Panthéon-Sorbonne.
However, the education system during the twenty years following independence succeeded best in establishing elitism through selective national exams and a system of early streaming (see Appendix 3.2). A nation-wide survey of secondary school graduates two years after their graduation carried out by Bsais and Morrisson (1976: 23) indicated that the type of employment secondary school graduates could get depended on whether they had a vocational degree (Brevet) or a Baccalaureat. The students graduating from general and commercial education with (or without) a Baccalaureat degree were employed in jobs related to their specialty while the ones graduating from the industrial stream ended up in jobs unrelated to their area of study. The researchers also found out that the salary of an employee who was a Baccalaureat holder was 80% higher than that of a worker coming from the enseignement moyen. The profile of the students coming from a vocational/occupational track did not match the types of jobs available. The experience of this first batch of Tunisians educated during the twenty years following the 1958 reform has resulted in a tendency for subsequent students to opt for the more remunerating general classicist type of education giving them access to higher education and better paid jobs. Policy makers at that time constructed the idea that young people had an attitude problem towards technical and vocational education.

This was evident in the attempt at the end of the 1970s (Ministry of Education 1981) to force pupils into vocational post-primary education streams and introducing them to handicrafts from the fifth year of Primary Education and by instituting a 7th and 8th form Professional Education route (see Appendix 3.3). However, This project merely delayed the rejection process by two years for the pupils who did not pass the competitive Sixième exam. The students who followed the professional route had very slim chances of reintegrating into the system through the '7th Special Form' (see Appendix 3.3). Although the objective was to produce more technicians, the pupils opted for technical training at secondary level were in the end granted a diploma and were excluded from entering Higher Education.
What can be deduced from the brief account above is that at the heart of the problem was an understanding of vocational education as short track, short-term rescue operation for less able pupils. The possibility of crossing over to a higher level of qualification was not an objective. For those who were employed, this period witnessed government legislation and regulation of in-service training in the business sector (Charmes et al. 1985). However, the policy of some companies in terms of promotion discredited in-service training. This created an atmosphere of tension and distrust between workers with in-service training and graduates:

"The education system is now producing graduates who, on the labour market but even more so within the company, will find themselves in conflict with non-graduates who have risen to their present position by virtue of their work experience. And when the two have been competing, preference has been given to the graduate in a number of instances" (69).

The previous vocational, technical and professional tracks were a dead end for most students. The number of students who went into higher education was so small that higher education institutions delivered one technician for every three engineers (Ministry of Education 1990). In a report prepared by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research prepared during the 1988-1990 academic year, it was indicated that half the student population at secondary level was following studies in arts (Lettres). Owing to the lack of diversification of courses and the increased demographic pressure, many Baccalauréat holders were ending up in undesired courses in a Higher Education institution. Unable to follow, they were generally excluded after the second failure in exams. Referring back to the WB proposal (see section 3.2) to increase the possibility of choice might help improve this situation. However, it remains to be seen whether streams will be tailored to the needs of Tunisian students or just borrowed from other contexts with different economic and administrative profiles.

7 The experience was stopped starting in 1989-1990 academic year.
3.3.2 THE AIMS OF THE 1991 REFORM

I stated earlier that the main purpose of the reform was to reduce government spending on education, to increase success and retention rates and to improve the quality of graduates by promoting scientific and technical education (Gharbi 1998, Kefi 1998, World Bank 1998, Ministry of Education 1990). A number of reforms have been introduced to address these problems.

The retention rate was meant to be increased by introducing a system of a compulsory nine-year Basic Education. First, it was hoped this would reduce the drop out level at the end of the first six years of Primary Education that usually resulted from the then competitive examination Sixième. Second, the success rate recorder in the June 2000 Neuvième exam improved. The Ministry of Education announced that it had reached 73.77%. Third, streaming in Secondary Education has been postponed until completion of two intermediate years of Common Core Secondary Education. After this, students will be streamed into one of five specialities, four of which are in sciences and technology (see Figure 1 and 2 in Appendix 3.4). The Baccalaureat exam, however, has retained its status as a requisite for admission to state-run and/or private higher education institutions.

While it has helped achieve the aims of universal education, the Ecole de Base has also increased the government’s spending on education. At a time of economic restructuring, it is necessary to find other sources of funding as the government will not be able to sustain the current level of expenditure on education. Two solutions were adopted at the level of higher education: (i) to introduce fees and loans as a cost-recovery mechanism, (ii) to involve the private sector in educational provision and services, and (iii) to increase the autonomy of institutions so that they can generate income.
In terms of the curricula in Higher Education following the recommendations of the WB reporters, two-year courses in Institutes of Technology were set up to reduce the drop out levels and to diversify the profile of students coming out from Higher Education. This is an attempt to orient educational provision towards producing middle-range managers and semi-skilled technicians. This type of vision and strategy might, if matched with the creation of the jobs needed, guarantee better employment prospects at the end of two years of university education. In the humanities a number of specialised diploma courses (e.g. the Diplôme d’Études Supérieures Spécialisées) were launched to diversify and up-date curricula in language departments (Daoud 2000).

Whether Tunisia develops a highly skilled labour force in the near future, will be a determining factor in attracting Multinational Corporations (MNCs) to Tunisia. However, it should be stressed that reforming education alone is not the whole solution. The question is to identify what jobs are likely to be available to the Tunisian workforce and what other initiatives are required to support the development of a workforce with the required skills. Zuboff (1988) suggests other variables countries need to be cognisant with if they want to compete in the global market place:

“...(N)ew technologies require organisational changes, attitudinal and cultural shifts, creative initiatives from employers, co-operation, integration, involvement, less hierarchical structures and higher levels of skill in the operating workforce” (308).

Therefore, the targeted level is much higher than vocational and occupational training provision of the utilitarian type that is linked to unemployment and the eradication of poverty. In the context of competitiveness for over foreign investment and the opening of the economy, I see the function of professional education as furthering and up-grading the education and training of a large pool of experienced skilled workers so that they can develop even higher levels of technological skills. I have pointed out that the diversity of products and the versatility of employees are key elements of competitiveness in the Post-Fordist mode of production. If Tunisian
products are to make their way into the European market, local industries will need to develop the capacity to produce competitive goods.

The Tunisian government is trying to formulate educational goals to meet the in anticipated employment needs resulting from foreign investors opening companies in Tunisia. I agree with Charmes et al.'s (1985) recommendations that Tunisian decision-makers need to diversify internal as well as external in-service training provision and to regulate career advancement routes that give credit to self-improvement. I also think that a state strategy based on drawing distinctions between the types and functions of vocational/occupational training courses is crucial, as education in institutions cannot meet all the need of industry.

3.4 ENGLISH IN EDUCATION

It has been argued that the internationalising the Tunisian economy has brought about a shift in the policy towards English. Any decisions concerning English might be regarded as provocative in Tunisia where French has enjoyed special status. When examined from a globalisation perspective, English is the language used in interactions between businessmen who are non-native speakers of English (Graddol 1997: 13) and in multinational companies (Green 1997). Truchot (1997) gives the example of the language policy of a General Motors plant in France:

"In the plant, out of 2,500 members of staff, 200 worked more or less permanently in English, that is, most of the people at all levels working with the executive staff. Only three people were not French, including the American general manager who could not speak French" (68).

Though there might be slight differences in the individual company’s language policy, English is used at different stages of the technological process (research, manufacturing, management, and marketing) and among employees who come generally from different parts of the world. In media and culture, the use of English is also prolific. At this level, globalisation emerges as overpowering standardisation
(Ritzer 1998) but, thus far, governments have abandoned attempts to pass regulations against the use of another language to protect their own (Flaitz 1988).

With reference to the Tunisian context, policy decisions in favour of English can be interpreted as being based on the anticipation of a greater need for English in the workplace (Jabeur et al. 1999). A case in point is the introduction of English in vocational training. I will provide below a brief overview of previous initiatives to promote English in education in Tunisia. I will then focus on past practice and on the new ELT curricula in order to delineate the nature of the 'innovation'. In the last section of this chapter I will review the literature on the management of change and innovation to discuss the issues arising from the implementation of 'innovation'. This shift is particularly important for the present study because of the implications for teacher education and development. I will reflect on the possible effects of the changes on the teachers and develop a number of hypotheses about their beliefs, perceptions and the impact of the required change on their established practices. The examination of the ELT situation will help us put in context the views of the teachers to be collected in the course of the study.

3.4.1 PREVIOUS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE ENGLISH IN EDUCATION

The first documented attempt to encourage the teaching and learning of English was through the foundation of the Bourguiba Institute for Foreign Languages in 1958. The second was the English Textbook Project in 1969 funded on the British side by the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) and on the American side by the Ford Foundation. English was retained as a required subject within the framework of the 1958 educational reform and continued to be taught by French teachers using French textbooks. Further aid to English was provided at the beginning of the 1970s in the form of supply of teaching staff. American and British volunteers (Peace

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Corps and British Visitors Overseas (VSOs)) were employed to replace the French teachers. Pedagogical change along American lines gained momentum. Describing this first encounter with the local educational culture Jaoua (1981) reports:

«...au niveau de la pédagogie, l’influence des Américains était importante. Le Corps de La Paix Américain avait sa propre direction qui était très active. Dotée d’un personnel d’encadrement pédagogique pour ses ressortissants, cette direction préconisait des techniques pédagogiques différentes de celles que préconisaient les responsables Tunisiens (ou Français). Pour cette raison, la méthodologie appliquée par les volontaires, tout en s’adaptant au programmes officiels, était jugée quelque peu « non-conformistes » aux yeux de certain» (105).

« At the level of pedagogy, the influence of the Americans was important. The Peace Corps had its own headoffice which was very active. Endowed with a training personnel for its own volunteers, this body employed pedagogical practices which different from the ones used by Tunisian or French trainers. For this reason, the method used by the volunteers, while in occurrence with the official programmes, were perceived as somewhat ‘non-conformist’ by some authorities » (My translation)

During those years, the American Centre and the British Council played an active role in providing great support for the teachers of English and their trainers. This was undoubtedly an important influence on ELT professionals. In 1975, an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) conference was held in Hammamet reflecting a recognition of the need to expand English in other domains. This event paved the way for the introduction of ESP courses in a number of tertiary level institutions. It was also followed by the introduction at secondary level of two ESP courses: a first course specifically designed for students in vocational streams (Ben Afia 1978) and a second for students in sciences (Jaoua 1979).

The early years of the 1980s, the years when political leaders making serious commitments to the liberalisation of the economy, were years of great hope for ELT. Political figures began to make a number of bold pronouncements on the limitations of French (see Battenburg 1996) and a number of projects were launched to honour these pronouncements. In 1981 the Transfer of Technology Project was launched. Its objective was to send high scoring Baccalaureat graduates to do Masters degrees in sciences in American universities. One year later the Lycée Pilote (1982-1983) was
established for high achievers who were recruited and taught all subjects in the English medium. These projects were discontinued between 1990 and 1991. It is difficult to find explanations for the aborting of the three projects without engaging in speculations and polemical discussions. It is perhaps worth noting that all these projects depended on external funding and suffered from a lack of planning for their graduates. There was no plan to send Lycée Pilote graduates to fee-paying English-speaking universities. It was difficult for Tunisian authorities to see any justification for spending huge amounts of money that would be saved if all students were sent to France and other European countries. Countries representing American and British interest who were, in principle, as interested in promoting English in North Africa as the French were in promoting French, had no scholarships to offer the first batch of Lycée Pilote graduates.

A third important event of the 1980s was an ELT aid project under the name of ‘The KELT ESP Project, Tunisia’ funded by ODA and the British Council. Its aim was to provide support for the teaching of ESP at tertiary level (Kennedy 1985). The ESP specialists based in Tunis and later in Sfax (1991) provided advice and assistance to ESP practitioners on course design and evaluation. Study days, seminars, national and international conferences, and a newsletter were the highlights of the project. A number of ESP practitioners were also sent on summer courses and Masters courses in the UK. Despite the difficulties and uncertainties over the survival of the ESP project and the problems with planning and development in ESP in the Tunisian ELT context (Hemissi 1985, Bahloul 1999, Daoud 1999), after termination of ODA funding in 1995 the project evolved into a dynamic department within IBLV (Daoud 2000).

The second half of the 1990s saw an increasing interest in English. Three important decisions were taken in favour of English in education. These were:

- Starting 1996-1997 English was introduced in the 8th form Basic Education and in Occupational and Professional Education.  

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9 Professional Education is now run by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Formation Professionelle
• Starting 1998-1999 English was introduced as a compulsory subject for all university level students other than English majors.

• Starting 2000-2001 English was introduced in the seventh form of Basic Education

• A British Council-Ministry of Education three-year trainer-training project was launched in 1995-1997 to provide support for trainers. This project was renewed in 1997 for another three years.

These are particularly significant decisions as this means that in general education the new generation will be learning English at a younger age and for longer. Another no less important decision is the introduction of English as a subject in professional education.

Having outlined major developments in English in education over the past forty years, I now turn to a discussion of the types of curricula introduced thus far in the Tunisian ELT context. I will pay special attention to the latest curriculum introduced in 1996 and discuss the changes it is likely to bring about in the teaching/learning situation and their implication for teachers.

3.4.2 PREVIOUS ELT CURRICULA

The first English curriculum designed in 1969 was a structural one (White 1988, Crombie 1985, Markee 1997). The curriculum text included the following recommendation:
“L’acquisition des structures du language sera la préoccupation première...Les structures phonétiques, lexicales, et grammaticales nouvelles doivent faire constamment l’objet d’un réemploi afin d’atteindre le plus haut degré d’automatisme conduisant à l’expression spontanée correcte” (Ministère de l’Enseignement Secondaire et des Sciences 1979: 3) (emphasis in original text)

“The acquisition of the language structures will be the primary concern...Newly introduced phonetic, lexical and grammatical structures must always be the subject of practice aiming to attain a degree of automation leading to subsequent spontaneous and accurate use”. (My translation)

The structural aspect of the curriculum was also reflected in the organisation and content of the units in the textbooks. A language unit was constructed around grammar points (‘Structural Topics’). Each unit included a combination of repetition and transformation drills. The grammar was distributed throughout the unit under a series of ‘Structural Points’ that stated explicitly what grammar point was being discussed and the rules needed for its application. Mechanical exercises were included in each unit and in summary units. This was believed to be the ‘best’ way to ‘practice’ the language at that time. Moreover, the dialogues and texts included in the books, and especially in the first two levels of the course, served as pretexts to introduce grammatical structures. A good illustration of this point is a dialogue in English for Modern Life, Level II entitled “Shopping in London” where each turn includes a question tag in it. At that time the belief was that language could be acquired through repetition, memorisation and emulation of the examples of language in the book (i.e. the dialogues).

A decade later there was growing dissatisfaction with the Audio-lingual methodology and a revision was felt needed. Based on an evaluation of the textbooks in use, English in Modern Life series and Aspects of Contemporary Life (Level IV), a group of inspectors recommended that:

“Un mariage heureux d’exercices mécaniques et communicatifs s’impose. En d’autre termes, bien qu’on ne puisse pas se passer d’une approche structuraliste à ce niveau, une approche fonctionelle-notionelle est souhaitable.” (Direction Générale des Programmes et de la Formation Continue 1990)
"A matching and mixing of mechanical and communicative exercises is needed. In other words, and though it is impossible at this stage to abandon a structural approach, a functional-notional one is desirable" (My translation).

Inspectors also recommended that in the second year textbooks dialogues be "conceived following functional-notional norms" and that "communicative grammar exercises be included". Evidently, the purpose at the time was a modification of an 'old' curriculum by interweaving the notional-functional with the structural (White 1988: 79). Therefore the curriculum included specification of content into 'function goals', 'language skills', and 'themes' as suggested by Van Ek (197910) and Wilkins (1976). This approach was confounded by the recommendation that accuracy was to be emphasised:

"Dès le début, les élèves seront initiés à parler la langue étrangère par phrases complètes dans une langue authentique. On insistera sur l'intonation, l'accentuation et le rythme naturels. On aura pour objectif la consolidation des acquisitions phonologiques, lexicales et grammaticales par le biais d'activités variées et conformes à l'approche en vigueur. (Ministère de l'Education et des Sciences 1993: 5)

"From the outset, pupils will be initiated in speaking the language in complete sentences and in an authentic language. Emphasis will be laid on teaching intonation, stress and the natural rhythms. Consolidation of the phonological, lexical and grammatical items acquired will be sought by means of varied activities in tune with the recommended approach" (My translation).

The reading and writing skills were to be given more emphasis as the pupils approached the Baccalaureat examination though it was only implicitly stated.

Thus, it can be concluded from the features of the 1993 curriculum and the recommendations made to teachers there was an attempt to build on the previous syllabus rather than to make a fresh start (see Lâabadi 1994). It was, however, an attempt to bring about change to the extent that it broadened the content of the language made available to the learner by adding on 'notion' and 'functions'

10 First published in 1972 in English Language Teaching XXVI, 1:15-19.
(Markee 1997: 17). According to Dubin and Olshtain (1986) this approach is not unusual in contexts where a previous syllabus conceived along structural/behaviourist lines was in place. In the Tunisian context, the impact of a structural/audiolingual curriculum that survived over thirty years is not to be underestimated.

A look at the books introduced to implement the 1993 curriculum will show that changes have been introduced at the level of procedure. The textbook series Communicate in English, put in general use since 1991 is different in outlook. The series includes authentic as well as fabricated texts and communicative as well as traditional ones (see Appendix. 3.5 and Appendix 3.6). This suggests that the writers of the book series wanted to preserve some aspects of traditional practice. In addition, a number of pair work activities were introduced even though no more than five pair-work activities could be found in Communicate in English, Level IV (see Appendix 3.7). However, this was a first step towards more interactional types of activities.

My review of the current ELT curriculum includes a more pronounced move towards CLT pedagogy. I consider ‘innovation’ as planned change that challenges existing fundamental concepts and values (Nicholls 1983: 4). Previous attempts to introduce ‘improvements’ resulted from course appraisal activity by the supervisory corps on the basis of their evaluation of teacher performance in the classroom and student results in the Baccalaureat examination. It was evident that no serious attempt was made to introduce changes to the whole approach to pedagogy (Richards and Rogers 1986).
3.4.3 FEATURES OF THE 1996 ELT CURRICULUM

A distinctive feature of the latest syllabus (1996) compared with preceding syllabi is the integration of language skills and strategies and a focus on general education goals. It is stated that the general goal of the curriculum is "to develop the learners' competence in English for purposes of international communication, giving them access to universal culture through Anglophone contexts" (Ministry of Education 1997: 6). As such it does not differ from previous statements except in ensuring that universal culture is accessible through Anglophone contexts rather than the language itself.

The language skills are organised in the same way as in the earlier curricula. The first two years focus on listening/speaking skills and strategies and gradually there is more focus on reading and writing skills and strategies as the pupils draw nearer to the Baccalaureat level. In the curriculum text for 8th and 9th form (Ministry of Education 1997), the course was designed to develop in learners

"(a) skills and strategies, (b) communicative functions and their linguistic and paralinguistic components, and (c) topic areas" (7).

The combination entails a focus on the learning process and learner training for category (a), a focus on developing communication abilities for category (b) and for category (c) an attempt to match (a) and (b) with what learners want to talk about when using language. In this respect the designers make the following recommendation to the textbook writers about text choice:

"Texts should be action-based (wherever possible), issue-oriented, engaging, intellectually stimulating, and somewhat unpredictable... (learners) enjoy reading/hearing about and discussing issues that matter to them" (11).

The skills and strategies to be developed are obviously conceived following CLT principles (Brumfit and Johnson 1979, Canale and Swain 1980, Brumfit and Johnson 1979, Richards and Schmidt 1983, Richards and Rogers 1986, Stern 1992). Besides,
the methodological recommendations and the assumptions underlying them (see Table 3.2), it is clear that CLT pedagogy is required. I have demonstrated above that previous curricular changes were only partial. They merely added on notions and functions. In terms of methodology that meant changing the types of activities following communicative exercise typology. It was recommended for instance to introduce pair/group work just as procedure while the approach remained largely intact. These changes were nonetheless towards introducing some aspects of CLT pedagogy while encouraging a ‘traditional’ emphasis on form and accuracy. The tenets of CLT pedagogy as spelled out in the table below will require a break from established tradition. From my knowledge of the Tunisian school context I suggest that teachers may not dispute the conception of language as communication but would not identify with the perception of the teacher/learner relationship as spelled out in the proposal. It might be the case that teachers and probably other parties involved in the management and implementation of the curriculum (textbook writers, teacher trainers, learners and parents) will find it difficult to identify with the goals of the curriculum.

Table 3.2: Main assumptions underlying methodological recommendations

(based on the 1995 ELT curriculum text)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSUMPTIONS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>A means of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Learning</strong></td>
<td>Incidental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Characteristics of the Learner</strong></td>
<td>Intelligent, motivated, independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Role</strong></td>
<td>To foster learner autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To promote independent learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To facilitate and manage learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learner Role</strong></td>
<td>Participant in the learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching/ Learning Process</strong></td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An examination of the statement of goals and the description of the outgoing learner leads me to conclude that the course is meant to develop social and personal skills along with the acquisition of the language. The new curriculum starts by developing an overall approach and changes the focus from teaching to learning. This is made clear in the statement about developing the outgoing learner. Its long-term objective is presented as two processes in tandem: developing learning skills and strategies on the one hand and developing personality traits on the other. In the table below I reproduce the list as it appears in the official text.

Table 3.3: Profile of the outgoing learner as stated in the 1996 curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS AND STRATEGIES</th>
<th>PERSONALITY TRAITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicative</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic/Learning</td>
<td>Aggressiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/interactional</td>
<td>Tolerance of ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative</td>
<td>Independence/autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attention and hard work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexibility (field independence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integration and retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance of difference of opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be inferred from the list, the curriculum goes beyond language development and incorporates ideological/political aims. For example, interpreted from a language learning perspective the target to develop a learner who is ‘tolerant’ of ambiguity and difference in opinion could infer a tolerance of ambiguity likely to result from the learner’s encounters with differences in the target language and the target culture. However, it could also be perceived as a political goal usually within the domain of civic education. Developing ‘aggressiveness’ and ‘risk-taking’, another personality trait, can be interpreted from a language development perspective as a conception of language learning as an adventure but it can also be perceived as learning to challenge authority and adopting an emancipatory attitude. Another case in point is the target to develop learner independence/autonomy. This is a central concept in CLT but the interpretations offered are numerous (Little 1990, Gremmo and Riley 1995, Littlewood 1996, 1999; Benson 1997, Benson and Voller 1997). From a
language learning perspective, fostering autonomy is linked to learner-centred instruction and the individualisation of learning. On the other hand, a more radical aim can be attributed to it (Giroux 1990). In terms of the issues of definition and interpretation of the statements related to the outgoing learner there will be ambiguity in deciding what interpretation to adopt and how far to go with the principles in terms of practice. There is also a possibility that the statements will remain ornamental as no attempt will be made to interpret or implement them.

3.5 TEACHERS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGE

The teachers of English in Tunisia might be experiencing tension in attempting to put into practice the methodological recommendations of the curriculum. Difficulties might occur at the practice level as teachers will have to abandon old routines and implement new types of activities that might conflict with established norms in the classroom. The teachers might experience difficulties identifying with the concepts underlying the curriculum because they conflict with their personal views and perceptions. The views they hold concerning the best ways of covering the curriculum and providing support to the learners will determine whether and to what extent they will put the ideas into practice. Cuban (1990) wrote:

"(Teachers) can alter the content they teach, even if it is mandated by a state department of education, if they already believe that the topics and content will be in the students' best interest. They also have limited freedom, drawn from their isolation as solo practitioners, to ignore and modify these directives. And they can initiate novel changes" (11).

The new English curriculum is a pedagogical proposal that requires a shift to occur at the level of the social dynamics of the classroom (Prabhu 1992). This has implications for the perception and enactment of teacher and pupil role(s) in the classroom situation. These roles are governed by norms and expectations within a given educational and classroom culture (Holliday 1994, Coleman 1996, Shamim 1996). On the transactional level the new curriculum might be seen as aiming to render more democratic current asymmetrical types of relationships dominating
classroom life in Tunisian classroom settings (Chabchoub 1984). A reader who is familiar with the Tunisian school context will see many parallels in the following depiction of the typical interactional level of engagement in the classroom:

“There is protocol to be observed: pupils fall silent when the teacher enters the room, they stand up and chant a choral greeting. One of their number cleans the board. There are ritualistic practices to be strictly adhered to. Pupils are addressed by their surnames, the teacher by title. The interaction itself is tightly controlled. Only the teacher has the right to initiate exchanges. Pupils can contribute only when they make a bid by raising the hand and when this is acknowledged and ratified as a claim for a speaking turn. Only one pupil speaks at once. The teacher only asks questions to which he or she already knows the answers. The rights and obligations associated with the teacher and pupil roles are clear, fixed and non-negotiable” (Widdowson 1987:85).

For instance, Chabchoub (1984) found out upon surveying the views of 72 secondary school pupils (age 15-21) and 43 teachers in Tunisia that teachers valued most the “moral posture” of their pupils. He found out that from the teachers’ perspective, discipline and compliance to the teacher’s orders take precedence over appreciation of the pupils’ cognitive abilities. In the Tunisian English language classroom, there is generally more flexibility and openness on the part of EFL teachers but on the whole the teacher tends to dominate classroom interaction. In a study of EFL lesson discourse Abdesslem (1992) concluded:

“The FL lesson discourse in Tunisian secondary schools is an unequal encounter. At the exchange level we find that often a student’s response move is generally preceded by three moves performed by the teacher, namely an initiate, and a prime, followed by a satisfy. Teachers tend to have a higher share of moves and acts than their students in all frames” (249).

Though Abdesslem’s data were collected before the introduction of the book series Communicate in English (1991-1992), it is unlikely that radical changes have occurred. Teacher-centred instruction has common currency in the Tunisian context of schooling. The transmission model of teaching associated with this type of practice (Barnes and Shemilt 1974, Kennedy 1991) is expected to be transformed if the recommendations of the curriculum are implemented. The predominant teaching tradition can, however, stand in the way of any ‘innovation’ that aims to reposition
the teacher and the learner in the teaching/learning process. It can be hypothesised that change in the transactional engagements, favoured by the initiators of change, is accepted and implemented by teachers only in as far as it is plausible to them (Prabhu 1995). Western models of pedagogy might be ambiguous for the local teachers and learners especially who do not perceive their own norms and behaviours as problematic (Coleman 1996).

Moreover, as teachers and learners are the end users of the curriculum, a curriculum proposal is hardly delivered “as is” as pointed out by Breen (1984)

"(I)n the lesson-to-lesson reality of language teaching, we are continually concerned with three syllabuses: the teacher’s version of the pre-designed plan, the individual learner syllabus, and the unfolding syllabus of the classroom- this last being the synthesis of the other two " (50).

Another factor that complicates the process of innovation in classroom contexts is the management of change within a given educational system. Educational change in Tunisia is initiated by government policy and then passed down to teachers through the training/inspection corps. Trainers/inspectors are at the same time initiators and early adopters of curriculum change. They can be regarded as initiators of change as some of them participate in the curriculum design team (Daoud 1999) but once the new curriculum is designed and passed as a law decree, they become the early adopters of the new curriculum (Markee 1997: 58). The teachers, however, are assumed to be implementers of the curriculum. The role of trainers is to bring about change in teacher practice so that teacher performance conforms as far as possible to the requirements of the new curriculum. In the next chapter I will focus on the TE system in Tunisia but at this level of the discussion of the process of curriculum implementation it is worth pointing out that it is occurring within a centralised organisation characterised by a hierarchical positioning (Handy 1985, White 1988).

As explained by White (1988), top-down relations and processes lead to firmly established procedures that emphasise the accountability and efficiency of each level of the process. Features of technical rationality are observable in the Tunisian system of education. This rationality starts with planning (setting of objectives), designing
curricula (input), and the inspection of teachers and evaluation of students (output).

Within this type of hierarchical organisational culture, decisions are passed on to teachers who are required to deliver the product (application of the programme and results in exams). A problem with this approach is that it assumes that curricula are teacher proof and that the training corps can bring about change in teachers in the direction desired by the institution. I shall turn to these matters in the following chapter. It is, I believe, only by looking at curriculum change from the perspective of the teacher, that understanding can be reached about what happens to the theoretical ideas underlying curricula. Starting from that understanding it will be possible to find ways to bring about worthwhile, long-lasting change in teachers as translator and transformer of the curriculum in complex educational settings (Stenhouse 1975, Olson 1980, 1981; Richardson 1990a).

At the time of the data collection for this study (August-September 1998) the school system was undergoing all of these changes described and analysed above. As far as English language teachers were concerned, situations differed. Some were employed in Preparatory Schools teaching 7th (recent decision), 8th and 9th formers. Others had been assigned classes in a preparatory and old system secondary school simultaneously. The ones involved in the old system of secondary schools are still using the older textbook series Communicate in English (level II, III, and IV). The ones teaching in the Preparatory Schools are using the new series Say it in English (8th and 9th form) and the latest book Spread Your Wings for first year secondary school. The books were generally co-authored by one inspector and either a Conseiller Pédagogique or a practising teacher (eg. Béji and Mestiri-Meherzi 1996, Ben Abdallah and Bousalem 1997, Mezzi et al. 1999).

A typical lesson is made up of a series of tasks to be carried out mostly in pairs or in groups. The different tasks in one lesson build up step by step the language items to be learnt. A main feature is the use of pictures that help learners guess by association the meaning of new vocabulary items and perhaps deduce the grammar rules by themselves. All pictures included were taken in a Western context. The characters in
the books are icons of show business like Michael Jackson, Roch Voisine, Kevin Costner, the Spice Girls, and the like, and of the world of sports like André Agassi, Michael Jordan, and controversial Mike Tyson. This was perhaps the writers’ idea of immersing Tunisian pupils in the target culture. In terms of exercise typology there are plenty of transfer exercises from text to charts, text to diagrams, mind maps to text and vice versa (see Appendix 3.8 and 3.9). Opportunities for interaction are created predominantly through pair work while group work activities are rare. In *Say it in English, 8th Form*, I found three activities indicated as ‘groupwork’. In *Say it in English 9th Form*, the first group work activity is found in lesson 11 and altogether there are three ‘group-work’ activities. These group-work activities are designed as information gap exercises. It is noticeable that these activities are supposed to be carried out by a Group A and a Group B with Group B checking at the end of the activity whether their guesses were right. This situation leads one to wonder why the book writers chose this format. Is it because they do not believe in the use of groupwork or is it because they are conscious of the problems involved in the Tunisian context? It can be argued, however, that teachers will still be able to use the material as group-work, if they wish, but the fact the textbook writers do not enforce their use is surprising. The data in this study will give more insights into this aspect of the innovation (see section 8.2).

In this chapter I have described the context of the study starting from the general and moving to the more specific. I have given an overview of changes in the economic situation, in the educational situation, and finally in ELT. Though this account is far from exhaustive, it helps shed light on a number of issues that have added to the complexity of teaching English in the classroom. The classroom is but a microcosm of society and factors affecting it at the macro level are bound to have bearings on the educational process at the micro level. As explained in chapter one, the focus of the study is on a number of EFL teachers in the Tunisian school context. To gain more insights into the background of the participants in the study, a brief outline of the teacher preparation process will be provided in the next chapter. It is, I believe, by examining what kind of training practice has been put in place in Tunisia that the views of teachers can be better understood and interpreted.
CHAPTER FOUR

ASPECTS OF THE TEACHER EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN TUNISIA

The aim of this chapter is to trace the salient developments that contributed to shaping the current TED system in Tunisia. I will attempt to identify its underlying philosophy, its structure, and established procedures with special reference to the ‘training’ and ‘re-training’ of EFL teachers. As the historical preview will indicate, there is no initial training per se in Tunisia despite recent positive developments in English departments (Abdesslem 1992, Daoud 1999). On the whole, the TED system in Tunisia can be described as consisting of three phases: (i) an academic education phase, (ii) a professional training phase, and (iii) a re-training and further training phase. I will employ intentionally the terms ‘training’ and ‘re-training’ with the connotations they evoke as an approach and associated procedures (see section 2.2). The term formation continue (FC) is used in Tunisia as an umbrella term for ‘re-training’ and ‘further training’. The term ‘stage’ is used to refer to the professional training course given to newly-recruited teachers at the end of which they are normally granted teacher status (‘titularisation’). I will conclude the chapter by discussing the ‘training’ and FC policy, approach and procedures in the light of the challenges arising from the goals of the ELT curriculum and the sort of teachers it requires for its implementation.

4.1 THE TEACHER EDUCATION MODEL

The first attested attempts to establish a system for the education and training of primary school teachers in Tunisia can be traced back to the time of the French Protectorate (1981-1956). Jerad (1986) and Chamam (1978) documented that from 1883 until World War II, primary school teachers in Tunisia were trained with the
same organisation and course content as that of the *Ecole Normale des Instituteurs* (ENI) in France. After WWII, the French renewed interest in training primary school teachers and instituted a course consisting of three years of academic education and one year of pedagogical training. Figure 4.1, represents schematically the structure of the TE course in the ENI. The academic component focused on general academic education in terms of subject-matter and the professional component focused on pedagogical (technical) skills. The same system was extended in 1885 to the training of secondary school teachers.

**Figure 4.1: The structure of the education and training of primary school teachers in place at the ENI until 1989 (based on Jerad 1986)**

The professional course was made up of two types of input: theoretical input in the form of a course called ‘psychopédagogie’ taught in the third year followed by a *practicum* in a model school in the final year. Thus, the TE model of primary school teachers was conceptualised as a progression from a theoretical component in terms of subject-matter to a pedagogical component that is a theory/practice dichotomy. During the school placement, the student teacher was required to teach ten to fifteen hours of classroom teaching under the supervision of an inspector and/or *conseiller pédagogique* in a model school.

When the Tunisian government considered establishing a TED system, the French EN model was a plausible option. In 1956, the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* (ENS) was created to provide education and training for prospective teachers of secondary school subjects like Arabic, History, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and English. Just one year after the 1958 educational reform the Tunisian ENI was established as part of the legislation for higher education (*Secrétariat d'État*
à l'Éducation Nationale 1959), following the model of the French ENI (Figure 4.1). However, the outlets of the EN were not sufficient to meet the demands of an expanding system of education. Therefore, ever since the first years of the institution of the educational system, the Ministry of Education had to resort to teachers educated by other routes (Cheniti 1988, Jerad 1986, Bousnina 1991). In 1961, a system of 'élèves moniteurs' was set up and four additional EN annexes which recruited students from the professional and middle school streams were opened in ordinary secondary schools. Despite these efforts, EN-trained teachers represented only 18% of the total number of teachers in 1965-1966 (Sraieb 1974, Bousnina 1991). The remaining came from a general secondary education background with either a 'Brevet' or a Baccalaureat as well as from the Zitouna Mosque 'traditional' educational background with the 'Tahcil' diploma (see Figure 4.2). Upon recruitment, the teachers coming from a non-EN route were given on-the-job professional training to which was added a theoretical component in 1964. This supplement consisted of lectures to upgrade the teachers' subject knowledge. The practice component for with the 'Tahcil' consisted literally of an 'apprenticeship'. They were required to sit in classes with an experienced teacher for three lessons a day and to teach the same class once a week (Secretariat of State for Education 1963).

**Figure 4.2: Non-EN routes to primary school teacher status instituted since the 1958 reform (based on Bousnina 1991)**

- General Secondary Education
  - (Baccalaureat/Brevet)
- Traditional Education at Zitouna
  - (Tahcil)
- One-year Professional Training
- Teacher Status
To supply teachers for the middle schools the *École Normale des Professeurs Adjoints* (ENPA) was created. Admitted to this school were students with a Baccalaureat from the general education stream or students with a diploma from professional/technical education streams. In 1973, this institution was replaced by the *École Normale Supérieure de l'Enseignement Technique* (ENSET), which recruited its students solely from among Baccalaureat holders.

Based on the brief outline above, primary school teachers came from either an ENI or some other non-ENI route, for Middle Schools from the ENPA and those for Secondary Education from an ENS/ENSET or other routes. The *Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines* was created in 1962 and soon afterwards teachers for Secondary Education began to be supplied from a *Faculté* route as well. A Bachelor Degree (BA) from a *Faculté* guaranteed a job as a secondary school teacher in one specialised subject. As non-EN new recruits to teaching, the non-EN newly recruited teachers were compelled to follow a two-year professional training provided by the Ministry of Education (see Figure 4.3). I will describe this course in more detail in section 4.2. The same course division into theoretical and professional components was used for secondary school teacher training.

**Figure 4.3: The two routes to secondary school teacher status**

*(based on Ministry of Education 1981)*
In 1989-1990, the ENI and the ENS were discontinued. The reasons were not disclosed, but cutting spending is a likely reason. EN students used to be paid an allowance equal to a teacher's salary during their schooling at EN and were guaranteed a job upon graduation from the EN. It can be hypothesised that the discontinuation of the EN fell under the policy of state disengagement mentioned in the previous chapter. In replacement for the ENI, the Ministry of Education created a number of *Instituts Supérieures pour la Formation des Maîtres* (ISFM) which recruited prospective primary teachers among Baccalaureat holders. The course at the ISFM is made up of a two-year subject(s)-specific courses followed by a two-year on-the-job professional training. The ENS was revived in 1996 under a new formula\(^\text{11}\). Students who have completed two years of university education can now sit for the *concours* to enter an ENS. Unlike the old formula, which used to be confined to secondary school level teaching, current ENS students can sit within three years for the *agrégation* exam and can pursue post-graduate research degrees\(^\text{12}\). This new ENS formula also includes a practicum in the form of placements in model preparatory and secondary schools. The ENS in its new version seems to be designed to train an *élite* for teaching and research in higher education. This might help alleviate the shortage of qualified teachers in higher education (World Bank 1998, Gharbi 1998, Daoud 2000) but the majority of prospective secondary and university level teachers will continue to come from a *Faculté* route for the years to come.

I have so far described the structure of the TED system as initiated at the time of French rule and by tracing a number of developments throughout the last four decades of the national teacher education/employment policy. Although the initial idea was to educate and train teachers in the ENI and the ENS, the EN was mainly conceived to educate and train a minority. The overwhelming majority of the badly needed teachers then entered the profession from a non-EN route, sometimes with less than adequate academic qualifications. Thus, the professional training course was an emergency measure to ensure pedagogical survival and performance to

\(^{11}\text{Law Decree 87 of 6 November 1996.}\)

\(^{12}\text{Law Decree 449 of 3 March 1997.}\)
minimum standards. Two disconnected phases resulted from this pragmatic solution; namely, an academic education phase followed by a professional training phase. It also lost the framework of partnership and collaboration that existed between the Ministry, the ENI/ENS and schools. Under the present circumstances, entry into teaching is a 'sink or swim' operation. Moreover, a minimum requirement to enter teaching was not always enforced. To this day, the Ministry of Education resorts to holders of the next lower diploma and even to students who have, willingly or unwillingly, interrupted their higher education studies. This is the case nowadays for school subjects like French, Natural Science and Mathematics (Chraiet 1998).

Until recently, the issue of teacher qualifications was not addressed. The normal practice was then that a degree in a given school subject area was sufficient guarantee to obtain a job in teaching. A development that can be considered an attempt to monitor teacher qualifications was the introduction in 1997 of an open entry exam named CAPES (Concours d'Aptitude au Professorat de L'Enseignement Secondaire) as a selection procedure. At first, the acronym caused confusion due to a similar acronym in the French system. While the Tunisia CAPES is a selection procedure, the French CAPES (Certificat d'Aptitude au Professorat de l'Enseignement du Second Degré) is a certification course (Holyoake 1993, Zay 1998). The Ministry has recently delegated a number of institutions of higher learning the task of setting up preparatory courses for the CAPES exam. This is a significant development though it will largely depend on what will be on offer in these courses and most importantly, what the CAPES is meant to measure. The first CAPES test for EFL teacher candidates, for instance, included language proficiency tasks, a pronunciation exercise and an essay on the qualities of the teacher (Ben Afia 1998, Jaoua 1998).

Moreover, Mr Ennaifar, Director of the Curriculum Department, drew my attention during the interview to a recently prepared document at the Inspectorate entitled A List of Teacher's Competencies (see original in Appendix 4.1 and accompanying full translation). This document is of interest as being an attempt to address a
fundamental question about teacher qualifications. It is not clear which of these qualities are meant to be developed at university and which are intended to be developed on the job nor in what order these qualities should be developed.

4.2 THE INDUCTION OF NEWLY RECRUITED TEACHERS

The professional course for probationary teachers, commonly called the ‘stage’, was initially an intervention to train newly appointed non-EN teachers who lacked the necessary pedagogical skills. It is a standardised course format administered by the Department of Curriculum Development and Continuous Training (Direction Générale des Programmes et de la Formation Continue) and implemented by the subject inspectors attached to the different Regional Districts. Below is a brief description of the procedures used.

The professional training course as it stands today is a replication of the EN practicum (see section 4.1). As pointed out earlier, the overall structure of the EN course was established during the first years of the application of the first school reform in 1958 (Ministry of Education 1963a, 1963b). Judging from descriptions in subsequent Ministry publications, the Stage as a requirement remained unchanged over the years (Ministry of Education 1981, 1984, 1989). According to a publication by the Secretariat of State for Education (1963a: 62), the course for secondary level teachers established in 1959 had two concurrent components: a theoretical component and a practical component. The theoretical component consisted of lectures held at the Centre National de Recherches et d'Etudes Pédagogiques (National Centre for Studies and Research in Education) and the practical component of ‘demonstration lessons’ and supervisory support. Trainees have to document the practical component in a training log (‘cahier de stage’) and upon completion of the theoretical component, to undertake a research project dealing with an issue related to pedagogy. The two components used to be run concurrently which is no longer the case now.
On the year of the introduction of the latest educational reform (1995-1996), a circular\(^{13}\) (see Appendix 4.2 for original text and accompanying translation) was issued to enforce the standard form of training provided during the two probationary years. The five-page document is of interest as it includes an up-dated description and explanation of the procedures currently followed throughout the country for all probationary teachers and all subjects. The description of the components of the *stage* has been condensed into table format for easier reference (see Table 4.1).

During the first year *stage*, a schedule for all the sessions is planned by the different subject trainers at the regional level (see sample in Appendix 4.3). The sessions are run by the inspector assisted by *conseillers pédagogiques* and/or *professeurs formateurs* (see section 4.5 for more details about the training personnel). The ‘demonstration lessons’ are generally carried in neighbouring schools by practising teachers with their usual classes. However, it is recommended that the majority of the sessions be held in a ‘demonstration lesson’ format, which downplays the value of alternative interactional procedures.

**Table 4.1: Current stated requirements and practices (based on Circular 49/95)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>PROCEDURES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIRST YEAR</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8 to 15 training sessions</td>
<td>‘Demonstration lesson’ and discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘<em>Cahier de Stage</em>’</td>
<td>Workshops (or combination of both)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>2 to 3 visits with prior notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback report on performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SECOND YEAR</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5 additional training sessions</td>
<td>‘Demonstration lessons’, workshops,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lectures, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research project (mémoire)</td>
<td>20-30 pages on topic determined by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trainer/chosen by trainee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection</td>
<td>Visit without prior notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluative report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{13}\) Circular 49/95 issued July 1995.
Another essential element of the first year *stage* is assistance to the probationary teacher in the form of supervisory visits, post-observation discussion and written feedback on performance. There are two or three of these formative assistance visits throughout the school year. These visits referred to as ‘*visites d’assistance*’ are crucial for the development of the probationary teachers (see section 6.2 for the teachers’ views) and the trainers themselves. The low trainer-trainee ratio and many other logistic problems are the reasons behind the limited opportunities for trainers to provide the needed support (see section 4.5 on the training personnel). A standardised form is employed for all subjects and for all supervisory visits (see sample in Appendix 4.4). The same standard form is used to report on ‘assistance visits’ and ‘inspection visits’. The report covers six categories:

1. *Description of the lesson*: The trainer describes the lesson observed (reading, writing, speaking, etc.)

2. *Pedagogy*: The trainer comments on the extent to which the objectives of the lesson are conform to the curriculum specifications, the teacher’s method, management techniques, the use of the blackboard, learner involvement, and so on.

3. *Content*: The trainer/inspector comments on the accuracy of subject-specific content knowledge and command of the medium of instruction.

4. *General organisation of course content*: The trainer/inspector comments on the pupils’ progress in the programme, the lesson plan and the quality of pupils’ notebooks, on-going assessment, and so on.

5. *Further training needs*: The trainer appraises the teacher’s pedagogical skills and identifies further training needs.

The introduction of a standard report form reflects the Ministry’s concern with rationalisation of the process of teacher evaluation. From the type of categories included it can be inferred that the focus is on the structure, content and implementation of a lesson plan in a rational way. Underlying the pedagogical skills it intends to identify is an assumption about a standard means-end type of lesson. The observer is meant to focus on the distribution and sequence of curriculum content and of the lesson. It presumes a homogenised progress through the course content by all teachers and all pupils. All the teaching skills under category 2 (pedagogy) and 4 (general organisation of course content) imply a conception of the lesson as a curricular unit and as the implementation of a method (Prabhu 1992). This perspective is typical of ‘scientific’ models of teaching (Zahorik 1986) that see teaching as a collection of procedures and techniques that are amenable to the implementation of a pre-determined plan. The problems of this model arise mainly from its limitations in catering for individual student needs, and also, in giving expression to the idiosyncratic in teaching (Elbaz 1983). It presumes that all teachers teach in a similar way and all learners learn in a similar way. The teacher is consciously applying a teaching plan in a dispassionate way and the learner is powerless in the teaching/learning situation (see Allwright 1984 for a critique of this position). In brief, the lesson is not perceived as a social event. None of the categories cover this aspect of the teaching/learning situation.

In the second year of the stage, the probationary teacher is required to engage in a small research project called ‘mémoire de fin de stage’ the purpose of which is spelled out in the circular as follows:

" (The pedagogical research project) deals with topics mainly related to subject-specific pedagogy whereby difficulties in the process of gaining pedagogical expertise can be tackled. It can also consist of developing teaching aids, materials, or a series of lesson plans..." (Circular 49/95: 3)

(My translation)

The ‘mémoire’, the common name for this requirement, is meant to be practice-oriented in the aim of helping the trainee overcome a problem she might be experiencing in the process of acquiring expertise (see a sample of proposed topics in
Appendix 4.5). Ideally, the mémoire as a component adds an ‘education’ touch to the predominately vocational character of the first year stage (see also section 2.3 for the arguments in favour a ‘holistic’ approach to TED). Although the theoretical dimension of undertaking research was overlooked in the circular, it would only be logical to presume that an information base is unavoidable. Thus, the research project would contribute to enhancing the trainee’s awareness and understanding of a particular teaching-related issue and contemplate on its applicability in classroom situations. The mémoire as a component of the professional course is meant to be an opportunity to develop abilities to engage in pedagogical ‘mediation’ defined by Widdowson (2000b) as follows:

“(...)he principle of mediation applies more generally to the relationship between any disciplinary discourse and the areas of its potential applicability, between abstraction and the actuality of experience” (31).

Though not all teachers benefit from this experience as revealed in the data (see section 6.2.3), it is an opportunity to read the theory in the area related to the topic assigned.

The end of course qualification criteria are also fixed in the circular. A probationary teacher’s case is considered for ‘titularisation’ (tenure) at the end of the second year. Taken into account in the decision are the probationary teacher’s attendance/participation in the training sessions, the quality of the Cahier de Stage and the mémoire and especially her performance during the ‘inspection visit’. The school principals’ opinion is also sought to gain an idea of the teacher’s administrative standing and relationship with the administration, parents and students. A trainee is confirmed if the marks for the mémoire and the ‘inspection visit’ are satisfactory (at least 10/20 each). In case where a trainee fails either of the two components, she will be required to repeat the one failed. The regulation as spelled out in the circular is that she will either be required to repeat the research project or be inspected again. It is possible, though rare, that a probationary teacher is turned down after the third discretionary year. In that situation, a specific administrative procedure can be envisaged. The teacher in question will be observed...
by a jury formed by the teacher's inspector and two practising teachers nominated by the Regional Administrative Office to take a final decision on the fate of that teacher.

To recapitulate, the Stage as a process for 'training' probationary teachers is a systematised procedure that has as its primary objective the standardisation and 'homogenisation' of practice. The course suffers from a heavy behaviourist bias, as evidenced by the privileged position of the 'demonstration lesson' at the expense of other interactive delivery procedures (e.g. workshop) and also by the view of teaching as behaviour and learning to teach as achieved through observation, repeated practice and 'trial and error'. Modelling also implies that a 'correct' way of teaching is being illustrated and that all the trainee has to do is to emulate it. I pointed out at the end of chapter two (see section 2.4) that a number of researchers and teacher educators do recognise the need for novice teachers to master the 'tricks of the trade'. Therefore, teacher educators need to cater for the craft dimension of teaching but prescribing that the majority of the sessions be held in 'demonstration lesson' format does emphasise a view of learning to teach as an apprenticeship process. Not only that, the solution proposed for uncertified teachers was to observe more lessons in the following year as if observing others teach were the only form of human learning. The 'sitting with Nellie' formula highly appreciated by the policy makers stems from a view of teaching as behaviour and learning to teach as 'copying' the 'wise village elder'. However, this system is merely a socialisation process that, perhaps, ensures pedagogical survival but perpetuates a static teaching style. This is a system which can be relevant if one starts from the assumption that teachers are not intelligent thinkers, if learners have no influence on teaching, if society is unchanging and its educational needs are static. It takes only a little common sense to conclude that such a model of teacher learning breeds continuous dependence on further models and 'new' ready-made solutions whenever there is a change of any sort in the teaching situation.

The rationale for the cahier de stage was, as stated in an early Ministry of Education document, to help the trainee determine what she learnt from the 'demonstration
lesson' (Secretariat of State 1963a). From this perspective, the task of compiling the cahier de stage was to engage the trainee in 'reflection'; that is, to articulate their ideas about teaching in the light of the lesson observed. However, on the basis of my own experience and the consultation of a number of Cahiers de Stage, it seems that the task of compiling it has slipped into a repetitive task. The trainees are now required to reproduce the content of the observed lessons and the discussions following them. In this way, what is written in the cahier de stage for the trainer to read is merely a repetition except for one paragraph or two following the report on each lesson in which the trainee expresses her personal view. The kind of information trainers really need is an understanding of the trainee’s personal thinking about the lesson, teaching, the teacher, the learners, the teaching materials, and so on (see section 2.4.1).

The mémoire has the potential of expanding into a proper AR component but it seems that trainees are left to their dispositions and intuition in this process. Though the trainers are there to advise and coach the trainee, there is no provision for developing long-lasting skills in classroom-oriented research methods of the type mentioned in Allwright and Bailey (1991), for instance. In my view, the way things are in the Tunisian ‘training’ situation, the mémoire is bound to be perceived and performed as the application of ‘theoretical’ ideas picked from whatever books available and applied in the classroom just for the sake of completing the project. Indeed, it might not be necessary to consult any literature if the task is to plan a number of teaching units. If any reflection is to take place at all, it will at best be at the ‘technical’ level (Van Manen 1977). Although this might be a good start for a beginner teacher as argued by Calderhead (1990) and McIntyre (1993), the question remains whether this is an adequate start for teachers to progress to higher levels of reflection on their own.

Therefore, the training course provided for probationary teachers is based on two different approaches. During the first probationary year is practice-oriented while the second year is theory-oriented. The possible mismatch between the provision in the
first year and the knowledge acquired through the mémoire do not seem to be considered. The above views have been reached starting from my own experience as trainee, conversations with colleagues, examination of a number of completed research mémoires and interview data from the participants in this study which will be discussed in depth in chapter six. The data will show that the teachers do not share my views on the limitations of the mémoire but there is evidence that it is undertaken from a 'theory applied' perspective (see section 6.2.3).

4.3 THE 'FORMATION CONTINUE'

The term formation continue is used in Tunisia as an umbrella term to denote the retraining and further training of practising teachers. A survey of government reports on developments in education revealed that little attention was paid to the issue of in-service education except when there was a reform to be implemented. In the early 1960s, at a time when the 1958 school reform was being implemented, a number of events were held for furthering the knowledge and skills of practising teachers. These were in the form of conferences, courses in ‘psychopédagogie’, monthly seminars, and classroom observation. At that time there was mostly concern with upgrading the educational level of primary school teachers many of whom, as explained above, entered teaching with insufficient qualifications and without training. It appears that the Teachers’ Union at that time was also active in the process and that individual teachers took the initiative by presenting ideas and materials they had developed themselves (Secrétariat d’Etat à l’Education 1963: 11). There is no sign of such involvement at present. Throughout the decades the system focused more on more on the probationary teachers with in-service provision only activated when there is a major school reform, change in programmes or medium of instruction.

Another instance of the FC process being activated by reforms in education is the 1988-1990 report on developments in education which coincided with the launching
of the latest school reform. The report specifically emphasised the role of in-service education from a management of change perspective (Ministère de l'Éducation et de la Recherche Scientifique 1990). The aims of the FC were stated as follows:

- To help teachers keep up with the rapid changes in knowledge and techniques related to their field;
- To help teachers adapt to changes in teaching methods and techniques specific to their field; and
- To help teachers adjust to changes introduced in the official programmes.

The overriding philosophy underlying the FC emerges from the two instances above as an in-service training intervention geared towards 'up-dating' the teachers' knowledge and bringing about change in their practice.

The planning for FC intervention is 'top-down'. Mr Ennaifar Mustapha (Ennaifar 1998), Director of the FC department, clarified that the content and procedures are planned by taking into account three primary documents: (i) the 1991 Law Decree defining the goals and objectives of the system of education, (ii) the profile of the 'ideal' teacher (see Appendix 4.1), and (ii) the annual reports written by the subject inspectors about the teaching situation and teachers in their own discipline. Subject-specific sources of reference for the planners are the school subject syllabi and the nature of the teaching materials (i.e. the textbooks) designed to 'translate' them. Moreover, Mr Ennaifar pointed out that there are national-level situations when this usual process is influenced by certain imperatives such as change in curricula. The new demands of the situation will be given priority in the process of planning. Mr Ennaifar added that the annual reports prepared by subject inspectors/trainers focus mainly on the degree of professional competence they sensed/witnessed while observing teachers performing in the classroom. Therefore, the recurrence of particular deficiencies in teacher performance across the country signals a particular general problem to be included in the FC agenda for the following academic year. Each team of school subject trainers will determine a number of themes that are
likely to deal with priority concerns arising in the teaching situation. Once a consensus is reached about the major foci of the national-level programme provision in a particular subject, the topics of national seminars will be fixed. As for the local level, the different subject trainers will have to work out a schedule for workshops, seminars and conferences (regional and national) to be organised throughout the academic year at district level following the national focus.

Mr Ennaifar, on the other hand, recognised that the institution was not exploring the views of the teachers in a systematic way. He reflected on a possible study that might uncover the teachers' needs. He outlined the focus and method of the study in the following terms:

S'il ya une étude ou une recherche qui est menée par le Ministère de l'Education Nationale par le canal de l'Institut des Sciences de l'Education...Donc, là il peut par exemple à la suite d'une évaluation générale des niveaux, une exploitation des résultats des élèves dans les examens ou dans les établissements..elle peut nous permettre de signaler et prendre compte de certaines insuffisances et donc à partir de ça, on va réfléchir sur des programmes de remédiation..Il peut y avoir des nouveautés qui peuvent être introduites soit dans les programmes soit par le biais de la formation et donc, qui vont demander par le biais de séminaires, un surplus de formation. (Ennaifar Mustapha 1998)

If a research study is carried out by the Ministry of Education via the National Institute for Educational Research...following a general evaluation of the levels of achievement, an exploitation of student results in national exams or at school level, we will then be able to signal and spot certain limitations; and starting from there, we can think out remediation programmes. Innovations can then be introduced at the level of the syllabus or through professional training and thus will require the provision of supplementary training. (My translation)

Though Mr Ennaifar had in mind taking into consideration the teachers' perspectives, this type of research methodology cannot, in my view, be expected to yield the type of insights that serve the intended purpose. It is true that the main concern of in-service education is to improve teaching, and consequently, learning but the improvement of teaching and learning depend on a number of variables of which the teacher is one. Change in teacher practice without change in attitudes and beliefs is unlikely to produce long-lasting change (Richardson 1990a). Without attempting to uncover the teachers' beliefs and attitudes, the FC will only address the superficial
level of teacher change. Underlying this process of planning for FC provision, is a ‘defect’ view of the teacher. As explained by Rubin (1971), this approach

"...begins with a judgement of weaknesses, usually diagnosed by an outsider, and proceeds to suggest a remedy for correcting that weakness, usually through a training program designed to change specific aspects of the teacher's behavior in the classroom" (25).

His ideas summarised in Table 4.2 show that there is a clear parallel between the approach to FC in Tunisia and the ‘defect’ view though it can be justified on grounds of ‘efficiency’ of the institution in producing the ‘necessary’ change in teachers to meet curricula requirements.

Table 4.2: The ‘defect’ and the ‘growth’ view of teacher development

(based on Rubin 1971)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>'Defect' View</th>
<th>'Growth’ View</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Up-dating</td>
<td>- Help teachers ‘understand’ problems occurring in their classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Repair</td>
<td>- Help teachers ‘frame’ and ‘reframe’ their ideas about practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Change of previous behaviour to match new ‘norms’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of delivery</td>
<td>Demonstration and modelling</td>
<td>Exploration of alternative courses of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions about teachers</td>
<td>Deficient Unable to keep up with change(s)</td>
<td>Active participants and agents of change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, the Tunisian model as it stands suffers from the problems of ‘scientific’ models which do not make allowance for multiple interpretations of teaching and give priority to the goals of the institution rather than those of individual teachers. Such models can be criticised for focusing on conditioning teachers into a particular pedagogical model external to them. The danger of such an approach is that it suppresses reflexivity and encourages conformity.
4.4 THE CASE OF EFL TEACHERS

Teachers of English are now educated in English departments within the Facultés or within the *Institut Supérieur des Langues*[^1]. A bachelor degree is normally the minimum academic qualification to be considered for a teaching position. Previously teachers of English either came from the ENS or the *Faculté*. The content of the BA degree (*Maîtrise*) syllabus in the two types of institutions was similar as the *Faculté des Lettres* syllabus was in fact designed after that of the ENS (Salhi 1984). For a short time back in the 1970s, the Tunisian authorities resorted to expatriate teachers. These were American, English, Irish, Palestinian, and Pakistani. The Tunisian EFL teachers at that time came from three different backgrounds:

(i) graduates with a BA degree in English from the *Faculté des Lettres*,

(ii) graduates with a BA degree from the *ENS*, and

(iii) graduates with a two-year diploma of university studies from an English department.

Currently, all teachers of English are Tunisian and educated in six different English departments in Tunis, Sousse, Kairouan, and Sfax. Until recently, EFL teachers came into teaching with no prior ‘training’ in teaching. In July 1996, a three-day initial training course was organised for around 300 EFL teacher candidates but the experience has not been repeated. During the three days, lectures and presentations given mainly by senior trainers and *conseillers pédagogiques* were held in the morning and workshops in the afternoons. The morning sessions focused on the new orientations of the English curriculum and issues of methodology while the

[^1]: New name for *Institut Bourguiba des Langues Vivantes* (also IBLV)
workshops dealt with lesson planning and the teaching of specific language skills using materials from the new textbooks (at that time *Say it in English*).

The ‘Nouvelle Maîtrise Unifiée’ syllabus introduced in 1994-1995 is a uniform modular course taught in the English medium. The *Maîtrise* syllabus is divided into four main areas of content under which the core modules are grouped (see Appendix 4.6). In Table 4.3, the content has been tabulated in brief. There is no discussion of the issue of language variety at the syllabus level but there have been attempts on the part of individuals in different departments to introduce a World Englishes perspective to the syllabus in literature. On the whole, duality in focus on the United States and Great Britain remains a strong feature of ELT provision at university and in secondary schools.

**Table 4.3: The core curriculum of the *Maîtrise* in English**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LITERATURE</td>
<td>Fiction, drama, poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIVILISATION</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Studies/Aspects of Culture and Government (US and GB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LINGUISTICS</td>
<td>Theoretical Linguistics and some allied subjects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic language skills are given special attention during the first two years. Linguistics was introduced as a subject in the late seventies as an introductory course in descriptive linguistics with emphasis on morphology and philology (Salhi 1984) but now has expanded into the ‘allied disciplines’ (e.g. Psycholinguistics and Sociolinguistics). Within the framework of the new *Maîtrise* curriculum, a number of new courses like computer literacy, commercial translation, scientific English, ESP, and business English have been introduced. These subjects are now on offer as an attempt to prepare English majors for jobs other than in teaching; namely, in business and services. As observed by the participants in a conference on English in Tunisia, there
is growing demand for English in Tunisia (Jabeur et al. 1999) and mostly for specialised language skills (see also Daoud 2000).

Another important development was the introduction of an Applied Linguistics component as part of the reformed Maîtrise curriculum. The general approach to this component is reminiscent of Alatis' (1974) and Strevens' (1977) models (see chapter two, section 2.3). Thus, subjects like Socio-linguistics, Psycholinguistics (also Language Acquisition), Syllabus Design and English for Specific Purposes are currently on offer. A course in ELT has also become compulsory. Despite the differences in appellations given to this course (Applied Linguistics, TEFL Methodology or ELT), it consists mainly of a survey of the major twentieth century 'methods' (Grammar Translation, Audio-lingual, Natural Approach, Communicative Language Teaching, etc.) as well as a brief introduction to notions of classroom management and organisation. Students are introduced to lesson planning and procedures and techniques for teaching individual skills. The number of contact hours allocated to this subject (two hours a week) and the assessment procedures planned (a three-hour written exam), however, make the course less amenable to emphasis on practical teaching skills. Opportunities for practice in school settings are rare but university-based teachers are resorting to video viewing, peer teaching, and Micro-teaching to circumvent the problem.

Departments of English also arrange for a Language Stay (‘stage linguistique’) for final year students. At present, the formula consists of a six-week stay in Britain. The content and focus of the courses offered to students during their stay differs from year to year but students are generally given tuition in English in the mornings with a parallel cultural/social programme in the evenings and at weekends. In recent time, this particular component has become a heavy financial burden on the Faculté budgets, mainly as a result of the increasing numbers of students. Consequently, the duration of the Language Stay has been shortened over the years from one year to six

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15 One colleague managed to arrange for a series of observation sessions in her ex-school. Students at IBLV negotiate individually with ex-teachers, friends and/or relatives to observe and record data.
months, to three months, to twelve weeks, to ten weeks, and recently to six weeks. It now lasts no more than ten weeks. Previous programmes like the ‘French Assistant’ scheme in Britain and links with the United States (Louisiana and Minnesota) are no longer in operation.

The professional training of EFL teachers is carried out according to the general scheme described in section 4.2 and section 4.3. The introduction of a new curriculum in 1995-1996 and new textbooks meant an increase in ‘training’ and ‘retraining’ activity. An examination of a number of schedules for the first year stage (see Appendix 4.5) revealed that the general trend is to use ‘observation lessons’ to illustrate the teaching of individual skills (reading/writing, listening/speaking) and workshops/presentations to deal with issues related to ‘input’, focusing on the implementation of particular procedures such as planning for collaborative activities, testing fluency, and using visuals (see Appendix 4.3).

National seminars usually focus on exposing teachers to ‘new’ ideas in their particular discipline while the more regular local level Study Days (Journées Pédagogiques) generally tackle methodological/pedagogical issues perceived to be related to curriculum implementation. Visiting foreign specialists16 (from Britain or America each seminar) and the local trainers of English participate in running these seminars. The national seminars for English language teachers in 1997-1998 dealt with themes such as cooperative learning (see Appendix 4.7) and teacher development (interview data). CREFOCs (Centre for Research and Continuous Training) in five different regions hosted between fifty and fifty-five practising teachers. Workshops are more and more in use especially on Study Days and these involve teachers in designing teaching activities, tests and developing teaching materials.

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16 The British Council and the United States Information Service regularly sponsor foreign specialists.
4.5 THE TRAINING PERSONNEL

There are three categories of teacher trainers in Tunisia: Inspectors, Conseillers Pédagogiques, and Professeurs Formateurs. The Inspectors can be grouped under three administrative ranks: Inspector General (inspecteur général), Principal Inspector (inspecteur principal), and Inspector (inspecteur). There were all in all 16 fully accredited inspectors of English at the time of data collection (1998). As the population of English language teachers has increased dramatically from 1321 teachers in 1994-1995\(^\text{17}\) to 3040 in 1999-2000, the trainer-trainee ratio is now as low as one trainer to every 167 teachers. The conseillers pédagogiques are generally experienced teachers chosen by their respective inspectors for excellence in teaching and (perhaps) enthusiasm for training. They are entrusted with the supervision of probationary teachers but do not carry out inspection visits. In return, they benefit from a reduction in contact hours and usually stand good chances of passing the exam to become inspectors thanks to the hands-on experience they have acquired as conseillers. The population of conseillers is volatile as the Inspector may not require the assistance of that Conseiller for the next academic year or perhaps spot a better-suited teacher. The professeurs formateurs are ‘benevolent’ teachers who assist in the preparation and, at times, delivery of training ‘input’. Apart from personal professional growth and the possibility of being invited to take part in trainer-training courses in Tunisia and in Britain (personal communication with trainers), the professeurs formateurs did not at the time of data collection (1998) benefit from a reduction in teaching hours. Like the conseillers the experience in itself can increase their chances of being admitted to the ‘concours d’inspecteur’ if their motivation and interest are sustained.

Inspectors are in charge of the training and supervision of the teachers appointed in the schools that fall under the jurisdiction of the particular Directions Régionales de l’Enseignement (Regional Office for Education) to which they are attached. The

\(^{17}\) Source: Ministry of Education Statistics.
duties and prerogatives of inspectors were stated in a Law Decree pertaining to the organisation of the system of education as follows:

"Le corps des inspecteurs est chargé de veiller à l'application des programmes fixés par le ministère, d'inspecter les enseignants, de superviser l'exécution des mesures relatives à leur vie professionnelle et de participer à la prise des décisions relatives aux programmes, au matériel didactique et à la formation des enseignants. Il peut également être chargé, par l'autorité de tutelle, de toute autre mission rentrant dans le cadre de ces attributions" (Loi n° 91-65 du 25 juillet 1991).

"Inspectors are entrusted with supervising the implementation of the curriculum fixed by the Ministry, inspecting teachers in classrooms and reinforcing decisions related to their professional life. Inspectors take part in the decision-making process related to programme design, the production of teaching materials and the training of teachers. They can be assigned any other task that might fall within their area of expertise" (Law Decree n° 91-65 of 25 July 1991). (My translation)

It can be gleaned from the above statement that the role of trainers/inspectors is expressed in terms of duties and prerogatives. Their duties are in close relation to the supervision of teaching and teachers:

(i) To supervise the implementation of the aims and objectives of the curriculum;

(ii) To train and inspect teachers;

(iii) To reinforce decisions pertaining to the teachers' professional life.

The prerogatives, the second aspect of their job description, give them power to influence decisions about curricula, material development and teacher training provision. Jaoua (1981) gave more details about their specific tasks related to their leadership role in ELT. In this area inspectors of English have to:

- Set subject-specific teaching objectives in accordance with the general goals of the educational system;
- Design the curriculum for English;
- Monitoring the timing and sequencing of programme delivery;
- Evaluate the pedagogical practices in place to analyse teacher needs;
- Evaluating teaching materials to provide additional support materials if need be;
- Set evaluation criteria and procedures (continuous assessment and final exams); and
- Preside over examination committees for national examinations in English.

In Zribi’s (1998) study, inspectors added other categories such as “building confidence and self-esteem in trainee teachers”, “enabling teachers to take initiative”, and “helping trainees implement the official programme in a personal way”. It is interesting that they added these particular aims which do not seem to have a place in the system neither in terms of approach nor procedures. These particular aims would be more in tune with a system that works from a ‘holistic’ perspective. Perhaps in this respect it is useful to draw a distinction between ‘espoused theories’ and ‘theories in-use’ (Strauss 1993). Though inspectors of English in Tunisia might not be against fostering reflection as a principle, they might at the level of practice act in such a way that is incongruent with these ‘espoused’ theories.

4.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter the teacher education tradition in Tunisia has been delineated. I focused on the structure of the system, the procedures in place and the values inherent in its procedures. I showed through the historical preview how the teacher education model ever since it was instituted was conceived as a vocational training intervention. The overall structure of the TED system bears a lot of resemblance with the French EN model. At present, the systems diverged in a number of ways as a number of reforms have been introduced in France to ‘modernise’ it (Holyoake 1993, Zay 1988). The Tunisian system, hampered mostly by financial constraints, developed more and more into an apprenticeship model. The theoretical input known
as psychopédagogie, for instance, has been dropped and no other formula was found to rescue teachers from the resulting state of ‘intellectual impoverishment’ (Widdowson 1993). It is for this reason that I intentionally used the terms ‘training’ and ‘in-service training’ for FC throughout my description.

The TED system is an insulated system. There is no attempt at making a linkage between academic provision and professional education. Instead, there seems to be a division of labour whereby the role of the university is confined to developing subject knowledge and that of the Ministry (the employer) to the provision of vocational training. The development of ‘expertise’ in teaching is thus viewed as a linear process along which subject matter knowledge is acquired at one stage and pedagogic skills at another. The type of collaboration that once existed between the ENS, the training institution and local schools never developed between the Facultés and the training institution. Now that the non-EN route to teaching has become the norm, there is great need for a vision to connect the different phases into a coherent TED system. A highly problematic aspect of this disconnected system is the absence of a ‘proper’ initial training phase at university level. Students come straight out of university departments into a vocationalised course that presents teaching as “routines, techniques and tactics” (Widdowson 1993: 268). In the case of EFL teachers in Tunisia, the ELT-related subjects provide a better foundation for teaching but hopes should not be raised too high as to the new teacher's ability to link theory and practice (Calderhead 1990). Indeed, the novice teachers are more likely to succumb for ‘what works’ and ‘what is acceptable’ and chuck away the theory learnt at university. It seems to me that there is a great need to move away from the ‘sitting with Nellie’ option and introduce more problem-solving activities to engage the novice teacher with the job and the environment at the mental level.

In-service training is practiced as a vehicle for curriculum implementation and teacher change. The role (and duty) of the inspectors/trainers is to ensure the official requirements are respected in terms of content and method of instruction and that the ‘appropriate’ testing procedures are being employed. A version of the appropriate/desirable pedagogy is thus passed down to teachers through
demonstration lessons, workshops, and seminars. The inspector's participation in the curriculum design and material production (i.e. textbooks), though enriched by their in-depth knowledge of classrooms, teachers and learners, makes their role in the implementation of change ambivalent. They are required to reinforce and evaluate the impact of the ideas they had themselves originated. Following the horizontal system and the positioning of the teacher within it, in-service training is mostly concerned with shaping and re-shaping the performance of teachers as wished by the institution rather than to bringing about 'growth' in teachers (Fullan 1995).

There is a contradiction in the system. The system of education is passing a reform that aims to develop reflective, self-directed, autonomous learning habits in pupils by teachers who are treated as moulding clay in the training situation. It is highly unlikely that teachers who are constantly 'told' and 'shown' what to do in their classes 'develop' as professionals able to “survive whenever there is a change, participate in the change or sometimes create the change” (Jaoua 1998). The view of in-service training as an intervention to prepare teachers to 'enact' change transforms teachers into 'guinea pigs' in the process of school reform (Hargreaves 1994). A diffusion perspective ensures that change be implemented and maintained (Markee 1997). The present research draws attention to the importance of understanding how teachers interact with the innovation at the level of theory and practice. By exploring the views of a number of EFL teachers I aim to provide guidelines for the design and provision of future TED programmes that start from a perspective of the teacher as translator of curricula. I believe a 'growth' perspective to in-service training to be a more promising alternative; but it is necessary to understand teachers before attempting to change them.
5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I intend to outline the ontological, epistemological and methodological principles that guided me in conceptualising, designing and undertaking this research project. I will first focus the discussion on issues related to the fundamental philosophical debate over research paradigms and their link to methods and strategies of enquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 1994). I will spell out my position as researcher vis-à-vis these issues and explain the motives behind the methodological choices in this project as well as the particular approach I adopted in analysing and interpreting the data to answer the research questions. As explained in the introduction chapter and throughout the last two chapters, this study focuses on the particular context of EFL and EFL TED in Tunisia. I pointed out in the introduction to this study that, considering the research aims addressed in this project, a qualitative type of data was believed to be more amenable to the task. Therefore, the methodological choices in this study were not made on the grounds of a choice between quantitative/qualitative methods. I agree with Hammersley (1992) and Denzin and Lincoln (1994) that ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ data contribute equally to the explanation of phenomena and ultimately to theory building. I will turn to this issue as I describe the perspective of the study and the procedures followed while collecting and handling the data in this study (section 5.3 and 5.4).

Furthermore, it will be difficult to claim that this research is ethnographic in the full sense. This research overlaps with ethnographic research only in the sense that it deals with the explanation of a phenomenon from the perspective of the main actors. It also concurs with ethnographic research in its focus on personal interpretations (the
emic) and the telling of the story ‘from within’ (Miller and Glassner 1997). However, it does not meet two essential requirements of ethnographic research: spending a long time with the participants observing them in different situations, and interviewing them a number of times. That level of depth alone ensures the provision of ‘thick description’ of the situation. This research is much more limited in scope than an ethnographic study. The teachers in the study were interviewed only once and, except for the encounter during the interview, I did not have any opportunity to explore other aspects of their life as teachers and persons. It is for this reason that I consider it more typical of a case study than an ethnographic study (Nunan 1992: 75). In that sense, it has the features of the case study format as defined by Yin (1994). He defines a case study as

> “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (13) (Emphasis added).

I used research strategies generally employed in case studies especially in the exploratory phase to acquire an understanding of the particular context. I referred to previous research in related areas, collected and analysed relevant official and semi-official documents to capture salient aspects of educational policy, interviewed officials and acted as a participant observer in training events. These efforts to explore and ‘map out’ the situation (Miles and Huberman 1994), fed into the description of the context in chapter 3 and 4. This strategy helped identify the current issues in ELT and TED in Tunisia that I focused on in this study.

Almost every resource book on research methodology contains a preamble emphasising the importance of becoming familiar with the ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinning of research ‘paradigms’ (or approaches) (eg. Seliger and Shohamy 1989, Denzin and Lincoln 1994, Scott and Usher 1996). Guba and Lincoln (1994) warned:

> “Paradigm issues are crucial; no inquirer, we maintain, ought to go about the business of inquiry without being clear about just what paradigm informs and guides his or her approach” (115).
They define a research paradigm as the set of beliefs that a researcher holds about the world. This set of beliefs, they maintain, defines for the researcher what is legitimate knowledge, whether it is achievable and what can be the most suitable way of going about finding it. From this perspective, undertaking research is a conscious process based on informed decisions regarding the perspectives and tools used to address the research problem (Davis 1995, Edge and Richards 1998). Breakwell (1995) and Scott and Usher (1996), however, present a different view asserting that a researcher's choice to focus on certain phenomena rather than others already is guided by their implicit and, at times, unconscious theories and values. That is, at the unconscious level a researcher's choice is determined by her worldview, shaped long before a researcher decides to undertake research. Past life experiences, personality, educational background, influential readings, and the like play a role in shaping this worldview. From my experience, the two levels are interconnected and it can be argued equally that conscious choices of the research area or topic can be made on pragmatic grounds. Possible 'pragmatic' motives nowadays are funding, political position, or attempts to circumvent difficult research circumstances. In this project, a number of 'pragmatic' decisions had to be taken that determined the methodology aspect and the data collection procedures employed though I tried to abide by the fundamental commitments congruent with my perspective. In my view, taking compromising positions about fundamental issues can put at risk the research 'warrant' (Edge and Richards 1998). Differences in perspective surround the answer to three questions in Guba and Lincoln's (1994) analysis. As they put them:

"Epistemology asks, How do we know the world? What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known? Ontology raises basic questions about the nature of reality. Methodology focuses on how we gain knowledge about the world (99)."

The answers to these questions clarify the researcher's position in relation to 'dominant' and 'competing' paradigms (Edge and Richards 1998). In section 4.4 and 4.5, I will attempt to answer the three questions as recommended by Guba and Lincoln (1994) to situate myself as a researcher while undertaking this research. My position will be contrasted with Positivism (the 'dominant' paradigm) and viewed in
the light of new concepts introduced by researchers functioning within 'competing' paradigms such as Naturalism and Ethnography. Challenges to the Positivist 'orthodoxy' have helped establish new criteria believed to better match enquiry in the human sciences. I will summarise these ideas in section 5.3.3.

5.2 POSITIVISM

'Positivism' (also 'scientism' and 'empiricism') is a theory of knowledge developed within the movement of Enlightenment in Europe in the 18th and 19th century as a reaction to the dominant belief that knowledge could be reached by common sense derived from everyday life experience or religious beliefs. Leading figures of this movement like Descartes (1596-1650) and Auguste Comte (1798-1857) questioned especially theology and the kind of knowledge it propagated among the laymen. Central to positivist thinking of the Enlightenment period, is a belief in the possibility of reaching a rational understanding of phenomena by freeing the mind of the inquirer from the elusive effect of inherited values and preconceived ideas. According to Cohen and Manion (1994), this very conviction laid the foundation for the development of the positivist tradition and its accompanying promise to improve the human condition.

The research process within the framework of the positivist tradition is rationalised and systematised. 'Systematisation' means that the enquirer makes a conscious effort to isolate the inter-related variables in order to examine them one by one. To prevent the researcher from influencing the research question, it was believed necessary to isolate the variables in emulation of the natural scientist studying objects in the laboratory as a precondition for the 'neutrality' of the researcher. Edge and Richards (1998) summarise the approach to research adopted by Positivists:
"(R)esearchers in this traditional, positivist paradigm see themselves as standing apart from the phenomena which they observe and investigate. Their own values are not involved in this objective inquiry, in which they manipulate the variables of a controlled experimental situation in order to test hypotheses regarding which causes have which outcomes" (336).

The typical research study starts with the formulation of a ‘theory’ and ends up by either confirming or refuting the proposed theory. Once the proposed ‘theory’ is tested and confirmed, it will serve as an explication of the witnessed phenomenon (Seliger and Shohamy 1989, Cohen and Manion 1994, Bryman and Cramer 1994, Scott and Usher 1996). The research process starts with the researcher observing a given phenomenon in order to elaborate a set of hypotheses (presuppositions) based on assumptions about the conditions of its occurrence and manifestations. Indeed, the generated hypotheses serve as guidelines for the research process (Bryman and Cramer 1994). The investigator then proceeds to a select which ones to focus on in the study. Depending on this selection, the researcher develops an idea about what kind of data is needed for the examination of the research problem. Accordingly, some type of data can be considered of high priority and another as unnecessary. Following the hierarchical ordering of data, the researcher turns to considering what type of subjects he/she needs to include in the study. The decision(s) related to the profiles of the research subjects will vary depending on whether an experimental or correlational/survey design is adopted. In experimental designs, the investigator deliberately controls, manipulates and determines the event and the conditions under which the data are to be collected to achieve what is known as ‘internal validity’. In the case of correlational/survey designs, the investigator collects informational and attitudinal data from a pre-determined (selected) population and seeks to elicit statistical relationships to relate the findings to significant factors.

Internal and external validity are central criteria within the positivist tradition. ‘Internal validity’ means “the degree to which findings correctly map the phenomenon in question” (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:100). It can be ensured by controlling the conditions surrounding the phenomenon and by justifying the findings through quantification and the application of laws of statistical probability. As
encapsulated by Cohen and Manion (1994), ‘evidence’ in this type of research tradition consists in collecting “data yielding proof or strong confirmation, in probability terms, of a theory or hypothesis in a research setting” (13). Thus, the technical aspect of the process is also meant to ensure ‘external validity’, which refers from a positivist perspective, to the ability of the researchers to ensure the generalisability and transferability of findings to other research contexts. Thomas (1998) described the ‘neat’ positivist research procedures thus:

“(Positivist research procedures) involve categorisation, crystallisation, codification, making things clear, taking a line, developing constructs through which the world can be viewed. They are logical, clear, tidy, parsimonious, rational, consistent” (142).

Within this frame, the researcher’s aims can be achieved by the rigorous application of the technicality of the research procedure. The individual researcher’s personal feelings or those of the subjects are not allowed to interfere in the research process to secure ‘Objectivity’. The researcher then is expected to resist any interfering personal biases stemming from interest, experience, gender, class, ethnicity and so on. This code of conduct expected of the researcher is believed to ensure ‘impartiality’ and by the same token, ‘scientism’. Guba and Lincoln (1994) summarised this view of the dispassionate, disinterested researcher within the positivist framework using the mirror metaphor:

“The received view of science pictures the inquirer as standing behind a one-way mirror, viewing natural phenomena as they happen and recording them objectively. The inquirer (when using proper methodology) does not influence the phenomena or vice versa” (107).

For the sake of ‘objectivity’ then the research participants, referred to as ‘subjects’ or ‘respondents’ in positivist discourse, are ‘silenced’ in the research process. Clearly, the view of the ‘impartiality’ of the researcher and the presumed helplessness of subjects depends on the belief system behind it. It is common practice, for instance, for researchers functioning within this type of research tradition not to inform the subjects about the real purpose of the study for fear this might affect the type of information they provide. From the perspective of the positivists, any deviation from the ‘objective’ and ‘scientific’ procedures outlined above is perceived as a threat to
the ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ of the research. Research that breaches these laws is
criticised as being ‘intuitive’ and ‘impressionistic’.

Writing about research in the field of language acquisition, Henning (1986)
embraced the ‘positivist’ stance by attributing scientific value to quantitative
procedures and highlighting what he perceived the ‘profound advantages’ of
resorting to quantification. He wrote:

"(Q)uantitative methods allow us to go beyond the identification and linear
description of language acquisition phenomena and to draw formal
inferences from the data about expected frequencies of occurrence, to assess
the likelihood that phenomena are generalizable beyond a given instance, or
to compare adequacies of existing theories and models to account for the
phenomena in question. Without some recourse to quantitative methods,
some marriage of words and numbers, it is inconceivable that the
investigation of language acquisition will ever be said to belong to the realm
of scientific inquiry" (702).

The ‘frequencies of occurrence’ mentioned by Henning (1986) in the quotation above
and the recourse to the laws of probability both stem from an assumption that
happenings in the world, and human behaviour within it, follow a certain
predetermined, predictable pattern. Thus, ‘evidence’ for this presumed regularity and
order can be confirmed by engaging in quantitative analysis and through the display
of statistical data.

In an earlier survey, Lazaraton (1995) noted optimistically that the number of
qualitative studies was increasing. Denzin (1994), in tum, hypothesised that research
was moving towards ‘competing’ paradigms:

"If the past predicts the future, and if the decade of the 1980’s and the first
half of the 1990’s are to be taken seriously, then interpretation is moving
more and more deeply into the regions of the postmodern sensibility” (512).
The domination of the Positivist standpoint in Applied Linguistics research seems to be sustained as confirmed by a recent survey by Lazaraton (2000). She surveyed 332 studies published in four Applied Linguistics journals over a 7-year period and found out that only 33 of these studies were ‘qualitative’. She commented that these facts were “disheartening”. The leniency towards quantification supports the view that the criteria for the acceptance of research for publication are still defined from a positivist standpoint. Implied in Lazaraton’s distinction along the ‘quantitative’/’qualitative’ divide was that she believed the decision to use quantitative or qualitative data follows from the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher. Similar views are found in Nunan (1992), Van Lier (1994), and Davis (1995).

Therefore, it appears that the attacks on the Positivists from different perspectives are not bearing fruit. Guba and Lincoln (1994) named a number of opposing trends like Critical Theory, Constructivism and the different trends within them. Ethnography with its different schools and trends is another contender for the Positivist investigatory approach (e.g. Gipps and Murphy 1994, Hildebrand 1996). These ‘competing’ perspectives challenged Positivists in relation to three main issues: The issue of the status of ‘theory’ in the research process (the epistemological question), the issue of the perception of what counts as ‘reality’ and ‘truth’ (the ontological question) and finally, the issue of ‘neutrality’ of researchers. To understand the proposals of the ‘competing’ paradigm, two key concepts need to be clarified: ‘interpretation’ and the ‘construction’ of realities. In the following section, I will attempt to discuss the arguments advanced about issues of knowledge and truth, the enquirer/enquired relationship and the type of data that are of interest to researchers. The discussion will lead to explaining the present researcher’s stance in this study.
5.3 ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES, CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

Smith and Heshusius (1986) made a distinction between what they termed the rationalists (positivists) and the naturalists (interpretativists) on the basis of their epistemological claims and in terms of defining what it is that constitutes knowledge. The debate over these issues draws attention to the methodological implications of perspectives and confirms the view that the choice of methodology is not a question of procedures but rather follows from ontological and epistemological convictions. They wrote:

"(R)ationalism can achieve truth value to the extent that an inquirer's statements correspond to how things really are, whereas naturalism can achieve truth value to the extent that an inquirer's statements correspond to how people out there really interpret or construct their realities" (6).

The major anti-positivist argument came from a questioning of the nature and value of the knowledge that can be generated from research and its link to perceived reality.

5.3.1 THEORY IS BUILT A POSTERIORI

I explained in section 4.1 that researchers functioning within the positivist paradigm normally start from hypotheses before the project can be carried out and during the data collection, manipulate variables to isolate their effect on the phenomenon under study. For ethnographers, the main critics of positivism, this procedure leads to making a priori assumptions about the world. They claim that the aim of research is not to perpetuate a model of looking at the world. Rather, they are interested in the particular in order to establish differences. By concentrating on the differences between the individual experiences of the people they are studying, ethnographers try to explore the world of the participants in a search for complexity and "variation of cultural stories" (Miller and Glassner 1997: 107). Therefore, the endeavour to grasp the meanings of events and of human actions represents a complete contrast to the
scientist stance. Instead of trying to intervene with the conditions of the research process, the ethnographer immerses herself in the 'messiness' of the world of the enquired to understand it with its multiple subjective realities. While the positivist is functioning within theoretical frames, the interpretative researcher is digging into the complexity of human phenomena while adopting an open exploratory attitude. To attend to the complexities of the human experience, the researcher is required to enter the network of human relations as participant within the research setting. Thus, the researcher as a detached expert is not tenable within this alternative view of human enquiry. As pointed out by Ulichny (1991):

"Since an underlying goal of ethnographic research is to discern the complexity of human actions and the meanings (explanations) they take on in their cultural context, any attempt to reduce variables in order to compare artificially constructed, contrasting situations would not be considered part of the ethnographic investigation" (201).

Davis (1995: 433) draws a distinction between these two research traditions as one focusing on the etic perspective (outsider's perspective) and the other on the emic perspective (insider's perspective). Social or cultural factors that might impinge on the phenomenon under investigation, ethnographers argue, are not accessible to the researcher functioning from an etic perspective. This particular issue has implications for the conception of the enquirer/enquired relationship; that is, the relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon studied, and between the researcher and the participants in the study.

5.3.2 RESEARCHER 'SUBJECTIVITY'

It might be helpful to form an idea about the meanings and connotations associated with notions of 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity' albeit from a layman's point of view. Objectivity is generally taken to be the result of a position or an opinion about a given person, phenomenon or situation that is impartial and disinterested; that is, a view that is not formed to serve the interest of a given party. Subjectivity, by contrast, is taken to mean bias and unreasoned judgement. The pejorative nuance it
carries is unmistakable. Thus, in research it will only be natural to value objectivity and to guard against subjectivity. This argument holds true in the positivist paradigm. If the researcher succumbs to personal biases, questions can be raised about the nature of knowledge and truth to be generated by the enquiry. In the interpretative paradigm, however, subjectivity is a useful condition since it matches the view of reality as tentative and constructed from different idiosyncratic perspectives. In their macrocosmic view of the research context, the researcher is required to be involved in the lives of the researched (Roman and Apple 1990). Writing from a feminist perspective, Roman and Apple (1990) reject the traditional view of objectivity and subjectivity as mutually exclusive. They see subjectivity as "invariably defined by the multiple power relations and conflicting interests of class, race, gender, age and sexual orientation" (39). Therefore, the problem is not in the involvement of the researcher but can be caused by the lack of reflexivity (self-criticism and examination of one's position, judgements, and interpretations) (Jenkins 1995).

From the ethnographer's point of view, the researcher is required to participate and, if possible, immerse in the life of the participants in the study in order to capture the struggles taking place between members of the group under study. Owing to the interaction between researcher and the participants, the researcher's meanings and those of the participants evolve in tandem resulting in a process of mutual transformation that Miller and Glassner (1997) called "the telling of collective stories" (104). The research process is a collaborative process, which brings together the 'insider' and the 'outsider' view. The involvement of the researcher is, therefore, crucial for the construction of credible stories based on the multiple versions of the participants and the researcher's own interpretation of these stories (Guba and Lincoln 1994). This broadened view of subjectivity as inherent in the research process leads to the conclusion that it will not be wise to avoid it for the sake of respecting the ideal of objectivity as set by the Positivists. However, a note of caution has to be made about holding too permissive a view of subjectivity. Any researcher needs to protect her research against researcher bias and participant influence for the balance can be a very delicate one indeed. The
researcher/participant relation is complex and slippery as can be inferred from Clandinin and Connelly’s (1994: 416) comments on their work on narratives of dream scenarios. They posited a situation of the interplay between the focus of the research, the story told by the participant, and the untold story of the researcher who will weave yet another story in the final research report. The issue of objectivity/subjectivity was a sensitive nerve for qualitative researchers whose research came under attack for not satisfying the criteria of reliability and validity set out by the dominant tradition described earlier. Consequently, researchers who supported the shift towards an interpretative paradigm had to defend their research perspective and elaborate a new set of criteria proper to their own paradigm (Guba 1981, Nunan 1992).

5.3.3 EMERGING RESEARCH CRITERIA

In the positivist tradition, research projects are judged by four criteria: internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. As pointed out by Davis (1995), researchers functioning within the interpretative paradigm have to establish the credibility of the story they are telling (Edge and Richards 1998). Guba (1981) proposed four alternative concepts to establish the trustworthiness of enquiries in the naturalist tradition. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. He defines credibility as the correspondence (‘isomorphism’) to be found between the data of a study and the phenomenon described. However, the correspondence is to be established between a phenomenon and the respondents’ perceptions. Therefore, the researcher is required to test her findings and interpretations by referring back to the participants themselves (Strauss and Corbin 1990). This procedure is expected to guard the research against threats to its internal validity, which in the traditional sense, might arise from researcher bias, observer effect or a problem in reporting data (Ulichny 1991).

Transferability is the parallel of generalisability in the positivist tradition. It means establishing that the findings can be relevant to any context. Guba (1981) points out
that the naturalist researcher is interested in a different type of generalisation. It is not something for the researcher to do but for the readers to find out for themselves. The researcher is only required to give a ‘thick description’ of the context. The thicker the description, the easier it is for the readers to establish similarities between contexts and judge how fit it is for them to transfer the findings to another context. Nunan (1992) suggests, for instance, that researchers carry out multiple site investigations and make comparisons across cases. With reference to the same issue, Nunan (1992: 52) argued that transferability should not be a concern for the qualitative researcher as it is not possible to replicate any given qualitative study for the sake of establishing external validity. He argued that it is impossible in practice to replicate researcher status, to find parallel informants and to obtain the same type of information (data) from informants no matter how outwardly similar each element may seem.

*Dependability*, the third criterion, stands for detecting and verifying the stability of the data. It is the counterpart of *reliability* in positivist terms. In the traditional paradigm, reliability refers to ensuring that the instruments used yield consistent results. Therefore, since the positivists believe in one objective reality, a shift in findings is considered an error. In contrast, the naturalists perceive the world as encompassing multiple realities and human beings as evolving. Therefore, they expect inconsistency, instability, and variance in their data and findings.

The fourth criterion of naturalistic research proposed as an alternative for *neutrality* in the positivist tradition is *confirmability*. The positivists, as noted by Guba (1981) divert the concern to matters of methodology and the use of tight procedures (Thomas 1998). As debated in section 5.2, a distinctive feature of naturalist enquiry is the acceptance and expectation that biases and multiple value systems interfere in the research situation. Different value systems can influence the perceptions and reports of participants and researchers alike. It has been pointed out that the naturalists do not attempt to avoid subjectivity but attempt to certify the *veracity of the data* produced in the study. Guba (1981) cites many ways of establishing
confirmability. One of the procedures is to be exposed at length to the context and the participants. Other solutions can be to triangulate (to use various sources and perspectives), to store data for later reference, to use member checks, to cross-check the data and to resort to peer debriefing. The latter meaning that the naturalist enquirer seeks advice from other professionals who will serve as “jury” to ratify the findings or attract their attention to a need to redirect the enquiry.

Researchers functioning within the competing paradigms argue for other appropriate ways of undertaking research which give way to less conventional types of ideas about the world and human beings. From a feminist perspective, Roman and Apple (1990) reject positivism on the ground that it is the outcome of a male dominated research culture. Social constructivism was another school of thought that put under scrutiny the empiricist view of the reality of the social world. Carr and Kemmis (1986), Hargreaves (1994) and Gore and Zeichner (1994) advocate a form of teacher research that is emancipatory and empowering for teachers. They advocate new criteria that are amenable to the types of questions asked by teachers about teaching (see section 2.4.3.3). The competing paradigms contributed to the elaboration of a new set of research criteria and strategies. Research in the naturalist/interpretative paradigm has been contrasted with the positivist paradigm. This discussion was based on distinctions made by Guba (1981), Strauss and Corbin (1990), Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Roman and Apple (1990), and Nunan (1992). In this chapter, the debate was centred round philosophical and procedural issues from which the characteristics of each tradition can be spelled out.

To summarise, enquiry within the ‘competing’ paradigms is conceived ontologically from a relativist stance, epistemologically from a constructivist/interactionist stance, and methodologically from a multi-variance stance (Glaser and Strauss 1967, Strauss and Corbin 1990, Bartlett and Payne 1995). The data is generally qualitative, collected from different sources and analysed with difference in perspectives in mind. The research process is deductive. Bogdan and Biklen (1987) summarised the process of research within what is known as ‘grounded theory’ as follows:
"As a qualitative researcher planning to develop some kind of theory about what you have been studying, the direction you will travel comes after you have been collecting the data, after you have spent time with your subjects. You are not putting together a puzzle whose picture you already know. You are constructing a picture which takes shape as you collect and examine the parts" (29).

I found the above specifications to be useful guidelines at different stages of undertaking the present project as will be shown in the account of the research process.

5.4 THE PRESENT STUDY

This research project was undertaken by an independent researcher, who saw the gap in research about teaching and teachers, and who thought that a contribution to knowledge could be made by focusing on this neglected area in Tunisia. The ultimate objective was to help understand and explain in the hope that it would be useful to people who have power to change the situation but not the ‘luxury’ of time to carry out research.

5.4.1 ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITIONING

I will attempt below to answer the three fundamental questions suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1994) by reflecting on the position and stance I adopted while undertaking this research project. In relation to the ontological question which aims to clarify “what...can be known about the phenomenon under study” (108), I take teaching and teacher education, the phenomena under study in my research, as complex and dynamic. I subscribe to Holliday’s (1994) view that professionals engaged in teaching English in non-Anglophone cultures function under the impact
of established local traditions of schooling closely linked to the socio-cultural values of that context. Therefore, as is the case of the teachers in the present study, teaching English to learners starting their second modern language is a particularly complex business from that perspective. I also draw in this work on the distinction made by Elbaz (1991) between the moral and the critical voice of teachers. This distinction is helpful in approaching data analysis and interpretation. I accepted with open-mindedness the views of teachers that could be stigmatised as ‘old’ or ‘out-moded’. As Elbaz explains, it is necessary to take into account the ‘moral’ in teaching as a strong aspect of school culture that contributes to the maintenance of the distinctive characteristics of a particular school culture.

To understand teaching, teachers and teacher education, it was deemed necessary to look into the context in which they occur and to elicit the views of the main actors in them. There are no general rules or definite answers about ‘how things are’ or ‘how things should be’ in these fields, and there is no ‘absolute truth’ out there that the researcher can analyse in isolation. Starting from this standpoint, there are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers to the questions the teachers were asked. The views that the participants express depend on an array of influencing factors; their work experience, their priorities as teachers, their perspectives on teaching and learning and so on. Thus, the answer to ‘how things are’ in ELT and TED in Tunisia will eventually emerge and become discernible to the reader throughout the research as the story is told by the participants and reconstructed by the researcher.

Furthermore, epistemologically, this research is undertaken from a position that tolerates subjectivity. For myself as a researcher and teacher, it will be impossible to sustain a ‘detached’ position when the topic concerns me as much as it does my respondents. Moreover, explaining a social activity like teaching depends on collecting clarifications, meanings, understandings and interpretations. I understood my role as a researcher to facilitate the expression of all these by interacting with the participants in the context of the research interview. I did not, therefore, attempt to adopt or emulate the ‘scientist’ stance but agree with Miller and Glass (1997) that
“(r)esearch cannot provide the mirror reflection of the social world that positivists strive for, but it may provide access to the meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds” (100).

On the basis of the explanation of my ontological and epistemological standpoint, if this is not already clear, this research departs in a distinctive way from the positivist tradition outlined in section 4.1 above. This research project was designed with the aim of giving ‘voice’ to the teachers’ interpretations (the *emic*) while taking into consideration other macro as well as micro contextual information to guide my own ‘sense making’ and interpretation. By making the teachers’ views explicit, my ultimate aim as researcher is to construct their ‘implicit’ theories and transform them into concrete stories. This perspective challenges established ‘dominant’ process-product research (Freeman 1994), which look at the teachers’ work in reference to external factors such as exam results or other representations of it by ‘experts’ who either never been in a classroom or else been away from them for too long (Wallace 1991, Freeman 1996a). This project is undertaken from a Constructivist perspective in the sense that it is concerned as much with discovery as with what action can be taken to improve the situation (see my proposal in section 9.2).

As the main concern in this research is with ‘meanings’ generated by the participants, a semi-structured interview was believed to be pertinent to capture the perspectives of the teachers. The intention was to discover how they understand learning and teaching English, how they interpret the benefit of certain teaching practices on learners and how they perceive their role in the process. In that sense, the *methodological* preference was for the interpretative/phenomenological tradition (Freeman 1996a). This choice was informed by Lortie’s (1975) concept of the apprenticeship of observation, Kelly’s (1970) personal construct theory, and research on teacher knowledge (Elbaz 1983, Schulman 1986, Grossman 1990, Gutiérrez AlMarza 1992).
5.4.2 RESEARCH ETHICS

Before setting out for the fieldwork, I developed an awareness of the issues related to research ethics. A number of documents available in Britain were consulted such as the *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* published by the British Educational Research Association, and the *Statement of Practice* of the British Sociological Association as well as the *Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines* of the British Psychological Society. I then took decisions to abide, as far as possible, throughout the research process by the rules of research ethics.

A conscious effort was made to follow as closely as possible the rules of open-democratic research and to avoid covert research practices (Scott and Usher 1999). *Informed consent* was the principle according to which the participants in the study were approached. That is, the researcher was open about the topic and focus of the research. The participants were briefed on the content of the interview and informed on how the data would be used in the research process (Kvale 1996: 233). A verbal description over the telephone was sufficient in most cases but the researcher generally allowed about fifteen minutes to inform the participant about the research as a whole and the interview schedule. The teachers did not seem to be worried about what use could be made of their answers and were not inquisitive about the interpretation process.

*Confidentiality* was the second important principle. I relied on my personal contacts and my own social and communication skills (Jenkins 1995) to gain access to the research participants. I assured the participants that their names would not be revealed and that any information that might lead to their identification would be omitted. The researcher made sure all teachers were sent the transcripts with a covering letter for approval and alteration of responses if need be (see Appendix 5.1). Experience with the practice of the principle confirmed the view that the participants might have concerns over protecting themselves or others they mention in the interview. Almost exclusively, the teachers who revised their interview transcripts...
wished to omit the name of trainers they mentioned. The researcher looked closely into whether this applied to cases when the teachers were a bit critical of their trainers. It became clear that even when the teachers were not critical, they did not wish to make the name of their trainer known. This confirmed the need for anonymity and confidentiality in this study.

5.5 PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

5.5.1 MAPPING OUT THE FIELD

It was felt necessary to "map out the terrain" (Miles and Huberman 1994) to develop an awareness of the intricacies of the training situation in the late 1990s. During that phase, and as part of the process of writing the proposal for this project, I discussed with practising trainers (mainly of English, French and Mathematics teachers) the prospect of undertaking a study on the training of teachers. Out of these informal conversations, it was possible to identify pertinent issues in TED and especially issues surrounding the work of inspectors/trainers. Another exploratory strategy employed was to pay numerous visits to the Ministry of Education offices and informally discuss with administrators the situation of TE in general. This exploratory phase helped in developing a better awareness of the way the institution functions and situate relevant information about the two main actors in the training situation; that is, the trainers and the teachers. I also made an attempt to observe training sessions and to collect official documents relating to educational policy and the ELT curriculum. The information and insights gained from this stage helped me document in chapter two the process of teacher education and development of teachers of English in Tunisia.
I was able to attend as participant observer the initial training course held in July 1996. It was an opportunity to interact with trainers and prospective teachers. The insights gained during that week were invaluable for the tuning of the research aims and design. In the same venue, there was a trainer-training course in preparation for the annual inspector selection examination (concours d'inspecteurs) and a further training course for established teachers. By observing and listening to trainers, experienced teachers, and prospective teachers, it was possible to detect variations in perceptions and understandings of the rationale behind teaching. Experienced teachers felt pressured to apply the innovation while its merits and relevance for the context and kinds of classrooms and pupils were not yet established. The trainers, in turn, felt that the change in the English curriculum served the interests of the pupils and that teachers had to accept the change for the sake of their pupils. Teachers expressed reservations as to the transferability of the content of the teacher development sessions to their particular classroom contexts. Clearly, they 'filtered' the ideas according to their own frames of reference. As the teachers were receiving input, they were engaged in powerful thinking processes. They were trying to make sense of the change by putting it in the context of schooling in general and their perception of the average learner in the school system. Views like, “we never used to do that before”, “remember the way we were taught”, “our learners won’t take it that way”, “there must be some grammar foundation” were commonly heard.

Prospective teachers who were graduates from different institutions were extremely concerned about the ‘painful’ beginning awaiting them. Students coming from Faculté des Lettres, where the ELT course had not been introduced at the time, felt at a disadvantage. Knowing I was teaching at that particular institution at the time, they queried me as to the reason for this omission and urged me to do something about it. On the whole, the prospective teachers, with or without a background in ELT and Applied Linguistics, developed the awareness that there was much more for them to learn and wondered whether they would ever manage to handle a class. Nevertheless, they found the course helpful despite the difficult conditions in the

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18 This experience was not renewed thereafter.
poorly ventilated lecture theatres and the ‘nonsensical’ curfews and gender-related behaviour regulation rules inherited from a boarding school tradition.

5.5.2 THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW AS A DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Considering the orientations of this study, I believed that the semi-structured interview might be a more promising tool to yield the type of data to help address the research questions (Breakwell et al. 1995). To understand the views of teachers, there is a need to search for meanings, intentions, and personal theories underlying the actions of the different actors in the whole context. Interviewing was favoured since it allows the collection of qualitative data in a more natural way by prompting and probing interviewees. The interviewer has an opportunity not only to go into depth about what the interviewee says but can also “pick up gaps and hesitations and explore what lies behind them” (Oppenheim 1992: 67). This decision has been confirmed by contemplating the possibility of distributing a survey questionnaire. A number of problems associated with the use of questionnaires (see also Fontana and Frey 1994). The first problem came from the necessity to limit the length and scope of questionnaires in order to make them manageable for the respondents and ensure a reasonable return rate. That meant to compromise the degree of depth and breadth intended here. In addition, I found having to provide statements for the respondents to choose from problematic. I believed that the type of ‘forced choices’ one can include in a questionnaire (close, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions) goes counter to the principle of ‘voice’ and personal meaning motivating this research. This technique imposes a certain type of answers ‘external’ to the respondent; that is, framed by the researcher on the basis of the literature in the field. Another limitation is the issue of meaning attached to the jargon words included in questionnaires. While responding to a distributed questionnaire, the respondent who is not certain about the meaning of a given concept has no way of asking for clarification. In an interview situation, the participants can turn to the researcher for clarification and the interviewer, in turn, can detect situations when a misunderstanding occurs. Finally, researchers employing survey questionnaires assume that, by including open-ended questions, they are giving the respondents an
opportunity to voice their views about a given issue. In fact, the task becomes another challenge since respondents will need to be skilled enough to put their thoughts in writing. As not all respondents are articulate writers, it can be argued that the quality of the data resulting from answers to open-ended questions will depend greatly on how skilled the respondent is at writing.

Concluding therefore that the use of questionnaires would not be helpful in detecting the respondents' meanings, understandings and interpretations, I found the semi-structured interview a plausible compromise. The general questions frame the event while allowing for a certain degree of depth and freedom for the participants to express their own meanings in a more or less 'natural' interactive situation. While the technique allows a sense of coherence in the collection of data, it gives the interviewer the possibility "to explore in-depth information, probing according to the way the interviewee proceeds, and allowing elaboration, within limits" (Seliger and Shohamy 1996:167). Thus, the researcher can facilitate self-expression, and when necessary, attend to ambiguous answers and prevent misunderstandings (Smith 1995). The interview schedules used in this study consisted of a series of topics towards which it was hoped to direct the interviews. It must be recognised that the procedure has some kind of standardisation in the sense that all the interviewees in each group (official, trainers or teachers) were asked more or less the same questions.

5.5.3 THE FIELDWORK

The fieldwork per se consisted of carrying out semi-structured interviews with one official (Head of the Continuous Training Section), four inspectors/trainers and 15 teachers. It was carried out between May and September 1998. Before arranging for the interviews it was necessary to apply for permission from the Ministry of Education. A formal application including the topic and purpose of the research and accompanied by the interview questions had to be submitted to the Ministry for examination by an 'ethics committee'. The application had to be sent via the administrative hierarchy at the university where I was registered (University of Tunis
I at the time of data collection). The reply reached the researcher via the same channels within three months (28 November 1997-19 February 1998). The fieldwork had to be carried out between May and September 1998.

Three steps were followed. After each step, the researcher reflected on the data obtained and narrowed down the scope of the investigation of the next step. I decided to approach the data collection by proceeding from the general to the specific and by interviewing first the officials, second the trainers and finally the teachers or rather top-down in replication of the system. As a first step, the director of the formation continue section, Mr Ennaifar Mustapha, was interviewed to gather information about the process of designing teacher education programmes. There were four topics for exploration in this interview: (i) the process of planning for FC provision, (ii) the role of trainers in the process, (iii) the involvement of university academics, and (iv) collaboration with foreign bodies (i.e. the British Council and USIS) in ELT (see interview schedule in Appendix 5.2). Mr Ennaifar chose to respond in French so it was necessary to improvise on the Arabic version I took with me. Despite Mr Ennaifar’s time constraint of having a meeting an hour later, he was willing to arrange for a second meeting if needed. He handed me over to his Chef de Service who hopefully provided the documents Mr Ennaifar referred to in the interview (see transcript in Appendix 5.3).

The second step consisted in interviewing four inspectors. These interviews were exploratory in the aim of to help focus the teacher interview schedule. The teacher interviews were carried out between 15 August and 17 September. Fifteen teachers (eight women and six men) practising in state schools located in eight different regions, took part in the study. The sample was made up of eight experienced teachers whose experience ranged between eight and twenty three years and six novice teachers whose experience ranged from two to four years. Included in the sample were teachers working in these geographical areas (in alphabetical order): Bizert, Kebili, Manouba, Medenine, Sfax, Sousse, Teboursouk, and Tunis (see Appendix 5.4 for more details about the participants). Variety and balance in gender,
experience and geographical location were controlled when approaching the teachers. The teacher’s administrative status was not, however, a consideration in sampling. Whether the teacher was a Professeur Principal (PP) or a Professeur de l’Enseignement Secondaire (PES) was mere coincidence. The participants are referred to as Teacher 1-Teacher 15 upon ordering based on alphabetical order of their surnames.

Most of the interviews with teachers (see interview schedule in Appendix 5.5 and transcripts in Appendices 5.6 to 5.20) took place in home settings (either the interviewer’s or the interviewee’s home). Only two teacher interviews took place in a school setting mainly as a result of time constraints. The interviews each took place on one occasion only. They ranged in length between one and two hours with breaks as required by the participant or initiated by the host to offer refreshment according to the traditions of Tunisian hospitality. I transcribed the interviews myself, and as far as possible, immediately after each interview. That process helped me reflect on my interview skills and develop a feel for ways to analyse the data. None of the teachers objected to the recording although some did express concern over making mistakes. Once assured that the researcher was solely interested in documenting their views and that they would eventually be sent a transcript to review, they became more relaxed.

The general principle in the interviews was to go with the flow whenever I sensed that the interviewee was interested in expanding the issue. I attempted as far as possible to give way to the interviewee’s spontaneity. Only occasionally did I adopt a business like attitude so as to remain on schedule. This ‘efficiency’ perspective was important when there was a time constraint for the participant. The order of the questions was varied where appropriate and the teacher was merely re-oriented in due course to the topic not covered. At the end of the interview, I asked what the participants thought about the interview questions. Their comments were assuring as they did not feel that the questions were contentious, demanding or threatening to them and expressed views to the effect that the issues directly related to their work as
teachers (Teacher 4, Teacher 8, Teacher 9 and Teacher 14). This teacher felt the questions mapped the situation of ELT. He answered:

“They (the questions) are good questions that cover the whole situation, I think. The manuals, the pupils, future prospects, etc. It’s an upper view as if you were looking at it from a plane. We covered everything and I hope you were satisfied with my answers” (Teacher 1)

This was an assurance that the aim to give ‘voice’ was not missed out by the teachers. Consider this comment from Teacher 4:

“I was able to express myself about certain issues that had remained inside me for a long time... [these were pertinent to your job?] Oh yes! I could say things I could not say in seminars, Journées Pédagogiques when we were always confined to a given subject and we couldn’t feel free to say anything we wanted to say. In this kind of interview I really delivered everything I had on my mind, you know? Inside me.” (Teacher 4)

Teacher 2 and Teacher 7 found the interview a learning opportunity. This unexpected answer from Teacher 2 raised my interest as the exchange below shows:

T: It evoked and raised many issues in my mind. As I am going to teach for the third year, [yeah?] I’m going to start with new ideas.

F: Ideas you developed from my interview?

T: Yes!

F: What particular ideas you thought were important?

T: You raised the question in my mind of why I teach. I have to think of improvement in terms of method and other things. (Teacher 2)

It is worth noting, however, that the participants did not see the connection in the interview questions with teacher education. Judging from the way they reacted to me during the interview and the high degree of collaboration on their part I am tempted to think that they perceived me as another colleague and in some sense an ‘insider’. As I mentioned earlier, I was bound to be an ‘insider’ when it came to discussing issues related to teaching. However, I made conscious efforts to keep a middle position and present myself as neutral and open to the participants’ view, challenging
them when necessary in order to reach more depth. I tried to abide by Miller and Glassner’s advice. They wrote:

“...(T)he interviewer does best to present him- or herself as someone who is neither firmly entrenched in the mainstream nor too far at any particular margin” (Miller and Glassner 1997: 104)

5.5.4 DEALING WITH THE DATA

The first concern after the recording of interviews was to transcribe them. However, transforming spoken language into written discourse is a challenge for the researcher Kvale (1996). The result is only approximate as it only reproduces on paper the spoken word. Other aspects of the setting such as the place, the sitting arrangement, and many aspects of the on-going non-verbal communication will inevitably be lost in the transcription process. Failure to reproduce these features of the interaction results in reduction of the interview situation as a social act and the ‘naturalness’ of the original version (Roberts 1997).

The interviews were transcribed in verbatim. I chose to transcribe the interviews personally. Transcribing the first interviews was a reflexive process since by listening to myself, I became more aware of my tone of voice and the influence of the overlapping of turns on the transcription process. It helped me take practical disciplinary decisions to improve my techniques of conducting the interview such as controlling my tone of voice and choosing when to intervene or not to intervene. Conventions found in similar work (e.g. Gutiérrez AlMarza 1992) and especially her use of brackets [ ] to indicate overlap in turn and bold letters to indicate emphatic tone were adopted. Words used by teachers in French were kept as they occurred written in Italics. The teachers sometimes switched to French when talking of the different school levels (e.g. huitième année for eighth form). The transcripts were further verified by listening to the recording again and further adjustments were added when needed. I also resorted to two colleagues to transcribe a five-minute
chunk each as a control procedure. There was disagreement, for instance, over interpreting when a raised tone of voice indicated emphasis.

The interviewees in this study responded in English. Though they were nervous about the prospect of making errors, none of them opted for French or Arabic. They felt it to be easier to speak about English in English since they were educated in English departments in the English medium and their training was conducted in English. They find it easier to speak of their subject in English. Judging by how the interviews went, they had no problem expressing themselves. It was decided not to interfere with the text except when an obvious alternative word was meant. As recommended by Wolcott (1990), I made sure all interviewees had a chance to review their interview transcripts. The transcripts were either handed over in person while the researcher was still in Tunisia or sent by post and electronic mail from London with an accompanying letter asking them to verify, amend or add comments. Seven teachers returned the transcripts with corrections (Teacher 2, Teacher 5, Teacher 6, Teacher 7, Teacher 8, Teacher 11, and Teacher 13), two returned them without corrections (Teacher 3 and Teacher 4) and three teachers did not return them at all (Teacher 1, Teacher 10, and Teacher 12). The teachers corrected mainly errors and some of my typographical errors. In some instances, additions for clarification were made (Teacher 6, Teacher 7, Teacher 8, Teacher 14 and Teacher 15). All these corrections and additions were made to the transcripts.

When consulting the literature on qualitative data analysis I looked for guidance as to how to approach the task of making sense of the data and interpreting it. There were two tendencies in qualitative data analysis. The first is to adopt the grounded theory view in the radical sense as advanced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and described in detail by Cobrin and Strauss (1990) and Bartlett and Payne (1995). They described the analysis process as a continuous process of questioning the relevance of the data, going back to the field to collect further data and so on. In these descriptions, the ideas, themes and categories are grounded in the data (refer to Scott 1999 for a recent overview). The researcher is not expected to impose categories on the data or themes
extracted from a particular ‘external’ theory. The data analysis is a process of theory development that is inductive and cyclical (Dey 1993). The data has to be broken down into categories but these categories are open to rearrangement and further reduction.

As the semi-structured interview by its very nature provides data already framed around themes and issues of interest, the analysis yielded sub-themes in relation to each central topic. The data surrounding each topic was approached across cases. The data from the fifteen teachers in relation to each theme was examined with a critical search for convergence as well as divergence of views. I went through the process as a *bricoleur* using colours, flashcards and charts to categorise the ideas expressed by teachers. Technical suggestions related to filing, storing, and organising the data for analysis were found in Dey (1993), Silverman (1993), Davis (1995), and Kvale (1996). The views of the participants were contrasted across the board in search for common grounds as well as divergence. A major interest at this stage of the analysis was to establish a relation between the different meanings and interpretations. At the end of each section of the analysis, I provide a comment that is my interpretation of the teachers’ views. I tried, as far as possible, to find explanations for the teachers’ views by reflecting on the local context and by establishing parallels, if any, to similar issues in the literature. In my comments at the end of each analysis chapter, I attempted to situate the teachers’ views with reference to the orientations of the curriculum and the teaching model underlying it.

The reader will gather while reading the forthcoming chapters, that the trainer interviews were not analysed. If analysed they would have provided sufficient material to write at least two more chapters on the trainers’ perspective. As a research project written for a degree has to be limited in space and time, I had to decide to concentrate on the teachers’ interviews. The data collected from teachers was so rich that some parts of the interviews had to be used selectively. The data analysed in chapter 6, for instance, came from responses to different parts of the interview protocol and data on the teachers’ views of career advancement were not exploited in
the end. The analysis reported in the forthcoming three chapters will provide enough support to answer the research questions.

5.5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has the limitation of any study that relies on only one method of data collection. The researcher had wished to combine interviewing with classroom observation to triangulate the data. It would have been important to be able to ‘triangulate’ by using different types of data and research techniques to add to the ‘credibility’ of the research findings (Allwright and Bailey 1991: 51). Constraints on accessibility and time stood in the way. Observing teachers also implied disclosing the identity of the participants. To arrange for classroom observation, permission has to be sought from the school administration and subject trainers. The researcher felt that it was more important to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality. In the same way, though it was possible to attend six training sessions as participant observer with a trainer, this was in the end a wasted opportunity. At that time, the long-awaited accessibility letter from the Ministry had not arrived so the trainer in question consented to my presence on a “friendly basis”. On the grounds of research ethics, however, it was impossible to make use of the data.

A second limitation comes from the use of oral reporting. The researcher elicited the ideas of teachers in the abstract. That is, the teachers in the study were asked to talk about aspects of teaching without reference to a concrete teaching lesson. It would have been the case had the present researcher interviewed them after observing a lesson or with reference to a concrete teaching situation on video (stimulated recall). These views could have been supplemented by observation data to bridge the gap between the implicit and explicit.
In a context where research on education is generally carried out by researchers commissioned by the Ministry, any independent researcher venturing into researching educational matters will raise suspicions about the purpose and intentions of his/her research. This situation probably explains why the postal questionnaire and document analysis were the only methods used in previous research in ELT in Tunisia (Salhi 1984, Hemissi 1985, Chamam 1978). Therefore, the presence of researchers employing ethnographic methods in classrooms or schools is an idea alien to the school culture. The researcher had to settle for the semi-structured interview and prompt teachers about issues they might not have talked about in a natural conversation. In many instances, especially because of time constraints, the researcher exercised control over the interviewee in order to prioritise coverage of the schedule.
CHAPTER SIX
TEACHERS’ ACCOUNTS OF THEIR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

This chapter examines interview data related to the teachers’ accounts of their pre-training, training and in-service development experiences. The structuring of the teachers’ trajectory into these three phases is based on Wallace’s (1991) reflective model of teacher education. I will analyse how the participants assessed the opportunities available to them in these three phases and the impact of the training programme on their experience as practising teachers.

Regarding the constituent parts of each phase, I take into consideration the specific structure of the professional training programme provided by the Ministry of Education in Tunisia (see chapter 3 for a description). The two-way arrows in Figure 6.1 indicate that the different phases of the process of professional development are interrelated. The experiences accumulated in the teachers’ lives, and especially their life as learners, have a bearing on the way they conceptualise and approach their work. As argued by Lortie (1975) and Kennedy (1991), by the time they enter their first formal professional training course, teachers are not blank slates.

The analysis of the teachers’ reports on their learning experiences before joining the profession will help profile the participants in the study. The analysis of the teachers’ views of their experience during the two probationary years will show how teachers in Tunisia make use of this formal training to meet the standards of competence required for recognised professional status. The last section will deal with the teachers’ views on their professional growth during the post tenure phase. The exploratory data on the teachers’ understanding of ‘development’ and their professional development interests will be used to delineate the teachers’ own perceptions of professional development prospects in Tunisia. This section also
attempts to appraise their views in the light of the proposed changes to pedagogical practice in ELT.

Figure 6.1: The learning experiences en route to teaching

6.1 THE PRE-TRAINING PHASE

This section focuses on the experience of the participants as learners of English prior to their entering the teaching profession. From these accounts, I will identify the characteristics of the teachers that marked them as learners and the attitudes and strategies that contributed to their ‘success’ as learners. Their views regarding the Language Stay (‘stage linguistique’) and the subjects studied at university, will help gauge what learning experiences they perceive as a valuable foundation for teaching English in Tunisian schools.

6.1.1 VIEWS ON EX-TEACHERS

The analysis of the data on the teachers’ recollections of their previous teacher(s) of English /French and other school subjects revealed the characteristics of the teachers
they appreciated or disliked. Only two teachers (both beginner teachers) did not remember being impressed by any of their language teachers. Two other teachers talked about their teachers of French rather than English. The remaining eleven teachers talked about their English language teachers. Helped with prompts, the teachers talked about what they admired in their favourite teachers, and they emulated those particular teachers. Consider the following quote:

"... (M)y English teacher... used to be a model for me. I think I'm following him... even apart from my methodology. I mean his character also... his humour, his mood... well, I felt sometimes like him." (Teacher 11)

This is another testimony that confirms Lortie's (1975) point about what he called the 'apprenticeship of observation':

"T: ... as soon as I started teaching, spontaneously I recalled classroom situations from my learning experience. At first I couldn't determine the difference technically between the two situations and, as I said, spontaneously I had the tendency of trying to imitate in one way or the other past classroom situations in this new classroom situation...

F: In the beginning you couldn't determine the differences but with experience, what do you think now? Have you decided that there were things you won't use now or...

T: Oh yes! There are things which I'd say you'll never give up despite the changes; the official changes. I think there are sort of 'marks' or 'markers' that you cannot get rid of." (Teacher 10)

Even though my question was not about why the participants liked/disliked their teachers, some teachers provided an explanation as to why they felt that way about them. They suggested they liked their teachers of English because they liked the language. This can be surmised from the following quotes:

"In general I liked all my English language teachers because I liked the language first. I liked English and I liked as a result all my English teachers." (Teacher 2)

"I don't think I disliked any of my English teachers. I liked all of them... probably because I liked English." (Teacher 4)
As explained above, the participants generally talked of their ex-teachers in positive terms. They appreciated them as professionals ("their method") and as persons (how they related to the pupils and whether they were humorous, kind and hardworking). When they described a teacher they did not like, the negative personality traits they cited were related to the human or the professional qualities the teacher appeared to lack. The ideas the participants posited appear to reflect their perceptions of the 'ideal' teacher.

The data show that teachers made a distinction between the teacher as person and the teacher as professional. "I liked her as a person and I liked her as a teacher," was a typical response. When referring to the teacher as professional, the participants used the term 'method' or the expression "the way they put things to us" to describe the way they taught. They were also eager to point out that the 'method' their teacher employed was different from the approach today. Teacher 4 praised the 'old' way of teaching grammar explicitly. She commented:

"I think what was good is that we studied the basics of language [you mean the grammar!] The theory and then you go to practice. You see what I mean? The teachers made sure we knew the basics and then we got to speaking, etc." (Teacher 4)

She added that with this method "the pupil does not have to face theory and practice at the same time". In other words, she contended that the current method of teaching grammar implicitly makes the task of learning the language harder for the pupils. This suggests that she still favours her teacher’s approach. Another experienced teacher also mentioned how she appreciated having been taught vocabulary explicitly. This method also proved effective with her eldest son who was taught French grammar explicitly. She attributed his writing ability to his ‘conscious’ knowledge of the rules and his ‘conscious’ effort to apply them while writing. She commented on the present trend:

"Now we have the tendency not to give the pupils rules as we mean them...They do not have these rules and we want them to grasp them through learning...If we take the time to explain them, to state them on the board and the students note them on the copybooks, I think it could be better but it is not advised." (Teacher 6)
Another teacher appreciated the way his teacher had employed a deductive method:

"I still remember my teacher when he wrote four or five sentences saying, "read every sentence and tell me what you can see. Look at the words in red and look at the expressions written in yellow." So, we tried to analyse things and to draw a conclusion [yeah] and sometimes the teacher gave us the rule." (Teacher 1)

Other teachers talked positively about innovative aspects of their teachers' practice. They regarded innovative practice as any attempt on the part of their ex-teacher to depart from the prevailing 'acceptable' practice at that time. One experienced teacher reported how in the 1970s his English language teacher had used visual aids in the classroom. He pointed out that this was a revolutionary thing to do at that time. Another second-year trainee teacher talked of her experience as a learner in the late 1980s during the transition towards CLT pedagogy. She appreciated her favourite teacher’s "tendency to adopt new methods" reflected in that teacher's attempt to introduce role-play and group-work activities into the framework of the unchanged official programme and textbooks. She recalled:

"I think when I was studying English, it was the beginning of the Communicative Approach so my teacher had two ways of teaching. We studied in the old books but in her way of teaching, she was using new communicative activities. I remember we had group work... Yes, we had group-work... and we still had this drilling so it was a mixture." (Teacher 5)

Likewise, another participant of the same generation as the teacher above mentioned how he appreciated his ex-teacher's emphasis on communication in the classroom. He described how this teacher had stood out as having a particularly innovative style:

"Though the teaching approach followed at that time was purely audio-lingual, communication was always present in his classroom. He was a bit 'ahead of his time'... He had a technique of his own." (Teacher 11)

It can be deduced from the accounts above that as professionals the ex-teachers were admired for two completely different reasons. One group of teachers appreciated their ex-teachers' traditional approach (by today's standards) while another group
appreciated their attempts to insert innovative ideas into the prevailing 'traditional' framework. From these accounts two attitudes to changes in teaching practice surface. The first comes from the group of teachers who had a mindset about how teaching/learning should take place and the second from the group who perceived teacher practice as dynamic and creative.

In the few cases where the teachers elaborated on the personality trait of the teachers they disliked, it was possible to infer their views of 'bad practice'. The use of translation, for instance, was not highly regarded. One beginner female teacher commented on how her teachers made poor use of translation in the classroom. Though this teacher was not against the principle of using translation or the mother tongue in the classroom, she did not think her teachers used the right code at the right time. She reported:

“I just did not like the way they taught because they did not explain well. They just used English and French. At times it was not necessary to use French and at times it was necessary to resort to French for young learners and they did not.” (Teacher 2)

Another teacher disapproved of his teacher’s laziness and lack of enthusiasm for teaching:

“The problem was that he was very lazy. He didn’t move from his desk. He was lazy and he used to speak either in French or Arabic.” (Teacher 15)

Another teacher expressed a negative opinion of one ex-teacher’s didactic, unimaginative style in the following terms:

“The teacher was giving a lesson and we were passive listeners; a few vocabulary words on the board and a point of structure and the lesson was done.” (Teacher 7)

The same teacher also recalled the tedious manner in which he was taught reading comprehension:

“May be I remember the reading parts in English. That was very monotonous. The teacher just asked us to read the text and then gave us some questions.” (Teacher 7)
Teacher 10 recalled not being challenged by one ex-teacher’s exam-driven, textbook-based approach:

“He was there worrying about the final exam and having the textbook and the reading passage and the comprehension check and that’s the end of it. English as a subject meant just getting trained for the final exam. That’s it. That wasn’t really motivating but I had to do with it.” (Teacher 10)

The views above reveal a number of ‘undesirable’ teacher attitudes and practices. In terms of attitude, these participants were dissatisfied with the monotonous and technical styles of teaching which were interpreted as indifference to learner motivation by Teacher 10, laziness by Teacher 15 and lack of imagination by Teacher 7.

Turning now to the participants’ perceptions of their ex-teachers as people, their comments highlighted the kind of rapport the teacher had established with the class in general and with them in particular. Their memories of their special human relationship with their previous teachers are indicative of the value they, as learners, attached to the affective dimension in the learning/teaching situation. Their views were in some cases expressed in the form of disapproval of the authoritative teachers whom they described as “not in good mood”, “look down upon the pupils”, and tend to “establish a vertical type of relationship with the pupils”, and who are “severe”, “over severe”, and “strict”. Indeed, the participants in the study rejected the top-down, authoritative way of relating to learners and preferred the informal, open type of teachers-students relations. There was a clear preference for the supportive as opposed to the authoritative teacher.

A quality in teachers that the respondents mentioned quite often was the ability to ‘encourage’ the pupils. ‘Encouraging’ pupils denoted being supportive as the teachers referred to their previous teachers’ attempts to praise or to reward them.
The rewards the teachers mentioned ranged from a free subscription to a magazine, to an application to join a pen-pal pool, lending reading materials to them and allocating additional coaching outside class time. One beginner teacher who was rewarded for good work by a teacher of English he had had for three successive years reported:

“Well, I used to be motivated and he (my teacher) encouraged me. He once gave me a free subscription in a magazine called *Plain Truth*. I was so happy about it. I used to read some articles and to extract the vocabulary (the difficult words) and explain them and then give him back the words. He was very proud of me and used to show my work to all the pupils…” (Teacher 11)

Describing a French teacher she once had, one teacher was particularly appreciative of the direct personalised praise that came from her teacher. She even attributed her success in languages in general to the help and praise she had received from that particular teacher:

“It was thanks to her help and thanks to her encouragement that I am learning languages and not scientific subjects. She admired my performance, my writings and the way I spoke and she once told me that I could in the future do whatever I liked in French.” (Teacher 6)

However, while describing some of the traits of teachers they had disliked, the participants deplored the attitude of some teachers nowadays who, they suggested, were establishing asymmetrical relations with their pupils. One experienced teacher pointed out the importance of being fair to pupils by referring to her own experience with one teacher. She suggested that her career prospects had been negatively affected by the unfair treatment she had received from a mathematics teacher. She recalled:

“...I still remember one particular teacher...perhaps I wouldn’t be a teacher now if I hadn’t had that teacher of Mathematics three years [in a row?] Yes, successively. The first day she walked in the class, she just looked at me and... told me, “take your things and sit in the back of the class and do not move from there until the end of the year.” For no reason!” (Teacher 3)
The participants emphasised the need for a teacher to be kind, fair, perceptive and supportive of the learners' progress. As learners, they had appreciated in their ex-teachers the ability to establish rapport with the pupils and to attend to their affective needs. They disliked teachers who were indifferent to the learners' needs and made no attempt to go beyond the prescribed curriculum. They disapproved of teachers who were authoritative and moody. As the following section will demonstrate, the participants' success was often linked to the type of teachers they had had. The notion of the supportive teacher is a main theme in the next section.

6.1.2 TEACHERS' IMAGES OF THEMSELVES AS LEARNERS

"What kind of language learner were you?" was the guiding question put to the participants. The data collected from their responses were meant to identify their characteristics as learners and their own approach to learning a language when they were learners. It is interesting to note that not one of the participants described herself as especially gifted for languages. For instance, they did not mention once the word 'aptitude'. Moreover, the majority of the participants emphasised the fact that they were motivated learners; that is learners who liked/loved the target language and were interested in learning it. The teachers talked of 'motivation' as something the learner brought into the language learning situation that accounted for their success in learning the language. They presented it this way:

"I was very motivated. I liked the language very much and I was motivated." (Teacher 4)

"I was a very passionate learner, which explains my being an English teacher today." (Teacher 5)

"I used to be so eager to attend the English class. I used to be motivated..." (Teacher 11)
Only one participant wondered whether his teacher had anything to do with improving his motivation and performance in class.

"... (I)n particular motivation... I don't know whether this teacher motivated me or other factors but what is important is motivation." (Teacher 8)

Another believed that the teacher played a role in sustaining/increasing her motivation.

"I was motivated... I liked English and my teacher made me like it... I was very motivated." (Teacher 9)

As to their approach to learning a language, the participants in the study fell into two categories. I shall refer to these as the 'course-oriented learner' and the 'community-oriented learner'. The course-oriented learner engaged in self-prescribed (perceived as chosen) study tasks closely linked to the course and to what their teachers' priorities in teaching were. The 'community-oriented' learner is the type of learners who did not only focus on what was learnt in class but was also interested in seeking opportunities to improve her skills in the language as a whole and especially out of class.

The majority (eleven teachers) fell into the course-oriented category. Judging from their accounts, the typical 'course-oriented learner' engaged in revision, reinforcement, and production of language that was closely linked to the syllabus. They were, on the whole, either competitive learners who sought to excel in class by working individually, or learners who just turned studious in response to specific circumstances. Teacher 8 and Teacher 12 were examples of the latter type. They report having been pushed to apply themselves to improve their results. Teacher 8 reported having revised his strategy after having been caught out in an oral test. It was the fear of failing the subject that had motivated him. He explained:

"At that time I felt I was in danger. I did not like that zero so I worked hard. I have a sister who is older than me and I always asked her questions and she helped me. This is for the start. Now that I understood what I was required to do, I liked the language from that time and I followed the teacher and ended up being the first or the second in class." (Teacher 8)
‘Course-oriented’ learners can be autonomous self-directed learners playing an active role in monitoring their own progress. They also tend to gauge their success in the language by their exam results as can be gleaned from the following teacher’s portrayal of himself as learner:

“Well, first of all I used to understand my teacher... I used to understand what he was teaching us... Yes? And apart from that... well, my production, my marks (my grades)... well, I used to write well... got good marks for writing...”

(Teacher 11)

Thus, the ‘course-oriented’ learners would engage in self-prescribed learning tasks in order to expand their vocabulary range and generally improve their language skills. Teacher 15 exemplifies this tendency:

“T: I used to go to the library. I used to read some English magazines or some newspapers and I used the dictionary a lot.

F: Really? You made those lists of words and learnt them?

T: No, sometimes I didn’t need to write the words. I just looked up the words in the dictionary.

F: You checked them before going to class or after?

T: Before and after going to class. What I remember is that when I was a student in the 7th form, for example, I bought the book in the summer and started working by myself. I finished all the book before September.

F: I see.” (Teacher 15)

Teacher 4 also employed self-access learning strategy:

“T: ... I gave many presentations... every time we had something important or something interesting... I remember I had a presentation about Henry VIII

F: I was just going to ask you whether you spent a lot of time out of class also studying English yourself at home.

T: Researching? Yes, I went to libraries for my presentations, I had to go to libraries like the American Centre to Les Soeurs so often for my presentations. (Teacher 4)
The most important learning experience the teachers engaged in as ex-learners was in connection with vocabulary building. They invested a lot of effort and time in the task. The main tools for vocabulary building were the dictionary, course books, newspaper articles and songs. These vocabulary items would be checked for meaning and pronunciation (phonetic transcription) and then used by the learner to write sentences, essays, or to give presentations. One teacher reported that she resorted to memorisation:

"T: I worked hard for this language. I learned everything by heart and sometimes I read books and I have used all my skills for that language in particular. [...]"

F: You said you’ve learnt everything by heart. What is it in particular in terms of English that you’ve learnt by heart?

T: Vocabulary. I learnt vocabulary by heart; some in context and some not in context. I just learned the words I liked. This means this so I learn it by heart and sometimes I took structures of some sentences and I learned them by heart. Sometimes in context and sometimes not in context.

F: You write them in a special notebook or what?

T: Yes." (Teacher 2)

Lexical development was the top concern of the teachers as learners. However, except for Teacher 12, no one mentioned grammar as an area of interest outside class. They did not seem to invest any time in learning the grammar on their own. Also, apart from Teacher 11, no one mentioned that their ex-teacher had played an active role in their autonomous learning. A beginner female teacher reported having set her own learning agenda:

"I wasn’t just relying on the teacher and the classroom but doing my own researches out of class so I was using my dictionary and using sayings from the dictionary [proverbs!] Yeah, the section where there are proverbs, etc. I was doing my own work to decorate the classroom with proverbs, etc. So I was learning at the same time so...Also songs helped me a lot [Oh yeah?] When I was a teenager [you used to listen to songs on the radio!] I listened to the songs, wrote the songs and bought magazines to learn the songs...really to learn the songs." (Teacher 14)
For the minority I referred to as 'community-oriented' the picture is slightly different. As learners, these teachers were, outward-oriented in their approach to learning the language. They were not the particularly studious, ideal students but benefited from special opportunities to learn the language in the real world. The three teachers who fell into this category had part-time jobs that required them to use English in the work place. These learners did not really conform to the idealised image of the pupil who gets good marks. Teacher 7 exemplifies this situation:

“F: ...I was going to ask you what kind of learner you were. You've answered part of the question really. What did you do to work for English class? You know you were listening to songs and that was a hobby. But studying for English...what did you do?

T: You mean when I was a pupil?

F: Yeah!

T: I did not do much you know? I did the homework that the teacher gave us and that was all.

F: So you weren't that hard-working!

T: No, I was just an average pupil.

F: Really? But you had lots of opportunities out of class so you didn't feel the pressure. Did you have good marks?

T: Yeah, but that came a bit later..probably at the end of the 6th form.” (Teacher 7)

Therefore, the opportunity available to him as a hotel receptionist in the summer vacation to practice English did not pay off in terms of grades as the “real-life English” (his own words) he picked up then, was not of direct relevance to the English course at school. Another case is Teacher 10. Talking of his post-secondary experience, he emphasised the importance of students looking for other sources of learning the language and the culture by exploring resources in the American Cultural Centre and The British Council libraries, reading literature in English and watching films in English. He also worked when he was a student as a receptionist in a foreign oil company operating in Tunisia. Thus, he attributed his language skills to reading authentic materials and to the availability of opportunities to interact with English-speakers in the workplace. Another example of the outward-oriented
language learner was Teacher 1 whose experience as a learner was full of special
events. He already had a pen pal by the second year of English study and then as a
university student, made the most of his experience as a French Assistant in London.
He reported on the kind of life experience he had had in London and how, in his
view, it had contributed to his language development:

"...We (his friends and him) never slept before one o’clock (in the
morning)...we used to spend every Saturday evening either in theatre or in
the cinema and we went to Bob Marley...we worked (in a Bingo) for a year
and that was also a very good experience as far as the English language was
concerned because when you mingle and talk with people, you have to learn
the culture. How things work, how precisely words are pronounced, how we
say that, etc. So, it was a good exposure to the real English culture..."  
(Teacher 1)

The analysis of the above responses shows that, except for Teacher 1, 7, and 10, the
rest of the participants learned English in the formal context of the classroom and
through personal study of classroom material. Their experiences were marked by
conscious learning decisions/strategies that made them ‘successful’ learners. Their
stories provide evidence that they employed learning strategies that were ‘effective’
within the local educational context. In contrast, the stories of the community­
oriented learners, were centred round some special opportunities for exposure to and
use of the target language. While the other group emphasised hard work the second
emphasised interaction in a natural social context. From the testimonies the
participants provided, it is possible to draw the conclusion that they learnt the
English language mostly in formal circumstances (in classrooms) from written
documents with very limited chances of exposure to native speakers or engagement
in authentic language use. The typical English language teacher would, at a later
stage, be rescued by the experience of the Language Stay in an English-speaking
country (in this case to the UK or the US) and experience the language in the target
context. This aspect of the preparation of prospective teachers will be the focus of
the next section.
6.1.3 RECOLLECTIONS OF LEARNING IN THE TARGET CONTEXT

As explained in chapter 4, an important component of a teacher's academic education is the language stay in an English-speaking country. In its original form, the stay consisted of an assistantship programme whereby the students would teach French in a British secondary school for one academic year, and perhaps, live with a British family. In its present form, the language stay consists of courses at a language centre with the students being accommodated in dorms or with families. The length of stay has over the years dwindled to six weeks. A minority of graduates, however, used to be able to arrange for their own language stay through organisations like Amideast whereby they would spend a year in the U.S. as French assistants.

In this section, I look at the Language Stay as a learning experience in context (as opposed to the formal learning mentioned above) and explore the teachers' views about the impact of this experience on them as professionals. The data did not yield much on the impact of the experience on the participants' personality perhaps because the participants perceived I was only interested in them as teachers. Only one teacher spoke of her experience as a French assistant in Britain in the seventies in personal terms. She commented:

"...As a person it was an excellent experience because, of course, it broadened my mind. It did me a lot of, a lot of good and I'm not glad about the fact that the students nowadays do not have the same opportunity." (Teacher 3)

Five of the teachers in the sample spent a year as French assistants (three in the U.K. and two in the U.S.) while the remaining ten teachers could only benefit of the shortened formula. Except for Teacher 1, the teachers who went as French Assistants did not highlight the value of the teaching experience that went with it. Perhaps they did not regard it as marking the beginning of their teaching careers.
The majority of the participants believed that this hands-on experience of life in an English-speaking context, no matter how brief, helped them develop fluency/speaking abilities and enriched their knowledge of the target culture. The teachers talked of the linguistic as well as the cultural knowledge gained during the stay abroad. Teacher 10 who was a French Assistant in Britain commented:

"...(T)hat was the most interesting part of the whole experience; the whole learning experience. It was good in the sense that you had to live in a real-life context away from the academic structure of books and bookish English. Getting to find out about people’s habits, values, traditions and culture in general. So, I think this was the best part of it." (Teacher 10)

Another teacher saw this learning experience as an opportunity to gain access to the culture by participating in the life of the community:

"...(W)hen you mingle and talk with people, you have to learn the culture. How things work, how precisely words are pronounced, how we say that etc., so it was a good exposure to the real English culture whether at university, at school, in the streets, or at work. I mean when we worked, we talked a lot." (Teacher 1)

The Language Stay was perceived mainly as a language development opportunity. When the teachers talked of the stay as a language development experience, they contrasted the type of formal language they had learned in Tunisian schools and university with the language they were able to ‘pick up’ during their stay in the U.K. or the U.S. They termed the language they had experienced in context as “every day language” and “real life language”; something in total opposition to “the language of books” learned in a school context. The experience also helped raise their awareness of the gap between the language of classroom and formal instruction and the one that people use in real life situations. For many teachers this was a valuable opportunity to experience and practice the language (actually speak it). Eager to improve their communication skills, they became conscious of the value of interacting with ‘native speakers’ and sought opportunities for practice with people around them. One teacher described the opportunities available:
"We met merchants and shopkeepers, etc. We learned the language in the market and we were able to improve our knowledge of the culture and the town, the places in London, etc." (Teacher 14)

Even when the language trainees were accommodated in dorms, they sought opportunities to communicate with other foreign students and ‘native speakers’ in the larger community outside the dorms. Teacher 11 reported:

"T: The most interesting thing for me at that time was speaking English with native speakers. Yeah, that was great!

F: Were there native speakers around?

T: Yes, lots of them. Well, in the disco or in the street. Yeah, you get lots of contact with them. That was the most important thing. Speaking real-life English not the bookish one." (Teacher 11)

This teacher recalled that the students at that time were often keener on mixing with people outside the university campus than on listening to the lecturers. The conversation with the following teacher highlights this preference:

"F: So you had a methods course!

T: But we weren’t really focusing on that.

F: What did you concentrate on then?

T: Going to places and eating English meals.

F: So that level of the experience ‘going to places and eating English meals’, etc. Was it helpful?

T: Yes, the way they were speaking sometimes. Their gestures. The way they were speaking but two months weren’t enough." (Teacher 13)

Another teacher highlighted the opportunity to learn language from members of the family he stayed with:

"T: ...I lived with English people who helped me improve my English.

F: Ah! You lived with a family?"
T: Yes, I lived with a family. Many, many new words [and expressions!] special expressions." (Teacher 15)

To sum up the ideas above, the language stay in an English speaking country (US or UK) was regarded as an invaluable experience. As Teacher 4 pointed out, the experience ensured mastery of the target language, which she believed was an essential component of teacher qualification:

"F: May be the answer is evident but how beneficial was the experience for you as a professional teacher?

T: It was beneficial. Extremely beneficial! For the language, of course. You can’t teach English if you don’t master the language..if you don’t speak it fluently. That’s the most important thing!” (Teacher 4)

The Language Stay was perceived primarily as a language development opportunity and a chance to gain knowledge about and insights into the target culture. Reflecting on the impact of this experience on their work as teachers of English in Tunisian schools, all the participants highlighted its contribution to their resourcefulness and efficiency in the classroom. Thinking back on their experience of using language in its social and cultural context, they found they often drew on that knowledge to carry out their teaching on a day to day basis. When asked what kind of knowledge acquired during the Language Stay they had to draw on in their teaching, they mentioned, mastery of the spoken medium and culture-specific background knowledge. The high level of importance accorded to these elements can be attributed to the content and orientation of the ELT curriculum in place (see section 3.4.3). Mastering the spoken medium and how to make it accessible to learners was identified as a pressing need. Teacher 1 described the importance of the experience to his teaching as follows:

“I was really lucky and I really considered that a fruitful experience and say: “Thank God I know how English people communicate!” When they say what and how they say it. This was very good for my pupils because I taught them that. We’re talking about the functions today so this is about how we communicate. So, it was a fruitful experience and it had a great influence on my teaching experience.” (Teacher 1)
As indicated by the teacher quoted above, the experience of the Language Stay provided teachers with the needed schemata they draw on to perform their role as communicative teachers (Medgyes 1994). Indeed, this hands-on experience and background knowledge helps them make judgements about what language input to select. One experienced teacher found that what she had learned during the language stay was of direct use to her teaching situation:

“It was to speak...to be able to speak about the things that we need to present to our pupils. It was one way to make a difference between spoken language and written language...to focus on expressions for speaking and not for writing...to see the difference in dialects and so on” (Teacher 12)

Some of the teachers mentioned that this background knowledge enabled them to explain slang words, idiomatic expressions, and to draw their learners’ attention to the social use of language. Teacher 5 recalled situations she had experienced herself while in Britain.

“When I was teaching the fourth form pupils they had to reproduce a dialogue about making a telephone call, so I recalled how I did that in Britain. That way I was able to teach them how to make an authentic phone call...” (Teacher 5)

The same teacher reported that familiarity with an aspect of social life and the culture in general helped her when dealing with culture-bound topics such as ‘Entertainment in Britain’. She reported having been able to deal with a reading text on football fans more thoroughly as she had the opportunity to witness how football fans behaved in Manchester during her stay there. It is worth noting that these teachers were talking of an experience they had undergone only after seven years on average of formal instruction at secondary and university levels. This fact might have influenced their views on how a language can be acquired and at what level the formal and the communicational can be integrated. It might also have a bearing on the teachers’ views about promoting interaction in the classroom as an instance (see especially section 8.2.2).

Thus far I have highlighted some aspects of the participants’ experiences as learners in formal and informal settings. It was possible to develop a profile of these teachers
and the learning strategies they employed to develop their language skills to examine their views on the Language Stay. I shall now attempt to analyse these teachers' appraisals of the subjects they took as part of their university education in relation to the requirements of an EFL teacher's job.

6.1.4 THE ATTESTED VALUE OF UNIVERSITY SUBJECTS

This section of the interview sought to elicit at one level the teachers' perceptions of the relevance of the subjects traditionally taught as part of the *Maitrise* in English (see section 4.4.1) and at a second level to gauge how the participants rated the importance of the ordinary subjects of the BA course and the newly-introduced teaching-related subjects for them as teachers. Since subjects like ELT, TEFL or Applied Linguistics have been introduced only recently, the teachers with more than four years experience are unlikely to have been exposed to these subjects. However, they were able to offer views on the prospect of including a training component in the BA syllabus. The participants' experience of the professional component varied. Three teachers (Teacher 7, Teacher 11 and Teacher 14), had attended a methodology course as part of their *Maitrise*. Two had taken TEFL and ESP as part of the Diploma of Higher Studies (*Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies*) course (Teacher 2 and Teacher 8). Three had received a professional training as EN graduates (Teacher 4, Teacher 10, and Teacher 13), and two had been offered a methodology course in the U.K. during their Language Stay (Teacher 5 and Teacher 11). In the following analysis, I will first focus on the teachers' views about the conventional BA subjects and look at their views regarding the professional component either in its EN or *Faculté* formula.

There seemed to be disagreement among the participants as to what extent the subjects taught at the BA level were relevant to teaching. Some teachers said that they found them of no use whatsoever (Teacher 3, Teacher 13, and Teacher 15) while others insisted that all the subjects were of some use at some time or other (Teacher 5, Teacher 4 and Teacher 8). Sometimes the teachers changed their minds after a few prompts as the following exchange with Teacher 5 illustrates:
"F: ...as a university student which of the subjects you had during the four years of the Maitrise did you find most helpful for you as a teacher?

T: As a teacher? [Yes!] I noticed that there was a big gap between what we had at university; the drama course, the novel and even grammar. It is very different from what I need for teaching. May be what we had in the composition course was helpful for me now to teach my pupils how to write paragraphs and so on but for the rest I don’t think that my university courses were of any help to me.

F: Not even Linguistics?

T: Yeah, Linguistics was very helpful. We learnt about English, about learning English and learning languages. Linguistics that’s right. It’s helpful.

F: How about Civilization and History?

T: Yes, History was useful. In the fifth form we have a bit of history.”
(Teacher 5)

Obviously, there appears to be a link between the answer that the teacher gave and her immediate concerns in the classroom at the time when the interview was conducted. That is, her response depended on what level the participant was teaching at that time and her personal interest as a student at university. The fact that the teachers sometimes kept on adding more and more subjects shows how unaware teachers generally are about what knowledge they really draw on while teaching and where it comes from. One reason why some teachers consider the knowledge required at university as valuable was their belief that this academic knowledge enabled them to answer unexpected questions from students. This is how this teacher felt about the knowledge received at university:

“What is remarkable in our country and at Faculté des Lettres Manouba in particular is that what you study in these four years is a bit too much. It’s complicated in comparison to what you really need for teaching. I mean this is normal. A teacher should know the language and about the language he is teaching. So it’s normal that you study in that way [so it helped you master the English language!] Certainly! I mean at least you can answer the questions the pupils ask sometimes.” (Teacher 8)

As for the nature of the subjects considered most valuable for teachers, Linguistics stood out as the most valued subject (five teachers) followed by ‘Civilization’ and History (generally mentioned as one). Literature was often ranked in third position.
after Linguistics, *Civilization* and History. However, there seemed to be mixed feelings about the relevance of the content of the Literature course to teaching. For example, two teachers pointed out that it was of no help to them as teachers (Teacher 7 and Teacher 14) while another teacher emphasised its relevance as background knowledge for teaching the poems in the seventh form textbooks (Teacher 4). Linguistics as university course seemed to define for the teachers what it was they were really engaged in as professionals. Teacher 2 explained:

“Linguistics is very important because it’s the logical aspect of English language teaching.” (Teacher 2)

Underlying this statement was the view that linguistic theory could be extended to teaching pedagogy. Since the sample was comprised of teachers who were students at different periods in the history of the university in Tunisia and the profession as a whole, some of them were referring to a period when Phonetics and Laboratory were essential components of the BA course. Theoretical linguistics was the only subject provided when Teacher 4 was a student. In response to my question whether she has an Applied Linguistics course as a student, she replied:

“...We studied Linguistics in French in the third year of English as *Certificat Complémentaire*... All I can remember is De Saussure, etc. but I don’t remember applying it. May be it had to do with the course itself but it was a matter of time; an hour a week type of course *Cours Magistral* if you see what I mean.” (Teacher 4)

Teacher 12 found the phonetics component of the Linguistics course directly applicable to classroom practice at a time when the *Baccalauréat* test included a substantial item on phonetic transcription and intonation patterns (Teacher 12). Likewise, Teacher 6 suggested that the Linguistics course was valuable because it raised her awareness of language as a system and unveiled some of the mysteries of how learners learn language. At that time, learning theories like Mentalism and Audiolingualism were covered as part of the theoretical component of the course. By contrast, a younger teacher talked of a wider range of ELT-related course content:
“...(A)nd in terms of linguistics we had lots of things. What I liked most was Sociolinguistics and Language Acquisition [you mean Psycholinguistics?] Yes, Psycholinguistics and exactly Language Acquisition..Chomsky and [Krashen as well?] Krashen yeah! Also Error Analysis was really a very important subject especially that it had an influence on my work and future career.” (Teacher 11)

Teacher 14, a graduate of the same department and the same year as Teacher 11, also mentioned the Language Acquisition course as useful in guiding the teacher to find ways to help learners learn. She explains:

“They say that Linguistics, I think, was very important. The Second Language Acquisition course was really important and of great help. I mean, when I teach something I need to know how it functions.” (Teacher 14)

Courses like History and Civilisation were believed to be directly relevant to the teaching of English in the current school context. Teacher 4 elaborates on this point:

“...In the second rank (after Linguistics) I’ll put History and Civilisation. It helps you understand what’s in the text you are going to teach [and especially with the new programmes] yes, lots of new things..people and their attitudes, who goes to church, who is [The Royal Family?] Yes, yes! Of course, you can’t remember everything you studied at university but many things that can be helpful to your students.” (Teacher 4)

Another teacher talked about the Civilisation course:

“...(T)he part about Civilisation was very important because we need to know the culture. There is a need to teach the language in its context.” (Teacher 6)

The Faculté graduates who were taught ELT-related subjects and the EN graduates (Teacher 4, Teacher 10 and Teacher 13) highlighted the importance of acquiring pedagogical skills prior to teaching. The EN graduates stressed how helpful the practice teaching component was for them as beginners. For teacher 4 this experience gave her the necessary self-confidence resulting from familiarity with classroom life acquired through visits to schools and observing experienced teachers.

“... It is a very good idea to do the training at the same time. So when you start teaching [you’re not shocked] No, there’s nothing shocking..nothing surprising about it. You are confident.” (Teacher 4)
For Teacher 10 the practice teaching component helped EN graduates avoid the shock Faculté graduates experienced during their first encounter with pupils.

"It was a fascinating experience...The first experience of just getting a couple of lessons to do a week, was ever so motivating, so exciting for us and it helped in a sense of not to land from seven floors. To get that pre-teaching experience was good." (Teacher 11)

Thus prior training, no matter how basic, is believed to be better than no training at all. However, this view was not totally supported by the participants who went into teaching without prior training. Teacher 1, for example, asserted that the lack of training was not really a problem for him since he could draw on memories of ex-teachers and his natural ‘gift for teaching’. His account is a good testimony to Lortie’s theory of the ‘apprenticeship of observation’ (Lortie 1975).

"... I had that previous experience from my teachers; how to teach using pictures, using visuals, acting in the classroom...being like an actor...it was simply that I had that spirit of a teacher and how a teacher behaves in the classroom. I had that experience...I know how...May be it was innate! Probably because...[but you had ‘good’ examples!] Yes, I had good examples. I had my past full of teachers...Probably that little past, that little experience in England, probably my brother [Oh yeah?] yap! He was a teacher...He gave me the idea of using slates and I was the first teacher of English to use slates in the classroom.” (Teacher 1)

Teacher 6 who commented on whether teachers needed to be informed about different methods before they started teaching, suggested that the course starts with practice. She believed that instead of lecturing students or practising teachers on different methods, it is more useful to give them demonstration lessons that illustrated the practice and let them infer the theory themselves. The views of this teacher suggest that she is in favour of the craft model of teacher preparation. The views of teacher 1 cited above, suggest that he believed that teachers are born, not made. Teacher 3, was sceptical whether a TEFL course would solve any of the problems of the beginner teachers. In response to my question about whether it is necessary to introduce a training component at university level, she made the following reservation:
“If they (university lecturers) are going to teach something which has nothing to do with practical life, so what’s the use of methodology?”
(Teacher 3)

The implication is that, as academics, university lecturers are liable to provide input that is dissociated from classroom reality. She contended that unless the methodology course was practice-oriented and designed for the Tunisian school context not much could be expected. Indeed, the accounts of the participants who had benefited from a methods course at university described their courses as theoretical as there were no contacts with schools for observation or practice opportunities. However, this ‘received knowledge’ (Wallace 1991) was regarded as helpful knowledge for prospective teachers. One less experienced teacher testified to the value of the course despite its theoretical bias:

“T: ...I thought that if I missed the opportunity of the DEA course, I would not be able to go work as a teacher. I felt as if my Maitrise was not valid or good enough...

F: And in what way did your TEFL course at the DEA level help you?...

T: The aspect dealing with the skills...

F: Teaching reading, writing and so on?

T: Yes…” (Teacher 2)

The younger teachers who took teaching methodology courses during their language stay in the UK and in Tunisia, found the input helped them develop knowledge and understanding of ELT as a field and especially made them aware of the ‘how’ in teaching (Strevens 1977). According to their accounts, some courses focused on classroom management and teacher-learner relationships while others surveyed the methods. In this respect, Teacher 11 argued that this ELT-related knowledge was valuable for the new graduate intending to go into teaching. He explained:
"F: I imagine this (ELT-related knowledge) was very helpful to you as you started teaching.

T: That's why I said that what I learnt later wasn't something new for me as I've already known it at university and it's really important to study this at university...later I realised how important that was. It was really of great value. Knowing the theoretical bases of teaching is really helpful. I mean, when you are doing something you're knowledgeable about...you'll certainly excel in doing it." (Teacher 11)

This view was in complete contrast with the views of the experienced teachers cited above. They believed that a command of the language and a craft-based professional training would be sufficient to make a ‘competent’ teacher. In other words, they rejected the role of theoretical knowledge.

Thus far, I have attempted to portray some of the participants’ past learning experiences before entering teaching. To recapitulate, the analysis revealed the following picture:

The teachers constructed images of their previous teachers as professionals and as persons. They admired their teachers as professionals in terms of ‘method’. They found them admirable teachers in their ‘traditional’ approaches as well as in their attempts to ‘innovate’. Professionally, some teachers disliked the teacher who was monotonous and obsessed with course content and exams. The teacher they appreciated as a person was represented as humane, supportive and fun. On the negative side, the participants disliked previous teachers who were unfair, lazy and monotonous in their teaching approach.

The majority of the teachers projected images of themselves as motivated learners who invested time in extra work to absorb/internalise the course and to improve their knowledge about topics connected to the content of the course. They worked individually out of class on reading, songs, proverbs and class presentations. That is, they mostly worked with formal written language, which they broke down to extract vocabulary words, expressions and structures and reconstructed it later by writing
summaries and essays and giving presentations. In the early years of language learning especially, they had no other source of language learning but books, magazines, or dictionaries.

The teachers' hands-on experience living in the target language context allowed them to see for themselves what was involved in using the language in its authentic context. Experience with language use stood out as a central feature of that experience. It gave them an opportunity to develop fluency and to acquire the appropriate language for communication purposes. The participants reported that as practising teachers, these abilities helped them become models for learners in their pronunciation and a source of information concerning language use and culture. Thus, the Language Stay was considered a valuable contribution to the development of professional knowledge for teaching English in the Tunisian school context. The teachers asserted that this background knowledge was particularly useful when dealing with culture-specific content and when teaching language functions. Having themselves experienced how to bridge the gap between the language of books/classrooms and that of the real world, these teachers could be expected to assist their learners to acquire native-like expertise. Medgeyes (1994) would agree with these views as he sees the strength of the non-native teacher to reside in this awareness of the learners' difficulties.

The teachers' views regarding undergraduate academic courses evoked the old debate in Teacher Education over theory/practice. The courses that proved to be useful for teaching were mainly Linguistics and culture-related subjects. The older teachers were merely taught theoretical Linguistics with emphasis on phonetics, history of the English language, and at best were introduced to two competing schools of learning theory (precisely Behaviourism versus Mentalism). The younger teachers were exposed to new subjects such as Second Language Acquisition, Sociolinguistics and ELT/TEFL. As university subjects, these are generally theory-driven subjects delivered in lecture form without relating the subject matter to teaching
(Strevens 1974). Nonetheless, some teachers found this form of abstract knowledge useful.

However, the teachers held conflicting views regarding the value of TEFL methodology courses at university level. Some teachers denied the relevance of theory to practice. They argued from a ‘training’ perspective that teachers need practice. Their position implies that teacher education should be reduced to a process of passing on the isolated inert techniques without the principles and concepts underlying them. These views reflect an implicit acceptance of a situation that might lead to “intellectual impoverishment” (Widdowson 1997: 124) as a result of overlooking what theory underlies practice (Krahsen 1983). The younger teachers who had benefited from methodology courses in Tunisia and in Britain found that the courses lacked the practical side but they did not reject the role of ‘theory’ (disciplinary knowledge) as such. In the following section I will present the teachers’ views on the professional training and how they value it as a learning experience.

6.2 THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PHASE

This section provides an analysis of the teachers’ accounts of the participants’ experience with the professional training as beginner teachers. The participants highlighted three aspects of the professional training experience that had played a major role in helping them acquire a mastery of teaching. The participants’ accounts revealed that, as trainee teachers, they integrated what they had learnt from the ‘demonstration lessons’ and the post-observation discussions to construct a rationale for organising instruction. They also used the demonstration lessons as an opportunity to learn a set of procedures that could be transferred to their own classrooms. As trainee teachers they were mostly concentrated on developing the understanding and skills needed to be able to give lessons at the level and in the style of presentation suggested throughout the training. The analysis will focus on the
respondents' appraisal of the mémoire de fin de stage as a professional learning experience.

6.2.1 THE 'DEMONSTRATION LESSON'

The demonstration lessons were organised to help trainees acquire the practical knowledge they lacked as untrained university graduates. One teacher contrasted the directives found in the teacher's manuals with the concrete illustrations of procedures in a demonstration lesson. He commented:

"...When you read a book about a lesson plan, it is merely theory. So in the 'demonstration lesson' you find it in practice. You see what the teacher has added or deleted if you like, if he has used visual aids or other techniques, the way he makes the transition from the pre- to the while- to the post-activity." (Teacher 8)

Similarly, Teacher 10 highlighted the practical value of the demonstration lessons

"F: As a novice teacher, what do you think the novice teacher 'picks up' from a demonstration lesson?

T: I think things that he/she cannot find in books. Very concrete things; contact with students...instructions...In terms of form more than in terms of content, I suppose..." (Teacher 10)

Thus, observing lessons helped the neophyte teacher compensate for the lack of initial training. This beginner teacher's vivid depiction of his experience during the first weeks of teaching demonstrates how lesson observation can come to the rescue. He described his thought processes in the face of the uncertainties of teaching during the first weeks:
My head was crammed with questions...Shall I do the whole lesson in one hour or shall I divide it over two sessions? Shall I stop here or shall I keep on? How many lexical items shall I present to my pupils? Does the number differ from one level to another? Shall I give them the oral test in the beginning? (Teacher 11)

Another teacher described what he looked for in the demonstration lesson:

“...The things I had to learn myself were how to introduce the lesson to my pupils...Do I have to start with the reading? Do I have to follow step by step what’s in the books or do I have to do things...my way?” (Teacher 7)

Thus, the beginning teachers relied on the demonstration lessons to ‘pick up’ whatever pedagogical moves might resolve the beginner teacher’s dilemma. While observing the lesson, the trainee made inferences about the teacher’s rationale (the perceived intention) and what classroom activities were used to reach the teaching objectives (observed/able practice). The observation agenda (what the trainee is looking out for) varied depending on the teacher’s personal interest. This is an example:

“F: So when you went to observe a lesson, what was it you concentrated on?

T: On the teacher and the pupils.

F: So the teacher...How he behaved?

T: How he behaved...how he changed from one place to another...What different kinds of activities he prepared and what different techniques...and the different activities...what were his objectives...how he prepared the lessons...the worksheets prepared by him/her.” (Teacher 13)

The following teacher presented another possible list of areas of interest:

“You learn quite a few things from them...different ways of presenting vocabulary in class, how to introduce a structure point, how to deal with the listening, how to do the oral test in a way...how to sequence the tasks...” (Teacher 7)
From these teachers' recollections, it appears that their observation agenda was sometimes determined by their personal evaluation of their own performance. By the time the demonstration lessons commenced, the teachers would have identified for themselves problem areas in their own teaching. In this regard, they hoped the demonstration lessons would help them find solutions to these deficiencies. The following teacher recalled having used the 'wrong' procedures to teach reading:

"...I just did not concentrate on reading because I relied on the book. I have questions following the text to read and to answer the questions. That’s it. But this is not the way to do it because later in my training I learnt how to deal with a reading activity." (Teacher 2)

Another teacher reported having learnt how to teach vocabulary in context.

"I found difficulties teaching vocabulary. I presented vocabulary out of context...so during the training they showed us how to teach vocabulary in context." (Teacher 5)

As pointed out by the two teachers quoted above, the observation lessons served as reference for the required performance criteria. In the case of Teacher 2, she learnt that the ‘appropriate’ way was to teach reading as a process. Teacher 5 learnt that the teaching of vocabulary in isolation was not the ‘right way’.

There is also evidence that observers evaluated the lesson according to the inspector’s criteria rather than with reference to their own needs.

"Sometimes, of course, the lessons you attend are not perfect...sometimes you think, “But the teacher did not do what the inspector told us to do!”... “But she didn’t start with an oral test and the inspector insists on the vitality and necessity of this step” and “she did not deal with a grammar structure” and “it (the lesson) wasn’t that good” but you usually got out with the importance of that as a trainee.”(Teacher 3)
Therefore, the trainee teacher's observation agenda was influenced by the official performance criteria. The novice teacher tended to use the observation lesson to clear away any uncertainty about the pedagogical requirements.

"...What I concentrated on was the way the teacher tried to present his/her material to the pupils and the way she tried to get the pupils involved; teacher interaction and student interaction [yeah!] And also the lesson management [the steps] the steps to follow." (Teacher 14)

Thus, the beginner teacher might be looking for models to follow and what errors or pitfalls could be avoided. The two extracts below are examples of this:

"...To observe other people is very important because when someone is in action whether his verbal behaviour or non-verbal behaviour...I ask myself, "she shouldn't have done that!" So next time I'm going to be observed, I will recall the person I have seen and I try not to be like them. In some cases- and if they are 'good'- I try to adopt their style." (Teacher 2)

"...If you find that something didn't go in a lesson, why not avoid it...if it is a waste of time..if you find that the teacher did not finish the lesson because he was dealing with a question or something which took him half an hour, for example, you try to avoid it or may be just not to waste so much time on it." (Teacher 8)

The analysis above revealed the aspects of the demonstration lesson the novice teachers appreciated. They suggested that the demonstration lessons introduced them to the practical side of teaching. The findings also indicated that the teacher's agenda could be influenced by the 'official' requirements. Some of them wanted to identify both the 'desired' and the 'avoidable' pedagogical practices in the 'demonstration lessons'. The model of learning to teach underlying this experience as described and perceived by the participants is mainly imitative and presumes an apprenticeship
model whereby the neophyte learns procedures believed by trainers to be worthy of replication. The model that emerges can be illustrated in the diagram below:

**Figure 6.2: The linear process of ‘training’ during the first probationary year**

*(based on the teachers’ accounts)*

![Diagram of training process](image)

The participants also saw the discussion following the demonstration lesson as another opportunity to test their own inferences about the implicit criteria of ‘acceptable’ practice. The teachers spoke of the discussions following the observation as consolidating what they had inferred from the demonstration lesson. They mentioned building up their own understanding through an exchange of ideas with peer trainees:

“...(A)nd in the next hour we had a discussion [yeah] and that which I did not notice my colleague might notice..that way we collaborate [yeah those were things you were interested in personally. They weren’t things decided by the inspector] No, never..but the inspector has some objectives. In fact, he guides us with his questions.” (Teacher 14)

When the teachers commented on the discussions, it became evident that the role of the trainer was crucial to whether the teachers regarded the lessons as models to imitate or as examples to reflect on. Teacher 6, an experienced teacher, highlighted the trainer's contribution to the group discussion.
"...It is through these lessons that we had help from our inspector. We get new ideas- not only about the new ways but also reviewing the different ways...the methodology of teaching...and imagining, for example, how we can deal with it in a different way...[what can be the alternatives] yes, this is very helpful." (Teacher 6)

One beginner teacher adopted a more judgmental approach to the observation task:

"...First we had the lesson so we see the teacher teach and then we discuss the lesson and we concentrate on the mistakes that this teacher made during this lesson so we learnt how to avoid these situations in the future." (Teacher 5)

Observers who approach the teaching observation with the aim of finding fault with the teacher’s performance lead to situations of the type described by these two teachers:

"What I used to hate (was)...teachers saying, “the teacher should have done this and this” ...or saying “doing such and such thing would have been better”...and I remember remarks like “the participation of the students was so good, so I suppose that the lesson was done before!” (Teacher 10)

"...Many teachers...say, “Oh, I think the teacher should have done this and this and that.” ...If I...explain certain vocabulary word in that or that way, why would it be better? Why do you say, “the teacher should have done” so criticising the teacher and not criticising the lesson.” (Teacher 1)

Apart from those occasions where the discussion phase might go wrong, the participants report having found that the discussions provided an opportunity for testing their own inferences and interpretations in the light of the trainer’s comments. Thus, the discussion following the observation of the lesson bridges the observable and the implicit and helps the novice teachers build up a picture of the model of teaching practice required. Professional training during the first probationary year
therefore follows a craft model of TE. This is understandable given the lack of pre-service training at university level. Moreover, bearing in mind that the novice teacher is in full-time employment, the pressure to meet the performance criteria is considerable. As attested by the participants, the demonstration lessons are part of a rescue operation to equip them with the necessary survival skills in the shortest time possible. It is in an atmosphere of complete dependence that the novice sits at the back of classrooms to 'pick up' the 'tricks of the trade' and then sets out to imitate the model when she gives a lesson.

The novice therefore uses the classroom more as a space to replicate the techniques and meet the performance standards set out explicitly or implicitly during the discussions. Learning to teach in this environment breeds acceptance rather than critical adaptation. It is for this reason that I believe the professional phase to be a linear process. It is for this reason that the arrows in Figure 6.3 go in one direction to convey the idea that there is virtually no room for the probationary teacher to report back on her experience in the training situation. Therefore, the training model during the first probationary year is undoubtedly a craft model. The trainee is not yet encouraged to reflect on her own practice. Rather, it is assumed sufficient that trainees reflect on practice (Schön 1983) by referring to a model in the demonstration lesson.

In the next section I will analyse the participants' views about a second professional training experience referred to as the mémoire. This requirement consists of an assignment to tackle a particular issue related to teaching. Based on the participants' recollections of undertaking the research project, I will attempt to draw a model of this learning phase and discuss its implications for FLTE in Tunisia.
6.2.3 THE ‘MÉMOIRE DE FIN DE STAGE’

The data representing the teachers’ views on the value of the research project indicate that the participants perceived it as linking the ‘theoretical’ and the ‘practical’ side of teaching. The teachers, who reported having been seriously engaged in their projects, saw it as a way to gain knowledge and insights about issues related to the theory and practice of teaching. Teacher 10 encapsulates this view:

“...The ideal situation would be taking this mémoire as a sort of bridge for the teacher...a transition from the purely theoretical things to implementing them in as efficient a way as possible.” (Teacher 10)

He then added that ‘theory’ informs instructional decisions:

“...If you want to come to the point of saying this works but this doesn’t work. If you don’t have enough theoretical background to this, it is going to be an arbitrary thing. I mean, meaningless.” (Teacher 10)

Thinking back about their experience working on the project, the participants recalled that it was an incentive to read books related to specific teaching matters.

“...I had to read many books about vocabulary teaching in some books which were really out of fashion...some newer editions. I learnt about different ways of presenting vocabulary...‘active vocabulary’, ‘passive vocabulary’ and things like that. So, I had to read lots of books for that [you learnt from that!] Certainly, I did. It wasn’t much but at least I learnt new things.” (Teacher 7)

Besides, its informational side, undertaking the research project helped this teacher discover how to teach grammar communicatively.

“...Since the first visit of my inspector I realised that as a teacher I didn’t know how to teach this grammar [in a communicative way!] Yes, in a communicative way. So, I had to find my way. I chose this topic and I read so many books and I worked on it. It was of greater help than the ‘observation lessons’ and the whole thing.” (Teacher 14)
Thus, she used the research project to address this particular professional need. She summarised what she had gained from undertaking the research project thus:

“In my case, it provided me with the procedures I lacked myself...songs, stories...how to give the pupils the information without being explicit [how to create a context?] Exactly! The context [So there was a practical part to it?] Oh, yes. The practical part was in the classroom. I read the books, I took the procedures and I tried them. I used them in certain tasks in my lessons [yeah?] and I recorded my remarks afterwards...” (Teacher 14)

This teacher had started by identifying a problem in her own teaching, addressed the problem, applied the procedures deduced from the reading of the literature available to her in that particular area, experimented with the ideas and evaluated the outcomes. This process is similar to Action Research (see section 2.4.3.).

Another teacher, Teacher 11, reported having worked on learners’ errors when he was a university student and as a teacher he chose the same topic but with a focus on the practice side.

“...The mémoire is beneficial in the sense that it makes us refer to plenty of books and consequently gain deep insights into different pedagogic aspects...I now know a lot about error analysis and this knowledge enabled me to deal with them (errors) properly in class. So I feel in a way that I have mastered that area. The most important thing is, I think, becoming successful in correcting my pupils. I know when, what time, for what purpose and who (to correct)...” (Teacher 11)

Thus, he believed that undertaking this work helped him make informed choices when dealing with learner errors in the classroom. Like Teacher 4, this teacher applied ideas from the literature (on learner errors) to his teaching. He used his students’ writings, classified their errors, identified the common errors and suggested ways of dealing with them. After that he constructed a view of himself as a knowledgeable (i.e. ‘expert’) and successful practitioner when it came to dealing with learner errors.
On the basis of the views expressed by the teachers quoted above, it is evident that the research project was perceived as an exercise in the adaptation of theory to practice. Despite the fact that the trainee teacher is meant to focus on practice, the attempt to find solutions related to practice by referring to ‘theory’ demonstrates to the value teachers attached to knowledge from ‘experts’. It is interesting to note that from the point of view of teacher learning, the craft model practised during the first year stage described in section 6.2.1, was transformed via the research project into an applied science model (Wallace 1991). Involving trainee teachers in research activity shifts the focus, as recommended by Freeman and Richards (1993), from “considerations of technique and procedure to examinations of the conceptions of teaching underlying them” (194).

As illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 6.3), the experience of the research project as a teacher development activity calls for the application of a body of ‘expert’ (abstract) knowledge to a practice situation through a process of experimentation and evaluation. The aim of the component is to help the probationary teacher develop a theory of practice on the basis of instrumentality. That is, the main objective is to become competent in dealing with a particular teaching practice founded knowledge derived from ‘theory’ presumed to be found in whatever books are available to them. The model assumes that ‘theory’ gives sufficient guidance for practice (what procedures to use in the classroom) and that these are transferable to different contexts. It also assumes that teaching is the result of principled systematic thinking and might place the teacher in the position of implementing ideas developed by others (Wallace 1991).
In the two sections above, I have analysed the teachers' views on two learning experiences during their professional training: the demonstration lessons and the research project. The two components were identified as putting into operation two models of teacher education: a craft model for the first and an applied science model for the second. These two models presume that teachers assimilate knowledge from 'above'. In the craft model, knowledge comes from the master (the experienced teacher trainer) and in the applied science model, it comes from experts in the field. Besides, sequencing these two models has its roots in a view of learning to teach (the acquisition of teacher expertise) that is patterned across time (Kremer-Hayon 1991: 80). Freeman and Richards (1993: 210) argued that this chronological conception of teacher development is a myth.

6.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER GROWTH

I will first focus in this section on analysing the participants' understanding of 'professional development' and the ways of achieving it within the system. I will use
their reports to complete the picture by analysing the teachers' views of professional development and growth and ways to achieve them in the Tunisian context. Figure 6.4 illustrates how the data will be organised to achieve this aim.

Figure 6.4: Re-construction of the teachers' perceptions of 'professional growth'

6.3.1 PERCEPTIONS OF 'DEVELOPMENT'

Practically all the participants who elaborated on the concept of 'teacher development', linked it with teacher improvement. Some teachers focused on 'teacher development' as a process and others talked of the outcome(s). The aim of teacher development for this teacher was to improve her performance through self-evaluation and self-questioning:

"...So, after two, three years or ten years I think you keep going on and try to..."what can I do?" "How can I manage to make my kids satisfied and to keep on loving me?" And you continue to do your own research..your self-assessment..questioning your techniques, evaluating your techniques..your method. Shall I change? Shall I do that? I'm going to change..." (Teacher 1)
Having attended a regional seminar on the theme of ‘teacher development’, the following two teachers suggested that ‘teacher development’ is about self-evaluation:

“...Self-improvement...and self-criticism...‘why did I do this?’ ‘why did I do that?’ ‘Try to do this and then find out why it did not work...’” (Teacher 13)

“(The developing teacher is someone who) tries to always make progress...to change his ways of teaching and not to stick to his own ideas...(someone who) tries to gather new materials and review his documents...to read about the new techniques in teaching and learning...” (Teacher 6)

Therefore, the teachers above perceived ‘development’ as seeking ways to improve performance by acquiring new knowledge and ideas. Thus, they linked ‘development’ with teaching outcomes. The following teacher proposed a working definition of ‘teacher development’:

“It means whether teachers improve through their career...And whether they try to develop their knowledge, ways of teaching and so on. I don’t know whether I’m right about it! [Yeah] That’s it.” (Teacher 8)

Thus, he perceived the desire for more knowledge as an on-going process of personal investment. Teacher 9 also perceived development as a process of life-long learning. It implies seeking further training opportunities and leading to teacher autonomy. She put it thus:

“...'Teacher development' means) being a professional in your job...it means autonomy, freedom..how you improve your level..how you develop your skills...so development involves constant recyclage...” (Teacher 9)

One teacher included career advancement as a dimension in teacher development though he later cited the knowledge dimension as being more essential to the practising teacher. He put it thus:

“'Development' can be understood in two different ways. May be promotion in terms of career or ‘development' in terms of knowledge.” (Teacher 11)
To sum up, ‘development’ was perceived by some teachers as a process to bring about improvement in teacher practices. It depended on the teachers’ initiative and investment in seeking knowledge and new ideas for practice. It presumed the need to engage in self-questioning and self-evaluation. Thus, ‘development’ was perceived as a process to counter professional stagnation. In the context of Tunisian teachers, it seems that the situation of change is raising the teachers’ consciousness about the need to seek ways of improving their skills and of furthering their knowledge.

The data shows clearly that the concept ‘development’ is embryonic among teachers in the study and within the training institution in Tunisia. As pointed out in chapter four, the dominant view of in-service education starts from the identification of deficiencies in teaching but because the current situation requires teachers to change, attention has been focused on one aspect of development that is perceived to facilitate that change. However, the argument that engaging in self-questioning and self-evaluation leads to improvement is questionable. If the only aim of ‘development’ is self-evaluation of teaching techniques and procedures, then this raises the issue of whether divergence and variety have a place in a TED system geared towards conformity and collective coherence. It raises questions about what frames of reference teachers are going to use to assess their own practice and to identify alternative courses of action. It can be argued that the ability of teachers to identify what went wrong during their lessons and to decide what options are available for further action, presumes a knowledge base. The crucial issue is what type of professional knowledge the teachers will draw on in this evaluation process. The findings in the previous section have demonstrated that ‘practical rationality’ was the over-riding aspect of teacher knowledge promoted in the Tunisian teacher education context. The currently recommended practice of self-evaluation and self-questioning has to rely on the tacit, the experiential and ‘old’ lights (Buchman 1987) if no concerted effort is employed to inform teachers.
6.3.2 PERCEPTIONS OF WAYS TO ‘DEVELOP’

Teachers suggested a number of ways a teacher of English in Tunisia might develop. These included attending the formation continue events (demonstration lessons, conferences, study days), personal readings and collaboration with colleagues. Many teachers mentioned language development as a ‘teacher development’ need and suggested watching television programmes in English, or travelling to an English-speaking country to pursue this goal (Teacher 9, Teacher 7, Teacher 3, Teacher 14, and Teacher 2). Some of them felt they needed to restore their fluency and to up-date their knowledge of British and American culture. Teacher 7 suggested that an exchange with other non-native teachers be set up as a framework to help Tunisian teachers exchange ideas with other ELT professionals. The teachers emphasised reading and collaboration with colleagues as two major self-improvement strategies. In fact, the majority of the respondents considered reading to be the major tool for professional improvement. They saw reading as a means to acquire up-to-date knowledge in the two domains of professional knowledge; methodological knowledge and subject-matter knowledge.

In relation to the first domain- knowledge of pedagogy- the participants suggested that reading books and journals dealing with ELT-specific methodology would make them aware of changing theories and ideas in the field. Teacher 1 explained:

“F: You mentioned books and specialised magazines. That I would probably label as ‘theoretical’... reading texts which are theoretical in nature [yap!] How helpful is that for the teacher?

T: Well, for the teacher at least one thing is that he will be familiar with the new jargon, the new vocabulary, the new labelling of new methodologies and very often you find teachers who give their own experience, for example, in teaching grammar...in how to manage with a large class, how to deal with group-work or pair-work...” (Teacher 1)
The readings in methodology help the practitioner to keep up with new pedagogical ideas and, if the article/book is written by a practising teacher, to learn from her experience. It was suggested that once teachers developed knowledge of ‘new methodologies’, they could adjust their practice accordingly. However, Teacher 2 suggested that the teacher was the best judge. In response to my prompt on the impact of readings on the teacher, she pointed out:

“(Specialised magazines) add knowledge to the teacher...and it’s for the teacher to decide whether to adapt this knowledge or not.” (Teacher 2)

When I asked the participants what specialised magazines they read, it turned out that FORUM, a specialised magazine mailed by USIS to secondary school teachers, was the only magazine they actually read. Teachers referred to the relevance of the content of the articles in it a number of times.

“(In FORUM lots of articles are about how to teach and a teacher speaks about his private experience in teaching a certain expression or structure.” (Teacher 11)

“(In FORUM) you have teachers talking about their own experiences so you get an idea about different people, different mentalities...” (Teacher 7)

Teacher 8 elaborated further on the nature of the articles included in this magazine.

I find articles about teachers from India, Pakistan,...many parts of the world and how they deal with certain aspects or problems. Some problems are similar to ours...There is one part I like ['the Lighter Side’?] (laughs) I find sometimes some questions at the end [Oh! The Question/Answer section!]...They deal with really good questions especially problematic matters we face as teachers [these are the kinds of questions the students ask!] Yeah, even if they don’t ask them, you yourself ask them...“what’s the difference between such a word in such a context and another?”...I like this part! (Teacher 8)

The teachers above were interested in other teachers’ stories and the idiosyncratic aspect of practice. Understandably, stories of this type gave the teachers a greater sense of security as the stories suggested that there were problems in the profession
common to all ESL/EFL contexts. Thus, they provided teachers with some reassurance that they were not the only ones facing difficulties in the classroom. Moreover, as pointed out by Teacher 7 (quoted above), the articles described different reactions of teachers to the materials and ideas they used. Like Teacher 8, Teacher 7 also appreciated the input that clarified certain 'tricky' aspects of the English language. This was usually the focus of the Question/Answer section of FORUM.

However, the data shows that even though the teachers were conscious and convinced that reading was the best way to upgrade and update their knowledge, it appears that except for the articles in FORUM, not much reading was in fact being done beyond that required for their research project. The teachers tended to limit their readings to a search for texts for the English test. One reason could be the dearth of resources in English in the country in general and, to varying degrees, in the teacher centres (CREFOCs). In addition, it is difficult for teachers in the hinterlands to benefit from the services provided by The American Cultural Centre and The British Council both of which are located in Tunis. These were some of the comments teachers made about the perceived need for reading:

"...You must always be up-to-date about new approaches and new methods. Unfortunately, there aren't many books and specialised magazines available in Tunisia, so I have to ask my friends to send me some issues of some special magazine for teachers." (Teacher 7)

"We are obliged to read. That way we will be up-to-date. We have nothing just the textbooks and the Guide Méthodologique. We are very limited." (Teacher 9)

"...In CREFOC there is nothing...I went one time to the CREFOC and there were no materials at all. Sometimes you can find a book photocopied from The British Council. Someone very generous must have seen that this book was very important and so went and made a copy but there is nothing in the CREFOC." (Teacher 13)
It appears that the teachers who paid occasional visits to The British Council and The American Centre did not make full use of the specialised magazines available such as The *English Language Teaching Journal*, *TESOL Quarterly* and *Applied Linguistics*. The teachers' opinions of *FORUM* illustrate the reading resources they were interested in; for example, practical ideas that could be tried out in their own classrooms. These types of readings are not available to the practising teacher even in the CREFOCs.

With regards to content knowledge, the teachers expressed a need to acquire the necessary information about topics and issues covered in the textbooks. Teacher 4 talked of the constant need for an up-to-date information base for teaching English:

"...(Y)ou need sort of the information that you gain about issues [current events] yes, current events. You’ve got to obtain information. You’ve got to read about events that are happening...so that you are not blocked when your students ask you questions. The teacher has to be confident..ready for questions..all sorts of questions..ready for discussions..all sorts of discussions.” (Teacher 4)

The teachers also stressed the need to be knowledgeable about culture-specific language issues. Teacher 12 recognised the gaps in her colleagues’ knowledge of American English and American life:

"It’s lucky that I had spent some time in England and in America so I’m familiar with certain things. But sometimes some colleagues can ask about eh...even the spelling of a word...then sometimes it can be a cultural point...” (Teacher 12)

Teacher 1 suggested that teachers needed to be knowledgeable about a wide range of topics:

"...I still buy and read newspapers in English...I should read and know everything [inform yourself] read different texts about science and technology, environment, education, violence, etc.” (Teacher 1)

The opinions the teachers above expressed about the felt need to ‘develop’ as professionals in both the pedagogical component and the course content component
revealed that many of the teachers were finding it difficult to keep abreast of current issues and have to rely on their own resources to do this. However, one participant noted that the typical Tunisian teacher was not willing to ‘invest’ in self-development. In response to my question about what resources are available for teachers, he replied:

“...Look! It’s like business. To develop, you should invest...But if you stay there and wait for the others to do everything for you, nothing will happen.” Going to Britain costs money”...and “we do not have the time”, “we hardly have time to prepare lessons and mark papers”...It’s not to attack my colleagues but I think these are dishonest pretexts.” (Teacher 10)

Besides identifying reading as the main strategy for self-development, the participants mentioned collaboration with colleagues as another source of information. Their examples of collaboration revealed a particular form that is centred on exchanging teaching materials or working on designing school-level tests. However, some teachers in the study related stories of professional isolationism in their schools. They portrayed some fellow colleagues as unwilling to share ideas and resources with them. I will focus on the latter situation in the second part of this section but first I shall describe the forms of collaboration depicted by some of the participants.

One teacher described the collaboration he had encountered in his school after a disappointing experience in another school.

“(I)n that school I had the good company of some teachers and I attended lessons with them and asked them to come and, I suppose, you probably know X [yes, of course] She observed me and I observed her and we tried to give each other feedback so when I went to work in HM school, I worked with teachers and we exchanged tests and worksheets...I remember with Y, she used to come and ask questions “how can we say that in English? Is it like that?” and “In grammar is it like that? Does it go like that?” etc. etc. So there is collaboration. There is help. There is mutual understanding.” (Teacher 1)
In the situation described above the teachers were practising peer observation and feedback, exchange of materials and mutual help with course content. The following exchange illustrates a less varied pattern though judged satisfactory by the teacher reporting:

"F:..So, when you work together, what are the things you collaborate on?
T: We don’t work together because when I’m in chapter 9, the other teacher is in chapter 5 and we don’t have the same speed...
F:...Do you collaborate in any special way, for example?
T: Sometimes I give my tests and I take other tests [and handouts?] Yes, and texts for the tests.
F: How important is it to have this kind of relationship among colleagues at work?
T: It’s important in the sense that I learn from my colleague and he/she learns from me.” (Teacher 2)

In response to a question about the sources of ‘development’ for teachers, Teacher 13 mentioned the kind of collaborative work taking place in her school:

“T: ...exchanging ideas about how to prepare tasks; “what are you going to do in this lesson?” “What are the techniques?” “What are the activities?”
F: And usually colleagues are open about that?
T: Yeah, yeah! Teachers of English have good relationship in our school. [You’re a good team] we work together when giving tests. We exchange tests..we exchange ideas and we do the tests together. Sometimes we even plan the lessons together.” (Teacher 13)

Very often, teachers perceived consulting senior colleagues a form of collaboration. The following teacher portrays a common situation of the neophyte resorting to the senior colleague. He recalled:

“I used to consult them (senior colleagues) whenever I got into difficulty in teaching..deciding things...For example, the test; “how many tasks shall I assign?”...“how did you manage that grammar point?” Or “how did you manage that conversation?”...“how did you get your pupils into that text?”...It happened to me many times. I find this exchange of ideas between teachers beneficial.” (Teacher 11)
Teachers can also seek advice (perceived as collaboration with other colleagues) across schools. A case in point is Teacher 14 who happened to be the only teacher in her school.

"T:.I was on my own but I had my neighbours next door who were English teachers..who were my English teachers before, so I would go from time to time to get their advice.

F: So in general what is it you get advice about?

T: Testing..the most frequent thing is testing..I give them my own test and they advise me to change certain items. Their advice is, for example, “you repeated this item of the exercise so you should [you tested the same thing twice] yes,...or the mark isn’t up to the.. I mean, [too high] to what the pupil is going to do.” (Teacher 14)

Another teacher in a similar situation sought help from colleagues in other schools. He reports:

“I personally have many friends with whom I exchange some books and cassettes [not necessarily from your school?] No, because my school is little now, so I have only one colleague. Of course, we try to help one another. We meet sometimes but it doesn’t work. We can’t, for example, prepare the lessons together. We can’t.” (Teacher 15)

The accounts above show that generally ‘collaboration’ is geared towards coping with the demands of teaching course content and testing. ‘Collaboration’ can be confined to an exchange of tests or involve joint design of school-level tests. This type of ‘contrived collegiality’ (Hargreaves 1994) can result sometimes in communication breakdown of the type described by this teacher:
"T: ...between colleagues we can sometimes have problems for designing a 
paper [what do you mean by paper? A test?] Yes, some teachers want to 
design types of tasks which would be given in writing...

F: So how can the problem, if there is one..How can it be overcome?

T: I think the problem can't be overcome.

F: Really!

T: Between colleagues it's OK we can always agree in the end. But when 
there is a man teaching with us (interviewer laughs) yes, this is true! This is 
what happens every year when we design a paper for Devoir de Synthèse and 
there is a man with us, he wants to impose his own exercises, which are very 
hard for the pupils and which are not related to the programme." (Teacher 9)

It appeared that ‘collaboration’ work mainly depended on the type of social 
relationships enjoyed by teachers in a particular school. However, in general the 
teachers worked in an atmosphere of professional isolation. One experienced teacher 
described this isolation as follows:

"...There is a tendency (for some teachers) to keep to themselves [be in 
isolation] working on his own and...some do not even dare to ask you 
questions [being too proud about it!] May be...may be he dares not placing 
himself too low [self-image?] many reasons for this...we greet each other 
every day, stand to have coffee but work [is something individual] “how do 
you tackle this lesson?” We don't find such a question in the staff-room.” 
(Teacher 6)

Another teacher complained of the reluctance of some senior colleagues in his school 
to assist younger staff:

"T: ...They (senior colleagues) are not very talkative, you know, and they 
have their own ways.

F: And have you approached them?

T: Yes, yes. I tried with some of them.

F: So you asked, “ what are the ways of dealing with such and such...

T: They don't give you anything.

F: So the answer is “there are many ways”

T: Yeah!
F: I’m really amazed because normally colleagues are helpful.

T: First thing, you should try to establish a kind of friendly relationship and then you ask them.

F: So if you have a friend teaching in the school...

T: Yeah that would be easier.” (Teacher 7)

This situation might have been caused by feelings of insecurity experienced by established teachers in an atmosphere of change. This might account for their reluctance to give guidance.

These situations raise issues about collegiality and the sense of belonging to a profession. There are many possible explanations for this. Teachers might see their professional world as confined to the classroom and therefore, do not seek to develop relations with colleagues. Another explanation could be implicit or explicit competitiveness at the school level. In such situations sharing ideas and information might mean losing status and seniority. Most importantly, teachers do not seek to collaborate with other colleagues when there is no clear objective(s) for such collaboration. Judging from the patterns of ‘collaboration’ that emerged from the data, there seems to be absence of a framework for meaningful collaboration in the schools. The findings give clear indication that teachers mainly ‘collaborate’ with fellow teachers on the basis of friendship or under pressure to prepare a school-level test.

6.3.3 STATED ‘DEVELOPMENT’ INTERESTS

A close examination of the participants’ views of the focus, content and mode of delivery for prospective FC programmes, revealed a clear interest in the implementation of communicative methodology and the use of the newly introduced textbooks. The teachers wanted training in teaching specific skills (writing, reading, listening and grammar) in a communicative way (Teacher 3, Teacher 4, Teacher 6,
Teacher 8, Teacher 9, and Teacher 11). Only two teachers focused on the use of pair/group work in language classrooms (Teacher 5 and Teacher 6). Another group suggested focusing on discussions of the new programmes (Teacher 13 and Teacher 1) and identifying ways of using the materials (Teacher 7, Teacher 1 and Teacher 13). These suggestions demonstrate the level of interest in pedagogical innovation.

It appeared that the participants based their professional needs on current teaching demands. These prioritised the development of skills necessary to meet the curriculum requirements. The teaching of skills deemed important were also closely linked to the teachers' understanding of the English test in the national exams. In response to my question concerning the focus of further training, two teachers recommended the teaching of reading and writing giving as their reason the nature of the national exams.

"...(T)o focus on reading and writing because those are what the pupils in Tunisia are tested on [and this is according to the official programme?] Well, yes! I suppose. May be they (the pupils) have to do a lot of activities but mainly reading and writing because that's what they have at the final exam. In the 9th year Basic Education or the Baccalauréat exam." (Teacher 3)

The second teacher started with her perception of the goals of the national curriculum and the skills it aims to develop in learners. She stated:

"Reading and writing [teaching reading and writing] in relation to the Communicative Approach [because you think it is really a need now?] I think that is the need. The need for the strategy..our strategy. We need to develop learners' competence in reading and understanding to make them produce (language in writing)..." (Teacher 6)

Interestingly enough, in a context where CLT was emphasised, only one teacher mentioned the teaching of listening comprehension (Teacher 9) and one teacher explicitly expressed interest in organising sessions around pair-work and group-work (Teacher 5). Teacher 9 seemed to have an interest in materials selection for the teaching of listening.
T:...I think that reading had its share. More listening...adding more listening passages and these passages must deal with the topics in the book...in the programme and related to English and American life.

F: So you'd want them to focus on the teaching of listening? To give you samples of teaching materials to be used for teaching listening but how about the way of teaching listening?

T: If you are given the materials, it's up to you. You must be autonomous [ahah...ahah] the teacher must know how to design a lesson...

F: So you're suggesting material development and adapting teaching materials for listening activities?

T: I think the first one." (Teacher 9)

Teacher 5 suggested focusing on communication activities:

"F: Now suppose that the people in the Direction Générale de la Formation Continue asked you about what they should focus on in the FC programmes for next year, what would you suggest as topic or key areas to work on?

T: Pair-work, group-work and drama activities in class. These are very important activities for the Communicative Approach and everything related to group-work is certainly worth talking about.

F: And what type of activities? Lectures?

T: About group work?

F: Yes.

T: How to form groups because to have a group-work activity, you don't just put pupils together [no, no] the teacher must know. This is something you learn...how to mix pupils; the 'good', the 'average' and the 'less average'." (Teacher 5)

It is interesting to note that the participants in the study did not think it was necessary to be trained in the implementation of these types of classroom activities even though the data will reveal in a forthcoming section (section 8.2) that many of them were struggling with this particular aspect of the innovation.

The second area of interest for the teachers was locating or discussing teaching materials. They suggested that trainers/inspectors organise discussions about the new
programmes and textbooks. Teacher 7 stressed the importance of helping teachers understand how to use the new textbooks:

“...[Just helping the teachers...telling them how to deal with this new material or how they are at least supposed to deal with it so they would all be operating in the same way.” (Teacher 7)

For Teacher 13, the aim was to give the teachers a voice in evaluating the new programme.

“Discussing the programme [evaluating the programme] yes, because sometimes the programme is not OK [there are problems] what the problems are, etc. So, to discuss them to see how it can be ameliorated.” (Teacher 13)

Likewise, Teacher 12 suggested workshops for experienced teachers to evaluate the new textbooks before putting them into wide circulation.

“T: ...We have to be involved in workshops because we are the teachers..we are in contact with the students.

F: And what will you be doing in the workshops?

T: Designing teaching materials.

F: Teaching materials?

T: Because who better than the teachers could know the needs of the Students?

F: Yeah, like thinking of ways to apply the teaching materials..preparing units?

T: Even if the books are already prepared..before issuing them, the trainers should [try them?] Try to get feedback from teachers.” (Teacher 12)

When asked about the preferred mode of delivery in the formation continue seminars or journées pédagogiques, demonstration lessons emerged as the most favoured technique followed by workshops. According to the teachers, the demonstration lessons served to illustrate CLT practice and to test the feasibility of the innovation.
Teacher 14 suggested that classroom observation would be more useful to colleagues than abstract talk (lectures).

"...Lesson observation is of great help to the teachers [yeah!] I think meeting and just to peak about linguistics and how to learn language...just abstract things and theory [is of no help!] is of no help...teachers...will not be patient to listen to you and to take benefit from what you're saying." (Teacher 14)

Teacher 3 described the positive impact of a particular demonstration lesson left on teachers in an in-service training session.

"T: We had that experience with one colleague; a Conseillère because most teachers were afraid of the Communicative Approach because most of them thought that perhaps it would turn into a mess and that the pupils would be chatting but she gave us the proof

F: That it could be done?

T: She showed us it could be very successful.

F: “She showed us” that means it was a video taped lesson or...?

T: Yes, yes!

F: So, that was a video taped lesson?

T: And said this has been filmed in Tunisia.

F: With Tunisian pupils?

T: Yes, yes! She told us that she assigned the different roles to different students. She provided them with [that was pair-work or group-work or problem-solving?] Group-work. She gave them...she provided them with vocabulary..the necessary vocabulary and it was perfect.” (Teacher 3)

As can be inferred from this instance, the demonstration lesson, live or on video, is employed to persuade teachers of the feasibility of the innovation. Perhaps this is a necessary as can be gleaned from Teacher 15’s demand:

“I want them to show me how to teach in a communicative way. OK? From A to Z [to illustrate it] Yeah! Not in theory because everything was written...but in practice..show me how it works.” (Teacher 15)
In relation to the teaching of grammar communicatively, Teacher 11 requires the following type of support:

“...(T)o teach grammar, for example, [how to teach grammar] especially how to teach grammar in a communicative way because sometimes an inspector visits a colleague and tells him [that's not the way] you didn’t do that in a communicative way. So, please show me how [aha] and the next time I’ll do it. So, he (the inspector) just makes the remarks and there is no follow up. So I need a workshop. I have a three-year experience and I’m eager to know how to teach certain grammatical points in a communicative way. (Teacher 11)

Demonstration lessons and workshops were the only modes of delivery the teachers suggested perhaps because they tend to be the two most widely used techniques in the Tunisian context. However, teachers assigned two different roles to each technique. They basically favoured 'demonstration lessons' for the illustration of techniques and procedures and workshops as a framework for the exchange of ideas and the design of teaching materials and lesson/unit plans. The practice in the journées pédagogiques is generally to mix both techniques. As such their suggestions were not remote from their past experiences.

6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I have mapped out the learning experiences of the participants in the study and explored their views of salient components of the preparation of an EFL teacher in Tunisia. I also examined their understanding of 'teacher development' and looked at ways of achieving it within the framework of the TED system in place.

The participants' images of their English language learning experiences at secondary and at university level had shaped their perceptions of the English language as form/system and 'civilization' (culture). They were found to hold a dual view of language teacher knowledge as consisting of knowledge of the language (Langue et Civilization) and pedagogical knowledge (the nature of which will be explored in the
The subjects they considered most useful for them as language teachers were Linguistics and Civilisation, which indicates a close link with the latter view. The teachers’ accounts of their professional learning experience during the first two probationary years helped identify two models of TE in place. In the first year the course is purely vocational and in the second year it leans towards the applied science model. The practice inherited from the French Ecole Normale tradition (see section 4.1) rests on a view of teacher learning as a cycle of disconnected experiences but it also perceives teaching as knowing (science) and doing (technology) (Freeman 1994). This philosophy presumes that what experienced teachers need along their careers is occasional updating at the craft level (techniques and procedures) referred to as ‘recyclage’. The teachers’ reports on their experience as trainees indicated that they found the stage (the vocational part) essential for their pedagogical survival, while they perceived the ‘mémoire de fin de stage’ an opportunity for deepening their knowledge about a particular aspect of teaching practice.

In section 6.3 I focused on the issue of teacher development and teacher growth in the context of current TED practices. The analysis revealed that teachers perceived ‘development’ as a process and as outcome. A number of teachers, apparently influenced by ideas generated in a national seminar on teacher development, linked teacher ‘development’ with self-assessment, self-evaluation and self-questioning. They perceived the outcome of the exercise change in the teacher’s practice (itself equated with improvement). I pointed out that the new interest in ‘developing’ teachers rather than ‘training’ and ‘recycling’ them, will require extending the concept beyond instrumentality (see section 2.4.2 on views of ‘teacher development’).

Section 6.3.2 dealt with the teachers’ perceptions of ways to ‘develop’ as professionals in the Tunisian context. The teachers highlighted three areas of interest: pedagogical ideas and skills, language development, and knowledge about the countries focused on in the textbooks (Britain and America). The teachers believed
that they could acquire the information needed through reading and interacting with colleagues (their meaning of 'collaboration'). In practice, however, their reading was confined to one particular English language teaching magazine (*FORUM*) which seemed to meet their interest in practical ideas. The data shows that when expressing their interest in pedagogical ideas, the teachers seemed to fall back on a technical view of teaching (Zahorik 1986). The lack of resources and implicit distrust of 'theoretical knowledge' made the aspired goal of 'keeping up' with new ideas hard to achieve.

The teachers perceived their professional development needs in terms of the curriculum and national examination requirements. They saw themselves as *agents d'exécution* (also employed by Teacher 10) of a particular curriculum that required of them particular teaching skills and specific background knowledge. The teachers were mostly interested in further training intervention focusing on the communicative teaching of individual skills as they perceived them (mainly reading and writing) but did not feel a need to be prepared for the implementation of CLT pedagogy focusing on the communication aspect such as pair-work or group-work (see section 8.2). Their ideas were more influenced by the requirements of the national examinations which, as they pointed out, focus on testing reading and writing and not on listening and speaking.

As to the mode of delivery of further training, there was a wide preference for the 'demonstration lesson' and the workshop. The illustrative power of 'demonstration lessons' matches the perception of pedagogical expertise as the mastery of particular techniques and procedures pointed out in section 6.1.4. The data analysed in chapter 7 will provide further evidence of the dominance of this conception of teacher knowledge among the participants themselves.
CHAPTER SEVEN
CONTEXT-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE FOR TEACHING
ENGLISH IN TUNISIA

This chapter focuses on the interview data on what the participants regarded as necessary knowledge for the teacher of English to have in the local context of ELT in Tunisia. If the subject matter for EFL is the English language itself, then the teacher's conception of linguistic knowledge is central to understanding their perception of what type and level of language mastery is required of the EFL teacher needs how it relates to pedagogical knowledge. The analysis in the previous chapter (section 6.1.4) revealed what aspects of 'received knowledge' the teachers valued most in relation to the job of teaching English in schools. The findings indicated that the teachers held a dual view of subject-matter knowledge: the language *per se* and disciplinary knowledge from academic subjects like Linguistics, History, 'Civilization', and to some extent Literature. The teachers also highlighted the knowledge they gained during the Language Stay. They suggested that the experience contributed to their knowledge of language use covering both the situational and the cultural.

The first part of this chapter examines the teachers' views on the two components of teacher knowledge for teaching or what Gudmúndsdottir and Shulman (1987) termed pedagogical content knowledge. Following Thomas' (1987) framework of Language Teacher Competence, these can be conceptualised as the 'language competence' component and the 'pedagogic competence' component. The second part of this chapter presents the teachers' views about other areas of teacher knowledge; namely, knowledge of the curriculum and teaching materials and knowledge of teaching methods as specified in Wilson et al. (1987) and Grossman (1990). I will close the chapter with a discussion of the implications of the participants' views in the light of the pedagogical changes brought about by the current ELT curriculum. In the next section, I will concentrate on analysing the participants' views on the two components of EFL pedagogical content knowledge as an attempt to come to grips
with what they consider as principal domains of knowledge for teaching English as a foreign language in the Tunisian school context.

7.1 KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR TEACHING ENGLISH IN TUNISIA

Two distinct positions emerged from the teachers' responses: a position that gives priority to mastery of the language, and another that prioritises pedagogical knowledge. Five teachers gave priority to mastery of the language (Teacher 1, Teacher 3, Teacher 4, Teacher 7, and Teacher 8) and four gave priority to pedagogical knowledge instead (Teacher 2, Teacher 5, Teacher 6, and Teacher 13). Three teachers suggested that other domains such as knowledge of the socio-economic context (Teacher 10) and knowledge of learners (Teacher 3 and Teacher 11) were extremely important. Teacher 12 did not elaborate on the area of pedagogical knowledge while Teacher 9 ended up talking about uncertainty in relation to the content and pedagogical knowledge currently required for teaching. I shall concentrate first on analysing the views of teachers who believed command of the language took priority over pedagogical knowledge.

7.1.1 LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE AS A PRIORITY

The views teachers expressed about mastery of the English medium (subject-matter knowledge) revealed that they conceived it as comprising two components: knowing the language as a system and knowing the cultures of Britain and America. They felt the latter aspect was closely linked to the content of the teaching materials they have to deal with on a daily basis. Even though they generally draw on their academic background knowledge from courses like 'Civilisation' and History, they also felt they needed background knowledge on contemporary issues in the world in general and in English-speaking countries (mainly Britain and the US). The teachers felt they needed background knowledge to attend to the students' questions when dealing with issues that might arise out of the texts they have to deal with in class as this extract shows:
"T:...The teacher has to be confident..ready for questions..all sorts of
texts..ready for discussions..all sorts of discussions...

F: So an English language teacher has to keep up with what is happening in
the world basically!

T: Definitely..definitely!" (Teacher 4)

Whenever teachers talked of command of the language as a central component of
teacher ‘expertise’, they meant ‘native-like’ standards. Fluency, accuracy, and
proficiency were considered central. Underlying this emphasis on mastery of the
English medium is a view of the teacher as informant and model in the
teaching/learning situation. Thus, they believed that it was expected of teachers to
show native-like performance; meaning that as a ‘competent’ speaker of the
language, the teacher is not allowed to make mistakes while conducting lessons.
Teacher 7, for instance, put it thus:

“I think you must be a fluent speaker. You must be proficient you know? No
mistakes!” (Teacher 7)

Teacher 1 held a similar position when defining what he considered as the minimum
language proficiency standards to be expected of a professional:

“The teacher should master the language [yeah]. He should master the
language [in terms of fluency?] Language! English language! He should
know how to spell a word, how to pronounce it. I don’t know...it means when
a pupil asks you: “how do you write ‘leisure’?”, you’re not going to say, “let
me check”. “ (Teacher 1)

For Teacher 3 it primarily meant displaying fluency in order to establish
respectability and authority as a teacher. She explained:

“Well, it (command of English) is important! Because...well, the best way
when you are in class is to start with English; only English and from the
start. So, if you are fluent enough to use only English...this helps a lot.
When you have to look for words...pupils...will whisper, “Oh! She doesn’t
speak English herself, so why the hell does she want us to speak English?”
So, when you master the language, that’s really important!” (Teacher 3)
Since the general policy is to teach English through the English medium, resorting to French or Arabic can be perceived as a serious deficiency in teacher qualification and might diminish her authority. From that perspective Teacher 4 was of the view that the ability to speak English fluently and naturally enables the teacher to serve as a knowledge resource for pupils. She argued:

"T: You can't teach English if you don't master the language..if you don't speak it fluently. That's the most important thing!

F: Sorry, in what way is it an important aspect for the teacher..the fluency part?

T: We are expected to speak English in class so how can you speak English from the start to the end if you don't master the language? You are going to translate some words into French if you don't master the language. Well, I think it's sort of evident in the end. The second thing eh..when you speak the language fluently..when you master it, you use words which people use every day and which you can explain to your pupils. When your student in the end of the hour says: "Mrs what does this word mean? I found it in a song"...or whatever and you have to explain to your pupil, you see?"

(Teacher 4)

Therefore, the quality of the teacher’s input in class was believed to depend on both proficiency and fluency in the language. The teacher is meant to be an informant for the learner, whom they perceived as resorting to the teacher for information about anything related to the language.

Likewise, Teacher 8 perceived professional qualification for teaching English as resting upon knowledge of the language in the linguistic sense (i.e. knowledge of the language and about the language). He maintained that while this type of competence was stable and transferable to different work contexts, the pedagogical skills he developed during his training in Tunisia could not be expected to be applicable to new teaching contexts. Below were his views on the nature of linguistic knowledge for teaching:
...I think the most important thing is the language; vocabulary and especially grammar. You know grammar helps in understanding an idea in a text. So, someone who doesn't know a certain structure or has never come across it won't be able to understand this particular idea in the text. So a teacher should know this...So, vocabulary is not important. You might come across three or four difficult words so the pupil can ask you about some difficult words you've never come across or which you don't know. It doesn't matter because the teacher is not a dictionary but it is the structure of the language [the system] how it functions..." (Teacher 8)

As can be deduced from his answer, mastery of the language is equated with mastery of the grammar. Meaning is thus inferred from the structure of the language and not from the use of its lexis in social situations. Along the same 'purist' lines, Teacher 15, presented a view of knowledge of the language perhaps with the ideal speaker/hearer in mind. He believed command of the language depended on three areas of competence: grammar, vocabulary and fluency. Because only a native speaker is perfect, he insisted that what could be expected of the Tunisian language teacher was an approximation of native pronunciation. In response to my question as to the required level of command of English for a teacher of English in Tunisia, he replied:

“Well, he should know the grammatical rules..all of them. He should be able to understand many lexical items. He should be able to speak Tunisian..I would call it Tunisian English because we cannot have the native accent anyway. We now hear about Indian English, American English..why not Tunisian English? Because we can't..we can't speak like native speakers."

(Teacher 15)

Thus, the participants perceived the language competence aspect of teacher knowledge from a formal perspective. They emphasised the teacher's knowledge of the grammar and her ability to speak accurately and fluently. Their views can possibly be attributed to a perception of their role as informants, models and resource persons. Considering the lack of support for English in the community at large (Walters 1999), the position of these teachers is understandable. Nonetheless, the fact that they prioritised language mastery over pedagogical competence can be interpreted as a tendency to see the language teacher as primarily concerned with imparting a body of linguistic knowledge to pupils. In the following section, I will
summarise and comment on the views of the participants who believed that pedagogical knowledge was more central to a teacher's job than linguistic knowledge.

7.1.2 PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE AS A PRIORITY

A number of participants in this study considered pedagogic knowledge to be more vital to the teacher than mastery of the language. Two features emerged from the teachers' responses as to what they considered 'pedagogical knowledge'. Some teachers used it to denote the knowledge and skills of managing learning. Interestingly enough, when prompted about the place of 'methods' in teacher knowledge, the responses revealed that the teachers did not regard method as an essential component of pedagogical knowledge (Teacher 8 and Teacher 2). Teacher 4 and Teacher 6 went as far as suggesting that prospective teachers do not need to be given courses on teaching methods, and argued that practice-oriented training will be sufficient for them to 'pick up' the necessary techniques and procedures. Two teachers made the exception by suggesting that background knowledge about 'methods' as theory was a guarantee of 'good' teacher performance (Teacher 10 and Teacher 11).

A second aspect of teacher 'pedagogical knowledge' emphasised by many teachers was to know how to simplify and distribute the content of instruction in ways that matched the level of the students. It was on these grounds that these teachers downplayed the linguistic knowledge component. They felt that the language used at university level and the courses they had been taught then were unnecessarily complex considering the basic level of the English they had to teach at basic and secondary level. The following extract exemplifies this view although this teacher adjusted her position in the light of my prompts.
"T: ...In my experience, the knowledge I took from my secondary education was enough for teaching (interviewer laughs) Surely!

F: In what way is this possible?

T: Surely, because you've got the programme and it is not very difficult. So what you need is how to teach; a training course not all this American Literature and American Civilisation and so on.

F: Even when you are teaching 7th form and you have all this content about a lot of aspects of American Civilisation?

T: You need it that's right especially with the new programme. You need some knowledge about American Civilisation, American History, talking about Americans [Because it concentrates on America!] Yeah, but not everything.” (Teacher 13)

This teacher's view draws attention to the contrast between the broad and complex nature of university level courses designed with the specialist in mind and the more modest background knowledge needed to teach the curriculum. Similarly, Teacher 2 made a point about the primary importance of pedagogical skills. She commented:

"English language teaching in secondary school does not require a lot of background as much as it needs simplicity and how to deal with learners.” (Teacher 2)

The ability to simplify input for learners was also highlighted by Teacher 5 who recalled that the first difficulty she had met was to learn how to use language that was not too complex for her pupils. She explained:

"...(W)hen I first started teaching, I felt that I needed this simple language. When I began teaching, my language was difficult for my students. I noticed this but I didn't know how to speak because this was the language I studied at university.” (Teacher 5)

A similar difficulty was faced by Grossman's (1990) subjects, who felt the need to overcome the discrepancy that existed between the type of university level specialist language use and the language they needed for use with their learners at high school level.
A strong feature of the participants' conception of 'pedagogical knowledge' was the view that it encompassed the necessary skills for classroom management. For instance, Teacher 6 broke down teacher pedagogical knowledge in terms of organisational skills. She described it as follows:

“(K)nowing class management; how to manage a class, how to stand, how to use the board, how to put pupils in order, how to make them work in groups, how to place them...to make them work in pairs or in groups. All this is part of our job.” (Teacher 6)

This emphasis on the organisation of input to facilitate learning was supported by the ability to structure course content and to deliver it to the pupils in a systematic way. She added:

“...I feel that using the board properly, using different colours, chalk in different colours and underlying things and putting all these details in relation; what is in relation to what...this is very helpful and makes the learner learn quickly. But if we have the tendency to speak only orally or to put words in disorder on the board and to just put them there and to expect the student to take notes...only notes...is really risky.” (Teacher 6)

For teacher 2, a beginner, pedagogical knowledge encompassed mostly the teacher's ability to secure a propitious environment for learning:

“T:...in general a competent teacher is the teacher who knows about the learners, who knows how to understand the interlanguage of the learner, how to manipulate the class, the learner and so on...who...

F: Sorry! ‘manipulate’ what do you mean ‘manipulate’?

T: Eliminate chaos in class...disorder...and at the same time make the learners motivated and especially know how to transfer the information in a way that is not difficult for the learner so that it is not difficult for them to...[follow?] yes, to proceed.” (Teacher 2)

This understanding of classroom management was closely linked to pedagogical survival. Her experience of school life as a new teacher had taught her to give priority to this aspect of classroom life.
Teacher 13 described pedagogical skills in terms of management of time and content implying the importance of planning:

"F: So if we say in order to be able to teach, a teacher of English needs to know English itself. To what extent would you say his knowledge of English should be expanded because we can be eh...

T: He needs first of all to attend 'demonstration lessons' and seminars organised by the inspector.

F: And what will the teacher learn from that?

T: He needs to learn how to teach a lesson...how to plan it, how to set objectives for this lesson, how to control the class, the timing. It means, for example, [how much time?] how much time for each activity and the different kinds of activities. All this! So, the lesson must be planned beforehand." (Teacher 13)

Thus, the teacher's pedagogical knowledge from this perspective is technical in nature. It is based on the ability to plan a lesson and to design and sequence teaching/learning activities to link objectives to procedures (means-ends).

Given the ideas discussed above, it is clear that the participants valued most classroom management skills, which they considered a central feature of pedagogical knowledge. The participants considered the teachers' ability to manage content, time and learner behaviour as major manifestations of teacher's grasp of pedagogical knowledge. While they reported being concerned with simplifying and grading content to facilitate learning, a more important factor seemed to be the ability to push content through by implementing the lesson plan. While they expressed genuine concern for learners to assimilate course content, the teachers made no reference to learning as a process except for Teacher 2 who referred to the "inter-language of the learner".

"F: But ideally what does the teacher need to know about the learners?

T: His/her level [abilities?] Yes, and also the level. The teacher needs to pay attention to the interlanguage of the learner in order to know how to help him or her improve and go to the next stage." (Teacher 2)
By contrast, when teachers were referring to 'Knowing the students' (Teacher 1, Teacher 3, Teacher 6, Teacher 8, and Teacher 10) as a component of pedagogical knowledge, they were not talking of cognitive processes. Indeed, for Teacher 1 and Teacher 3, the purpose of knowing the pupil was to develop an awareness of possible family problems which might have been influencing the pupil's behaviour and/or performance in class. For Teacher 1, this sense of awareness/understanding on the part of the teacher, by inference, helped contain 'deviant' classroom behaviour.

"...The psychology is very important! You should know where your children or your students come from; from poor families or rich families, if they have problems and this can be done by just getting in touch with your kids...who told you that he was not having a lot of problems between him and his father or mother or problems between the mother and the father or whatever problems [or a problem with other students] I don't know. So, if you listen to the kid, he'd tell you, for example, "this morning I had a row with my father" or "there are lots of problems between my mother and father and divorce..." (Teacher 1)

Teacher 3 was referring to problems of anxiety towards the future. She recommended that teachers paid special attention to pupil's psyche:

"...The teachers should know their pupils and take into consideration their problems as teenagers you know? Because they're having a hard time. I think the pupils are really undergoing hardship [related to?] related to everything. They have to work harder and harder. They know that the opportunities are just for the best pupils. It's very selective everywhere and they know that most of them won't [go very far!] Yes, exactly!" (Teacher 3)

For Teacher 10, however, knowing the learners meant situating them in their socio-economic context in order to figure out 'appropriate' ways to handle students from 'privileged' backgrounds. He explained:
"F: ... What is it that the teacher needs to know in order to be able to teach in a Tunisian context considering the limits?

T: Well, I might surprise you. Because what a teacher needs to know here in X, I believe is different from what a teacher needs to know when teaching somewhere else [really?] even within the same country. Strange enough, Tunisia is such a small country, but with such a big cultural variety and there are so many things that you have to take into consideration to have, let’s say, 'safe teaching' and I underline 'safe teaching'. There are things if you don’t take into consideration, you’re in trouble you know.

F: Really? So, what are those ‘environmental factors’ if I may say so?

T: Oh, as far as the social context, social classes, professional position of the parents, social belonging and so on. All of these interfere in one way or another in the teaching situation...” (Teacher 10)

This teacher draws attention to ‘situational knowledge’ (Elbaz 1983) which is developed from the teacher’s interaction with the system of organisation in the school and the community at large.

Another teacher, Teacher 8, presented a specific meaning to the construct ‘knowing pupils’. He used it to mean detecting the pupils’ attitude to learning English. Below is his account of how he went about it:

“T: ... when I teach my pupils I ask them in the first session, “do you like English? And why? If you do, why and if you don’t why?”... so that I know what is the motivation of those who like it and try to motivate those who don’t.

F: So you want to know about your students basically!

T: Yes, and there is a handicap. Some people think it is the language of this eh...[imperialistic country?] especially here in the south.

F: Yes, when you mentioned the purpose for learning English, I thought may be you were talking of the official policy.

T: and the official policy, yeah. I tell them also about the official policy...I tell them it is an obligation. It is an international language. I mean, it is the language of science. I mean, if you don’t know English it is as if you were ignorant or illiterate. Yeah? Like computer science...something really interesting!” (Teacher 8)
As the above accounts demonstrate, the teachers’ views about the need to know learners revolved around the theme of learner attitude and behaviour. All the problems mentioned above can give rise to a pupil’s reluctance to work and/or resistance to the teacher’s authority. The teacher’s need to understand the pupils’ family circumstances, psychological state, or motivation is linked to ensuring cooperation from the pupils. They did not see the circumstances as producing learning difficulties but rather causing ‘discipline’ problems. Failure to do the homework seemed to have been attributed to environmental problems.

To recapitulate, the ideas teachers expressed about the two components of teacher knowledge, command of the language and knowledge of pedagogy, demonstrate that the teachers who gave priority to linguistic knowledge conceived it as knowledge of language as system with emphasis on the ability to speak it with native-like fluency. This conclusion resonates with views about their own experience with learning language analysed in chapter 6. When they talked of the Language Stay, they emphasised its contribution in linguistic terms. They highlighted its role in helping them develop fluency. In addition, the course they found most relevant to their job was Linguistics followed by Civilization and History of Great Britain and America (section 6.1.1.4). With regard to the teachers’ views of pedagogical knowledge, however, the teachers highlighted knowledge of classroom management skills: management of content, management of activities and management of learners. Underlying the pedagogical knowledge teachers depicted is a view of the teacher as expert and craftsperson (McIntyre 1993, Elbaz 1993). There was also implied emphasis on planning skills which following Thomas (1987), “include identifying and organizing activities...which are valid in terms of specific objectives” (38).

Teachers expressed views of pedagogical knowledge as a manifestation of two domains; that is, subject-matter knowledge (content) and pedagogical knowledge (the knowledge of organising and managing life in the classroom) as identified by Berliner (1987). Absent from the teachers’ descriptions of pedagogical knowledge
was any comment about the *Why* of teaching or the teachers' ability to question, reconsider or change teaching goals. The over-riding emphasis is laid on *explaining* language to the pupils and *telling* them about the culture. Evidently, they perceive their role as limited to teaching English as a school subject and transmitting it through the curriculum to the pupils. Their ways of relating to the ELT curriculum will be discussed in the following section.

### 7.1.3 KNOWLEDGE OF THE CURRICULUM

The teachers saw in the curriculum a source of guidance and a reference point for teachers to provide similar content to all pupils in the country. In that sense, they neither saw the idea of a national curriculum as binding or as constraining. The examination of the responses indicated that the teachers were able to talk of the function of a curriculum in general and not of its content as background knowledge for teachers. When the teachers wanted to talk of the sequence and gradation of content, they started to talk of the textbooks rather than the curriculum. The next section examines the way the teachers related to the curriculum and the values that they attached to it.

At one level, many teachers did not seem to have special interest in the curriculum as text, as could be sensed from the teachers' reactions to my question on the curriculum. They often ended up talking about the textbooks or the *Guide Méthodologique* (Teacher's manual) instead or talking of the curriculum and textbooks interchangeably. There were two instances when I was under the impression that the interviewee was talking about the textbooks and not the curriculum (Teacher 4 and Teacher 7). While my question was about the curriculum text, Teacher 4 was referring to the textbooks. She referred to the textbooks as point of reference to infer the objectives of the curriculum.
"F: ...How important also is it for an English language teacher to look up the official programme that the Ministry publishes; the little booklets!

T: Well, you mean all levels?

F: Well, at the moment there are two different texts; one is for the Communicate in English books and a second one that they have just published about 8th and 9th form.

T: Actually, I haven't looked closely into the textbooks. My son is studying in the new book. I overlooked the book [the 8ème année one?] No, I forgot the name of that book [Spread Your Wings?] I overlooked it because in reality my children studied English at the primary level [Ahan!] So, this is mainly why.” (Teacher 4)

Teacher 9, for instance, has the tendency to consult the teacher's manual and textbooks but not the official programme.

"F: And have you looked at the new books for the 8th and 9th form or the official programme for that?

T: Not the official programme. Because I had some relatives who asked me to teach their children so I was obliged to. I'm familiar with the books for 8th and 9th form [not Spread your Wings?] No. [The latest one?] No, and I haven't got the Guide Méthodologique but I know what's in the 8th and 9th form books.” (Teacher 9)

Teacher 7 believed that the curriculum text is helpful to the teacher but in practice he relied on the textbooks to develop an idea about the orientations of the change.

"F: How important is it for the teacher to read the official programmes..the national official programmes!

T: Eh..Right! I think it's essential. It's helpful. Otherwise, I don't know how...

F: Have you read the last programme text? I think in 1995 they started the programme for Say it in English and you have in 1992 another one for Communicate in English. Did you read the programme for that one?

T: Well, for Communicate in English I actually taught with the textbook but for Say it in English, I had an overall look (points to the textbooks).” (Teacher 7)
Judging from the responses above, there seemed to be a belief that all a teacher needed was to know how to plan for instruction is to develop knowledge of the textbooks and the teacher’s manuals. With reference to this particular point, Brumfit and Rossner (1982) noted that the latter reaction is typical of practitioners in the world. It appears that the higher the level of what they referred to as the “decision pyramid”, the less interest and involvement there is on the part of the practitioner. In the same way, the participants in the study did not seem to show any interest in the macro level and seemed to concentrate on the sequence of content. For instance, none of the teachers who happened to have read the curriculum mentioned as a reason for reading it an interest in digging for the general aims and goals of teaching English. On the whole they projected an image of themselves as fitting in the picture painted by Brumfit and Rossner (1982: 227) of teachers being on the receiving end of the decision-making process.

At another level, when teachers happened to give some thinking to the curriculum, they tended to concentrate on its significance as a document rather than on its goals and aims. When prompted about the rationale for discussing the new curriculum text during training sessions, Teacher 10 wavered between a view that legitimises its homogenising function and a more ‘critical’ view of its binding nature as an official document.

“...I think it’s (reading the official programme) important because you’re part of a whole system. You don’t have that private institution in which you are teaching the way you wish. A teacher, I think, is part of a system and we should get to know everything about that system in order to be within the framework of that system and respect the norms and regulations. So, it is very important. [Because I have noticed that especially recently a lot of emphasis has been put on the reading of the official programmes] Yeah, it’s a new tendency...sort of structuring the situation of teachers and inspectors...sort of telling you here is the official programme and when the inspector is there, there should be a document to check whether you’ve done what you are supposed to do. Well, I think it’s kind of ‘institutionalising’ the system.” (Teacher 10)

He seemed to imply that because teachers in Tunisia were functioning within a national system of education, it was expected that they would comply with the requirements of the system; that is, to “respect the norms and regulations” as he put
it. At the same time, he realised that the end of a national curriculum is to put into effect a system of checks on the delivery of desired objectives. What he perceived as a 'new tendency' was the practice in place for the management of the new curriculum I discussed in section 3.5 (Kennedy 1987, Markee 1997).

Teacher 14 also talked of the purpose of a national curriculum *per se* rather than of its usefulness as a document in clarifying the goals, aims, and objectives for teaching English. For Teacher 14, the curriculum is a guarantee of uniform tuition, which was believed to ensure equal preparation for the national exams.

“Of course, you have to look at the official programme so as not to have a different teaching from your colleague. I mean, when you are taught in Béja or when you are taught in Bizert and you have to sit for an exam by the end of the year, you don't have to be a victim of your teacher. You have to pursue the same programme as your other mates in the other parts of the country [em]. I think this is the real objective of looking at the official programme.” (Teacher 14)

From the same perspective of a teaching that is oriented towards national exams, some teachers found in the curriculum a source of information on the targeted content and the language skills to be achieved. They referred to the text to develop an idea about the way the targeted content was broken down over the years of schooling leading to examinations at the end of Basic or Secondary Education (Teacher 8, Teacher 3 and Teacher 5). For the same reason Teacher 6 warned that if teachers did not consult the curriculum, there would be the risk that they would fail to cover the specified content in a balanced way. She explained:

“The teachers who do not have a look at the programme...that is they follow the textbooks. They follow the textbook only...the risk can be that they do not finish the programme and they teach in a certain rhythm...and they have no idea what the focus is on because they (teachers) have a book [that they take day by day] yes, take the book as it is page after page; 100, 101, 102 and so on and the risk is that they don't finish the programme and the pupils in the next year will have problems.” (Teacher 6)
Based on the views expressed so far, teachers appear to conceive the curriculum text as a continuum. They refer to it to develop a general idea about the different stages of the course and how content is distributed over the different years of language study. It also serves as a point of reference as to their pupils’ level of language proficiency inferred from the description of what had to be taught in the previous year(s).

Besides the points raised above about the teachers’ conception of the curriculum as a sequence, it appears that some teachers related to the curriculum to inform planning decisions. One case in point is Teacher 11, who referred to the curriculum to establish links between the levels, the units in the books and the individual lessons for planning purposes. He explained his standpoint as follows:

“Well, I think that it is very important for the teacher to know the official programme for the simple reason that, at least, he will get an idea about what he is going to teach. Well, the textbook is the starting point for him to formulate the lesson and present it in his own way. As a teacher teaching the 6th form, I think he should have knowledge about the kind of things his pupils learned. This gives him an idea about their previous knowledge; their background [their linguistic background?] Yeah, it’s really important. Besides, it’s really important to have an overall idea about the official programme in that the teacher will work out lesson plans that fit in the whole unit and textbook as well.” (Teacher 11)

Likewise, Teacher 13 mentioned interacting with the curriculum to plan across units.

“F: How important is it for a practising teacher to know about the official programme?

T: Very important because sometimes you want to mix between two lessons.

F: So you should know about this. So, you always have a copy of the programme when you prepare your lessons.

T: Of course, the official programme is very important. It guides you.” (Teacher 13)

The two examples above indicate that the curriculum text acquires a special value when teachers engage in comprehensive planning (Clark and Yinger 1987) by
attempting to link individual lessons to the curriculum. However, it must be pointed out that the participants’ accounts show it is not a general tendency among teachers.

Thus, it can be concluded from what the fifteen participants reported that when consulting the curriculum text the participants were more interested in collecting information about ‘what to’, ‘what not to’ and ‘when to’ teach its content rather than in finding out about ‘how’ or ‘for what purpose’ to teach it. The obsession with national exams seems to lie behind the focus on the coverage of content. The teachers projected themselves as primarily concerned with enacting the curriculum and helping learners make the transition from one level to another rather than adjusting its content to meet student learning needs. From the views gathered about the curriculum, it became clear that the main focus of the teacher is coverage of content and progression with learners from one level of presumed attainment to another towards the final destination; namely, the national exams. As their position is embedded in their perception of their role in the instructional process as ‘carriers’ of content to the classroom, the analysis of the teachers’ accounts of how they relate to the textbooks can be used to verify this point further.

7.1.4 KNOWLEDGE OF THE TEXTBOOKS

From the participants’ reaction to my question on how important they thought it was for teachers to consult all the textbooks in use, it was clear that they were more articulate when talking about the textbooks. Even when they were not assigned the new Basic Education level, they proved to have made special efforts to buy and check the content of the new books. They spoke with a lot of enthusiasm and curiosity about the new textbook series but did not recommend that novice/young teachers refer, for instance, to previous textbook series like English for Modern Life or Communicate in English. The views of Teacher 7 and Teacher 13 were typical of that position, while Teacher 10 was the only teacher to recommend that teachers situate themselves within the history of ELT in Tunisia. Teacher 15, in turn, did not think highly of the locally produced textbooks and recommended that fellow teachers
should consult internationally-produced textbooks. The following exchange with Teacher 7 shows how some teachers might be quite ready to welcome change in textbooks putting previous ones behind them:

"F: ... You've been using only Communicate in English but I see in front of you Say it in English and even the latest Spread Your Wings. Why did you feel the need to buy them?

T: Well, to be up-to-date because they were really different from other series.

F: So starting from next year... you would suggest... like if you have somebody teaching now only 7th form in the old secondary system... would you go and tell them they have to read the 8th and 9th form books?

T: Yeah, certainly! Because it's really a very different experience.

F: And if you have somebody teaching 8th and 9th form, would you tell them to go and read Communicate in English?

T: No, no I wouldn't do so." (Teacher 7)

Moreover, the data revealed that the teachers conceived the textbooks as a 'chain' and a 'progression' (in their words) and therefore, believed that it was essential for any teacher to examine the different books in order to form a general idea about the targeted levels of achievement. Starting from her own experience, Teacher 6 recalled how helpful it was to become familiar with the content of the textbooks:

"... From experience, I taught 4th form but I did not, for example, teach along with that another 7th form so I did not know how the progress is built in education through the textbooks and through the programmes. I focussed on the 4th form and 5th form because I was only to teach 4th form and 5th form... so, I found that in the second year I taught my fourth form pupils differently [better?] and much better because I knew what they needed to be prepared for the next level." (Teacher 6)

The participants emphasised the teachers’ responsibility to develop an idea about all the books to be able to cater for new pupils in an adequate way. With the prospect of having to teach pupils coming from Basic Education in mind, Teacher 11 (a teacher at secondary level) felt that it would be necessary for teachers to familiarise themselves with the new series in order to develop an idea about what these students know. He said:
"I should... if not I **must** have a global idea about what these pupils had already known [yeah!] because if I don't know about their previous experience, I might oversimplify or overcomplicate things. I may say this is difficult or I don’t think they have done it before while in reality they have."

(Teacher 11)

Familiarisation with the content of the textbooks and especially the ones covered in the preceding year helped the teacher make the instructional decisions that take into consideration the level of the pupils. In that way, the teacher would assist the learners to make the transitions without being repetitive.

When it came to individual books for specific levels, the same pattern of focusing on content applied. Some teachers expressed the view that examining the whole book was an essential step towards handling the material in a reflective way to teach individual lessons more effectively. Teacher 1 argued that familiarisation with the textbooks helps the teacher to be creative with the management of content:

"...when you know the books and you know what is going to come first and what it is going to come after,...what is going to come finally is...very often say, “no, this grammar point is gonna be taught in unit 10 and not unit 1. I know it. This is better!”...so, the person is free to reshape his unit...I have another way of dealing with that unit." (Teacher 1)

The overview of the individual textbook is thus a stepping stone for practising long-term planning and making short cuts through the units (Teacher 13). When planning a given lesson teachers also need to develop an idea about what the pupils have learnt to plan for further instruction. From the participants’ accounts emerges a view of the textbooks as the arms and tools of the language teacher in Tunisia. Teaching English in schools is simply and clearly the delivery of the content of the textbooks in a strategic and systematic way.

I have thus far analysed the teachers’ views on teacher knowledge of the curriculum and textbooks as components of knowledge base for teaching. The analysis revealed
that the overall concern was with knowing about the content of the textbooks rather
than the text of the curriculum. The participants were mainly concerned with
delivering the content of the textbooks to the pupils in order not to put them at a
disadvantage when taking national exams or when moving to another level. They did
not make any allusion to the fact that textbooks embody a teaching methodology or
promote a given type of learning processes and experiences. This attitude is
congruent with the perception of the role of the teacher as manager and technician
'carrier' of decisions taken at a higher level (Allwright 1981, O'Neill 1982). From
this perspective, it is highly unlikely that teachers engage in any type of critical
examination of the teaching materials or attempt to go beyond what is in the books.
In the following section I will deal with the teachers' views on the importance to be
attached to knowledge of teaching 'methods'.

7.1.5 KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING 'METHODS'

This section analyses the teachers' views on the value of knowledge of teaching
'methods'. Behind my question is an assumption that knowledge of 'methods' is an
essential part of teacher pedagogical knowledge. As explained in chapter two, the
idea of teaching prospective teachers about 'methods' is still embryonic in many
departments. Therefore, experienced teachers cannot be expected to be informed
about all the fads and fashions of twentieth century teaching methods. However,
according to the specifications of the EFL curriculum, it is implied that the
Communicative Method (or some version of it) will be implemented in classrooms.
Their views about other methods can be an indicator of their perception of the
concept of 'method' and whether they regard it as part of teacher pedagogical
knowledge. An examination of the teachers' responses revealed, however, that
teachers held different views of 'method'. Some teachers tended to have a view of
'method' as merely a set of prescriptions about procedures and techniques. While
conscious that according to the requirements, a CLT methodology should be applied,
some teachers tended to question commitment to one method and proclaimed
'eclecticism'. The analysis will attempt to explain what the teachers' motives were
for adopting an 'eclectic' stance in a context where the 'official method' is allegedly CLT.

7.1.5.1 PERCEPTIONS OF 'METHOD'

A number of teachers adopted the position of “method is dead”. Teacher 2 and Teacher 8, for instance, contended that she did not associate instructional decisions with the idea of applying one particular method. Teacher 2 also held the same view:

“F: So how do you learn the different techniques to be used for each method?

T: It depends on the situation. I don’t have this in mind in advance because I don’t have enough knowledge about the different methods. I just heard about many of them.

F: But you try to apply them in the classroom!

T: No, I don’t have this as a primary objective saying this is the methodology and it just comes like that [naturally!] Yes.” (Teacher 2)

Teacher 8, thought that the instructional decisions a teacher makes are based on intuition and tacit knowledge about what is there to be done.

“T: When I told you I was talented...I don’t know...may be I was not talented. I know what is Grammar Translation, what is Audio-lingual. We studied this...May be because I know this but it was in my subconscious so I didn’t find any difficulty. I found that I could convey the idea. Even when the pupils don’t understand, I can give them simplified things and they are satisfied.

F: Also, you know...did you feel the need to know the techniques like special techniques proper to the different methods?

T: Yes,...I find this theory. Sometimes you do something in practice and you don’t know why (laughs). You feel it is necessary to do this. It is like something instinctive!” (Teacher 8)

Therefore, this teacher was arguing for the tacit in teaching (Elbaz 1983) and did not seem to believe that his practice was already informed by his ‘received knowledge’
about ‘methods’. He did not see the relevance of labels and ‘theories’ (descriptions of methods) as helpful in solving problems arising in the classroom.

From a slightly different angle, other teachers saw the knowledge of ‘methods’ as merely technical. Teacher 4 held the view that an experienced teacher could automatically connect with and convert into new ways of teaching. Based on what she said in the following extract, she believed a quick in-service training course would do. She explained:

“F: When you used English for Modern Life and then Communicate in English, you had this opportunity to experience that before but for somebody who is just going to start now teaching in schools and finds the Communicative Approach in place, probably we need to inform them at the level of the university about what was there before.

T: I don’t think it’s important. It is the role of inspectors..of the trainers [to illustrate them!] Yes, the techniques and you get into it. For example, when I first taught I used the old method..the one I was taught with and then when I was home after my interruption, I got back to teaching, it was a new method so I observed a few lessons; two or three lessons and that was it. It wasn’t something really hard to grasp or...you got into it very quickly...” (Teacher 4)

Thus, ‘Method’ for her denotes the ‘procedures’ without the level of ‘design’ or ‘approach’ (Richards and Rogers’ 1986). The latter position is based on a view of teacher change as dealing with the behavioural and not the conceptual (Calderhead 1987, Guskey 1989). Incidentally, this teacher and Teacher 8 turned out to be less permeable to change (see section 8.2.1 and 8.3.1).

Moreover, when knowledge of ‘methods’ was considered an important aspect of pedagogical knowledge, it was perceived as knowledge of a set of techniques and procedures.
“F: So would you suggest that at a pre-service stage may be like us at university..in the fourth year we have the TEFL methodology course so it covers aspects of teaching methods...

T: Yes, that’s a good idea. At least present every technique and show what? [examples?] Examples and the benefit of it and then...[so that they know] so that you let the teacher choose.” (Teacher 1)

Clearly, the choice is based on different courses of action and the ability to ‘choose’ is based on acquiring a repertoire of techniques from different methods. His suggestion implied that the benefit of each can be demonstrated and not just discussed in the abstract.

By contrast, two participants expressed views that are reminiscent of Widdowson’s idea of mediation (Widdowson 1993). They considered theoretical knowledge (expert ideas from Applied Linguists) about teaching ‘methods’ as contributing to teacher quality. Teacher 10 and Teacher 11 stated that the more teachers knew about teaching methods, the better. Reflecting on his experience with two TEFL courses, one attended at university in Tunis and one in the UK, Teacher 11 emphasised the value of theoretical background knowledge saying:

“It’s really important to study this (the TEFL course) at university. Well, I liked the course at university and later as a teacher I realised how important that was. It was really of great importance. Knowing the theoretical bases of teaching is really helpful! I mean, when you are doing something you’re knowledgeable about...you’ll certainly excel in doing it. So the theoretical knowledge serves as a guide to the teacher to attain his teaching objective at the end of the lesson after going through such or such activity.” (Teacher 11)

Likewise, Teacher 10 linked knowledge of ‘methods’ with reflexivity and creativity. He suggested that knowledge of methods equipped the teacher with the flexibility needed to widen the perspective of teaching English. He recommended that novice teachers would be given an overview of the methods as part of their professional training:
"I think the importance of the methods is to determine or to build up an efficient channel of communicating knowledge to the learner in such a way that the learner goes beyond seeking knowledge for the sake of taking an exam and that's the end of it. I believe the more you know about these methods, the easier it is for you to achieve an efficient teaching and to achieve a beneficial situation for the learner. That's the way I regard this." (Teacher 10)

It is worth noting that in his understanding, 'received knowledge' enabled the teacher to formulate teaching goals that went beyond teaching for passing examinations. In other words, this background knowledge helps the teacher transcend the confined context of teaching language merely as a school subject.

Based on the teachers' views, it can be concluded that the majority of the participants were speaking from a view of teaching as a craft. They considered the theories underlying 'methods' of little effect on a teacher's decisions, which they regarded as the result of experiential wisdom and intuition rather than knowledge of different 'methods'. Some teachers believed knowledge of 'methods' covers only the level of techniques and procedures and that these can be applied in the classroom as options. In general when teachers considered knowledge of 'methods' important, it was for the prospect of practising 'eclecticism'. The teachers' understanding of 'eclectic' practice will be explored and discussed in the following section.

7.1.5.2 PERCEPTIONS OF 'ECLECTICISM'

The data analysed below is a follow up on the question of knowledge of ELT 'methods'. As highlighted above, the participants (except for Teacher 3) advocated 'eclecticism' as the necessary solution for teaching English in Tunisia. I examine the data to identify their understanding and purpose of being 'eclectic' and then discuss the significance of this position for the process of curriculum change.
The first argument in favour of ‘eclecticism’ was based on the belief that it allows for variation and adjustment of provision to best match the learning/teaching aims and objectives, the type of learners involved, and the materials used. Therefore, the teachers argued, it is impossible for teachers to meet the needs of the students and the demands of the teaching situation in Tunisia if they rely on just one method. In the following extract, Teacher 8 justified the ‘eclectic’ position along these lines:

“T: I think there is no method which is one hundred percent perfect. For each method, there are des lacunes? [gaps?] Exactly! So in this way you can teach in a communicative way using something from the Grammar Translation Method, something from the Audio-lingual Method..may be creating a new method yourself. Why not! That’s what it means to be ‘eclectic’. I think it is a necessity.

F: And you think it is practised in general?

T: I think..in general eh..because there will come the day when we will criticise CLT and we will have a new method. So, this method in which you believe one hundred percent now, and think it is perfect will be criticised later, so in this way we should from the beginning know that it is just a question of relativity. Well, it’s a good method..its objectives are quite good. I mean, communicate correctly and perfectly in a good way for the pupils and learners in general but we should know that it has some gaps and why not try the other methods.” (Teacher 8)

Thus, two important ideas emerge from his illustration. First, ‘eclecticism’ as practice is not a denial of the existence of ‘methods’ but rather the practice of ‘picking up’ the techniques, which are ‘appropriate’ to the situation. That is, the teacher selects across ‘methods’ without bias towards any ‘method’ in particular. Thus, ‘eclecticism’ seemed to be perceived as a strategy to avoid the ‘gaps’ in each ‘method’. For Teacher 8, this stance helps teachers distance themselves from the ‘method’ in vogue (in this case CLT) and, presumably do what is ‘best’ for the pupils. Likewise, Teacher 15 called for ‘eclecticism’ mainly to counter CLT practice. He suggested the following:

“I think when you teach a lesson..when you prepare your lesson plan, your lesson plan shouldn’t be mainly communicative OK? Your lesson plan should be ‘eclectic’. That means, you should take from the Audio-lingual Method what you think is good for that lesson.” (Teacher 15)
Thus, for him 'eclecticism' was the mixing of two methods (precisely the Audio-lingual and the Communicative). Therefore, the true purpose of being 'eclectic' was to preserve some aspects of the Audio-lingual 'method' because there was some 'good' in it. In response to my hypothetical question about what he would tell a teacher who claims to be committed to one method only, he advanced the same argument about the rise and fall of 'methods' advanced by Teacher 8 (above):

"Right! I'd tell him that this Communicative Approach is going to change. It is not going to be with us for ever. So, like for example, the Audio-lingual Method was in Tunisia for about...[twenty-five years] now it is nearly finished but we try to get the best of that method and we try to apply it to our lessons." (Teacher 15)

While he seemed to be convinced that any popular method would eventually lose popularity and gradually disappear, what followed from his suggestion was that teachers retained aspects of the Audio-lingual Method.

Other teachers saw in opting for 'eclectic' practice a way of making use of what they perceived more effective techniques. The following teacher argued that repetition drills were the 'best' way to teach pronunciation in the context of schooling in Tunisia:

"T:....so knowledge of drilling is of great use, for example. That's why I said for beginners 4th form ex-régime..we can't apply the Communicative Approach in its totality [yeah!] That's why I call it a pre-communicative stage. For a beginner..for someone who doesn't know how to use the language..how can we say..expect him to communicate? So I mean the pupil has to have a bit of linguistic knowledge which will be a starting point for him to communicate his message.

F: What do you do with 4th year beginners? They are beginners so do you use drills with them?

T: Yeah, yeah. I myself make use of drilling..repetition...it is true that it is 'stereotyped' and 'stigmatised' as Audio-lingual but I think of it as [valuable!] Yes, as a precious technique when used with the 4th formers. It's really a valuable technique." (Teacher 11)
Likewise, Teacher 14 found it necessary to resort to repetition with beginners. She believed that the sound system of the language could only be acquired through repetition. She explained:

“...sometimes, for example, you are teaching numbers or something like the alphabet so you have to go back to the Audio-lingual method OK? To make them acquire this sound. They must be familiar with the sound ‘a’ [ei] not [ ] and ‘i’ [ai] not [i:] OK? [especially that we have interference from French. Yeah.] It’s like that...sometimes even if you use them like a song, for example, when I teach the alphabet I just sing A,B,C,D,E (she sings!) so I make something..a rhythm to make them follow me so it’s now more..[Audio-lingual?] Yeah Audio-lingual [so you use repetitions. You would be in support of being ‘eclectic’ in that sense] Yeah in that sense but maybe more communicative...” (Teacher 14)

Another illustration of the same position came from Teacher 7 who was also teaching beginners. In response to my question about whether he resorts to certain ‘forbidden’ techniques, he replied:

T: One thing I can think of is the use of phonetics because there isn’t much emphasis on phonetics but I believe that pronunciation is very essential to speakers [so putting the phonetic symbols helps] sometimes while introducing a new word, I would write it [the whole word] the phonetic transcription of the word.

F: In what way do you think that helps the learners also to learn how to pronounce it?

T: Right..Just to speak correctly! So that when they go home and forget how it was pronounced in class, they can reproduce the sounds by themselves.” (Teacher 7)

Thus, his decision to resort to the phonetic symbols was aimed at promoting ‘correct’ pronunciation. In fact, he would not be in support of teaching just comprehensible pronunciation as advocated by CLT proponents. For Teacher 15, however, ‘eclecticism’ allowed the preservation of the principle of automation and habit formation by means of drilling.
F: What is it in particular that you think in the Audio-lingual is useful?

T: Is useful? Structure drills...[substitution drills?] Yeah, substitution drills...all kinds of drills are very important [so you resort to that from time to time with 8th form...especially with beginners] 8th form and 9th form [and how do the students respond to that?] I think they like it because it gives confidence in the pupils. They feel confident because [they think they are using the language?] They think they are using the language and not making mistakes. I think that drills are...in my opinion...very important. That's why now we find a good pupil; even if he has 16/20 or 17/20 and he doesn't know the difference between the verb 'to have' and the verb 'to be' Ok? Because he hasn't used them enough. There weren't many tasks to use them. Then they haven't become mechanical. I think there should be [there should be practice!] They should practice.” (Teacher 15)

Judging from this teacher’s explanation, what he had in mind was a blend of the Audio-lingual and the Structural Method with the ultimate aim of preventing the occurrence of mistakes. Thus, it appears that the teachers quoted above start from the view that ‘practice’ can only be mechanical. In other words, they do not think pronunciation can be taught in any other way except through repetition and drilling.

Other than the issue of teaching ‘correct’ pronunciation, Teacher 4 and Teacher 12 expressed concern over the teaching of grammar within a CLT framework. They disagreed with what they perceived as the de-emphasis of the practice and reinforcement phase. They observed that teachers practising a communicative methodology are not thorough when it comes to explaining a grammar point (the usage aspect) and seem to skip the practice phase. Teacher 4 put the charge against communicative procedures as follows:

“...I always go to other schools and observe lessons, structural points like...I take the example of inversions, you know? Just one example is written on the board or even not on the board but on their worksheet...one example and they pass on the next thing. I can be sure that [they don't get it!] No, they don't get it. They will make mistakes if the teacher does not take the time to insist on that and use many examples [have them practice!] Of course, or make them write examples on their copybooks and then give them homework about that.” (Teacher 4)
In the same way Teacher 12 doubted whether the mere presentation of grammatical points and structures without detailed explanation and controlled practice would help learners master these forms. Though she did not disagree with the communicative emphasis on contextualisation of grammar, she found it necessary to strike a balance by adding a reinforcement phase. She explained:

"T:... (now) we don't spend a whole session on grammar and each grammar point is going to be taught [implicitly?] implicitly within the context.. within the reading comprehension or the listening comprehension and that at the end of the lesson, if we have time, we recycle and give an exercise. But this is not sufficient! It can be sufficient for 'good' students but not for average or weak students. It is not possible!

F: So sometimes you resort to the explicit way of teaching grammar. This is the rule and...

T: Yes, I never start by giving a rule. I agree that this is completely bad. If I give the rule, the students follow it and that's it. I can't make sure. I always give an example and ask the students to express it differently and sometimes there is something missing but I always try to help them to find the rule themselves after making the change [then you give them the rule and make them practice] yes, and write it on the board in a different colour and ask them to learn it by heart and give them for homework a practice exercise..."

(Teacher 12)

From the explanation above, it can be deduced that by being 'eclectic' teachers continued to cater for the 'old' emphases on accuracy and grammar. They believed language could only be acquired when teachers allowed time for extensive practice and reinforcement exercises. These views lead to the conclusion that the teachers' views of language and language learning remained embedded in an Audio-lingual framework. As demonstrated in chapter 6 (sections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2), this was how these teachers learnt the language themselves and, in the case of the more experienced teachers, that was the way they had taught it for a number of years (Abdesslem 1992). However, these teachers did not perceive the practice of 'eclecticism' as the perpetuation of tradition (Lortie 1975, Buchman 1987). They rather started from feeling a sense of duty to counter the expected unsatisfactory outcomes if a CLT methodology only was to be applied. According to the participants' understanding of 'mixing' and 'blending' methods, it can be gleaned that, in fact, they resorted to a limited number of techniques normally 'banned' in a CLT framework such as mechanical oral and structural repetition drills and phonetic
transcriptions. They perceived that these techniques were useful and compatible with the Tunisian EFL context where the classroom is the only place where the learners received language input.

In addition, the argument they gave was that some techniques were more conducive to learning than others. Some teachers argued that the materials at hand (type of text, type of activity, type of topic, etc.) determine the need for being ‘eclectic’. Teacher 1 argued:

"I don’t think there is a ‘good’ method and a ‘bad’ method. There is a text which asks for a particular method and there is a method for a special time."

(Teacher 1)

The gist of this teacher’s argument was that the Communicative Approach was not always the answer, yet he also implied that the textbooks did not include the materials that match the requirements of the ELT curriculum.

Following a slightly different line of argument from Teacher 1, Teacher 6 stated that the same lesson (and perhaps the same materials) could be taught in two different ways relying on one method or another. What follows from her view is an image of the teacher as technician; someone who is able to teach a lesson following the Audio-lingual Method and the next following the Communicative Method.

Furthermore, ‘eclecticism’ can be advocated for quite idiosyncratic reasons. For Teacher 10, ‘eclecticism’ is a form of escapism from the prescriptions of curricula and textbooks. He perceived it as a way of giving expression to the art/craft side of teaching (Zahorik 1986, Eisner 1983). What he elsewhere called “the human side” and “the individual addition”. In other words, when teachers abide by the methodological requirements of one method, there will be no way for them to be creative and attend to the needs of the learners and the demands of the situation in the school and community as argued by Holliday (1994). In response to my question on whether it was possible for teachers in Tunisia to be ‘eclectic’, he replied:
“They can’t because..we talked about the official programme earlier..having things set up and organised is good but then too much, that’s bad. As I said, you end up having the feeling of you’ve got to apply that and that [you don’t have any choice!] You have no choice and in a teaching situation, if the personal addition is not permitted or if there is nothing for the teacher to add..nothing personal, I think teaching should become electronic and that’s the end of it. The students staying at home and getting taught by internet...But if you are not allowed some room for personal addition..let it be taking into consideration the social and cultural context..there are things I may add here I cannot add next door simply because the learners we have here are different from the students next door. But the team of teachers here and there respect the official programme. They’ve got to have some room to add personal things depending on what the students may accept to do or can do or the ability to meet the needs of the students.” (Teacher 10)

Thus, ‘eclecticism’ in his view is a form of positive resistance to prescriptions and the narrow perspective of teaching English as a school subject. It is practice by breaking rules, as Fanselow (1977) would have it.

Two ways of conceptualising ‘eclectic’ practice emerged from the data. The first belief system looks at ‘eclecticism’ as an effort to break free from the doctrines of the method in vogue and to preserve old ‘useful’ and ‘efficient’ practices. The data showed that teachers in the study also start from a defensive position towards CLT. They believe that CLT fails to attend to certain pedagogical aims the teachers consider as essential for learning the language (accurate pronunciation and mastery of grammatical forms). Therefore, behind the popularity of the idea of being ‘eclectic’ was a view of ‘good’ language learning as the mastery of forms and accurate pronunciation and a perception that CLT was not the ‘right’ method to pursue that goal. The practice of ‘eclecticism’, as they presented it, favoured what was old over what was new. From that angle, ‘eclecticism’ could be viewed as a compromise position as pointed out by Stern (1983b) who remarked that a similar phenomenon was witnessed in Britain and Europe during the inter-war years when the Direct Method was first introduced. At that time, he explained, it was decided not to taboo the use of translation and the resulting method was called the ‘compromise method’. I find the participants’ position towards CLT had given rise to a similar ‘compromise’ situation as the one described by Stern.
The findings presented in this section show clearly that the participants have not made the philosophical shift towards a CLT view of language. It can be sensed through the teachers’ accounts that the Audio-lingual and the structural approach to language teaching still have a strong hold on the participants’ belief systems. The data collected in chapter 6 on the teachers’ description of their favourite teachers and their views on the way they themselves learnt the language (section 6.1.1 and 6.1.2) confirm the same view of language and how it is ‘ideally’ learnt.

‘Eclecticism’ can have a therapeutic effect in a context of pedagogical change. If old practice is not tabooed, practitioners can be spared the feeling of professional inadequacy resulting from feeling de-skilled and failing to implement the innovation. The findings might suggest that ‘eclecticism’ is a manifestation of a transitional phase in the process of implementing change. One might argue that the ‘blending’ and ‘mixing’, no matter how biased towards the old, provide a supportive atmosphere for the gradual introduction of change. It can be expected that practitioners adopt the kind of practice they find feasible and compatible in their situations and in the long run incorporate the innovation in their repertoire. On the negative side, however, encouraging ‘eclecticism’ can give rise to theoretical incoherence that can only be overcome by dissociating ‘theory’ from ‘practice’. In the following extract, it appears that the teacher does not start from an analysis of ‘methods’ but rather an analysis of learners’ reactions to instruction:

“...There are many types of methods as you said Audio-lingual, Communicative, Grammar Translation, etc. But I have chosen something else taking into consideration every method [you’re ‘eclectic’!] Yes, sometimes I resort to the Audio-lingual Method and sometimes when I feel tired and the students need to be calmed down, I resort to the Audio-lingual Method and sometimes when I feel that they are not understanding and not following, I try to motivate them and use the Communicative Method. Even with the individual skills..I think they can be taught in this manner.”

(Teacher 2)
Moreover, the teachers' justification for 'eclecticism' seemed to be associated with two main assumptions. The first assumption is that teachers claim that they select 'the best' of each method on the basis of comparing and contrasting methods. As demonstrated in many reviews of contrastive research in that area (Stern 1983b, Chaudron 1988, Sheen 1995), the results of studies focusing on contrasting methods were far from being conclusive and therefore, no such information is available for teachers in that respect. The second assumption is related to the practitioner's presumed ability to apply any method (in the restricted sense of technique) any time to any teaching materials. This view presumes that material design is a value free activity and that teachers are in command of a large repertoire of techniques related to all 'methods'. In the case of the teachers who took part in this study there was no evidence that they were referring to methods other than the Audio-lingual or the Structural. Thus, it appeared that by adopting an 'eclectic' position, they could be dismissive of certain aspects of CLT.

7.2 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The aim of this chapter was to analyse the teachers' conception of pedagogical content knowledge for teaching English in Tunisia. In the first part of the analysis, I dealt with their conception of language teacher competence with regard to the language mastery component and the pedagogical component. The analysis revealed that the participants were in agreement as to the importance of both components for teaching though some swayed towards the language mastery components and others more towards the pedagogical component. Language competence for teaching English for the participants meant knowledge of the purely linguistic (the system and its rules) and the cultural (History and 'civilization'). Mastery of the language is coupled with the ability to use the language naturally and fluently. I have argued that this representation of teacher knowledge is closely linked to a view of the teacher as informant and resource.
The teachers who emphasised pedagogic knowledge broke down this type of knowledge into two domains: knowledge of course content and knowledge of classroom management. The majority of the respondents conceived pedagogical knowledge in terms of management skills. That is, skills in distributing content over teaching activities and organising for instruction in a systematic and rational way. Other areas of pedagogical knowledge emerged in the midst of the discussion, the strongest of which was what teachers called “knowledge of pupils”. An examination of the teachers’ elaboration on this point showed that they attached different meanings to this construct. It meant an awareness of the pupils’ social and economic background for some and the psychological state for others. This type of knowledge was linked to unusual behaviour or attitude on the part of the pupil. The teachers’ awareness of these affective variables might give teachers reasons for tolerating ‘unacceptable’ classroom behaviour on the part of these particular pupils. The fact that teachers showed concern for such information can be linked with concern with control and discipline. It was surprising to note that the teachers did not really link ‘knowing the learner’ with learner styles and strategies.

Interestingly, the participants did not consider knowledge of teaching ‘methods’ as an important component of pedagogical knowledge. At best teachers perceived ‘methods’ at the behaviour level and considered knowledge of ‘methods’ (i.e. a set of techniques and procedures) as helpful to teachers to practice ‘eclecticism’. However, when their ideas about ‘eclectic’ practice were examined closely (see section 7.1.5.2 above), it became clear that this stance was a way of denying the plausibility of some communicative principles. The analysis showed that the teachers’ beliefs about language and language learning have not changed to match the tenets of communicative language teaching.

If CLT is the method intended for application, the teachers’ attempts to deny its key features signalled a situation of *malaise* among the practitioners. The findings confirm that the participants were unable to make the shift away from emphasis on form and accuracy. With the national exams in mind, they believed teachers to be
best judges as to which learning experiences pay off at the end. From the teachers’
accounts of the way they handle the curriculum and textbooks, they seemed to
perceive them as a homogenising force. Incidentally, this function can not be served
by committing themselves to one method and particularly not CLT. When talking of
the curriculum, the teachers represented themselves as functioning in a ‘modern’
educational paradigm (Hargreaves 1994). The participants accepted the role of
managers and transmitters of the content of a standardised curriculum (i.e. what is in
the textbooks) to the pupils in the most efficient way possible with the aim of
increasing their chances of success in national exams.
CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCEPTIONS OF TEACHING AND ISSUES RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CLT PEDAGOGY

In this chapter I analyse data on the teachers' views on what they consider a 'successful' lesson and examine these views in the light of two models of teaching: the transmission and the interpretation model (Barnes and Shemilt 1974, Kennedy 1991). I will then focus on analysing the teachers' accounts of their experience with implementing two aspects of CLT pedagogy. The first aspect pertains to teaching through pair/group work and the second to the prospect of teaching for learner autonomy. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of the implications of the participants' views and reports on their experience with implementing the general goals and recommendations of the newly introduced ELT curriculum.

8.1 TEACHERS' CONCEPTION OF TEACHING

This part of the analysis focuses on the participants' criteria for successful teaching and/or the 'competent' teacher. Fully conscious of the disputable nature of the terms 'competent' and 'successful', I have left it to them to express their views in their own terms. An examination of the responses revealed a number of criteria or indicators of how the participants valued the events, actions and exchanges during an English lesson. The analysis and categorisation of their responses enabled me to draw conclusions about the predominant orientation in the participants' thinking about 'successful' teaching. A conception of teaching as transmission of knowledge with the teacher as controller of the lesson was found to be predominant among the teachers.

To interpret their views, I found it helpful to rely on a distinction made by Barnes and Shemilt (1974) and evoked by Kennedy (1991) in his comparative study of Malaysian and British undergraduates and their experience with introducing new
methodologies. I will also draw on Olson’s (1981) distinction between what he referred to as ‘high influence’ versus ‘low influence’ teaching to situate the participants’ views within an identifiable frame. The researcher is however conscious of the fact that the data only reveals what the participants considered on the spur of the moment as priority criteria for ‘good’ teaching. The meanings inferred are only valid to the extent that they reveal the participants’ orientations in thinking about teaching a language lesson in a Tunisian school setting and the function of teachers and learners within it. If the data is examined from the angle of teacher thinking, the findings can be said to have serious implications for practice in the context of pedagogical change in Tunisia (see section 3.4.3 on the current curriculum).

When the teachers’ responses are examined in the light of the transmission and interpretation models of teaching, it became clear that the majority of the participants’ descriptions of what they regarded as a ‘successful’ lesson fitted a transmission model of teaching. Only two teachers (Teacher 5 and Teacher 14) could be said to have talked of the ‘successful’ lesson in terms of an interpretation model while two others (Teacher 10 and Teacher 11) depicted a mixed model. For Teacher 10 the type of lesson he valued retained some aspects of the transmission model (objectives/ends) mixed with a humanistic touch and a display of interpersonal skills. He emphasised the interpersonal teacher-learner communication and the teacher’s attentiveness to the learners’ reactions. Teacher 11 added a focus on developing in the learner the ability to integrate the skills and on helping learners produce personal language as criteria for ‘good’ teaching. For these two teachers the attempt to attend to the learner is fitted into a larger teacher efficiency framework. I shall turn to discussing the view of the majority regarding the ‘successful’ lesson as transmission of knowledge achieved through control of the content and the participants in the teaching situation. I then address the implications of the participants’ views for the prospect of implementing the current ELT syllabus in Tunisia.

In the table below (Table 8.1), I compiled extracts from the teachers’ descriptions of the features of the ‘successful’ lesson that reflect most their implicit views of
teaching. Words and phrases were emphasised in Italics to highlight the meanings teachers conveyed through their use of language while describing their image of the ‘successful’ lesson. On the right side column, I indicated my attempt to identify the model of teaching that these teachers were depicting through their criteria of the ‘successful’ lesson or ‘successful’ teacher for that matter. I used ‘T’ for transmission, ‘I’ for interpretation and ‘T/I’ for the mixed model. Teacher 9 talked rather of a lesson that might illustrate the Communicative Approach and therefore I did not include an extract for her. I believe the teachers’ views of the ‘successful’ lesson (‘good’ teaching), the ‘successful’ teacher or the ‘competent’ teacher as uncovering an implicit conception of teaching. The hypothetical lesson(s) the teachers were referring to can be assumed to represent their favoured model of teaching.

The language used by the participants suggests an image of the teacher as playing a dominant role in the teaching/learning situation. As can be deduced from some of the extracts in Table 8.1, a recurrent feature of the ‘competent’ teacher mentioned by the participants was her ability to bring about learning (Teacher 4, Teacher 6 and Teacher 8) by simplifying input and mastering the ‘how’ of teaching. The participants depicted an image of teachers as ‘experts’ who set objectives and carry out instructions in a systematic way employing techniques and procedures that suit the objectives and the content of the lessons. Four teachers reported that when observing another teacher performing a lesson, they generally focused on how and whether the teacher has attained the objective(s) of the lesson (Teacher 8, Teacher 10, Teacher 13, and Teacher 15). This means/ends perception of teaching implies a view of teaching as ‘instruction’ (Allwright 1984a, Stern 1983b). Teachers talking from that perspective, considered the objectives and content of the lesson as one entity. For teacher 13 the objectives could stand for the items presented to the learners. Teacher 15 talked of the students understanding the objectives. Content and objectives could be put into operation through the synchronisation of teaching activities. Timing and pace emerged as relevant criteria for the ‘success’ of the lesson. Indeed, Teacher 11 portrayed the ‘successful’ teacher as an ‘efficient’ teacher, meaning able to communicate content to learners in an efficient/economical way. Indeed, the latter teacher and Teacher 8 used the adjective ‘smooth’ when
talking of presenting language items and the ‘flow’ of the activities towards the objectives. ‘Smoothness’ presumes the teacher’s skill and competence in maintaining the flow, pace, and sequence of the activities.

Thus, a view of teaching as consisting of presenting input was a strong feature of the participants’ descriptions of ‘successful’ lessons. The view of teaching as input transformed into output is evident in the expressions used by Teacher 4, Teacher 8 and Teacher 13. The implication is that there is a content to be passed on to learners (‘message’ to be conveyed) and that it is the teacher’s task to find ways to have learners “reproduce what is taught to them” (Teacher 4). The responses given by pupils to the teachers’ questions were perceived as proof of ‘understanding’ the lesson, and by implication, a valid measurement as to the efficiency of the teacher. Teacher 4 and Teacher 12 especially appraised whether learning is taking place by making inferences about what the teacher was trying to teach and an intuitive diagnosis of signs of ‘understanding’. Perhaps their tacit knowledge as experienced teachers equips them with this special ability to detect signs of ‘understanding’. They used verbs like ‘feel’ (Teacher 6), ‘sense’ (Teacher 15), ‘appears’ (Teacher 8); words indicating that they drew on their tacit knowledge of learners and classrooms to gain access to the unobservable.

From the way the participants talked about learning and teaching it was evident that they believed that input and output were two faces of the same coin. Indeed, there were no signs of them having a concept like Allwright’s (1984b) ‘uptake’ in their frames of reference. Indeed, when the teachers used ‘understand’, they seemed to imply that it is the direct outcome of the teacher’s work not that of the learners efforts or abilities. They were particularly attracted to witnessing the teachers figuring out ways to best ‘make learners learn what they were required to learn’. Thus, they valued explicitness on the part of the teacher. The ‘good’ teacher “makes himself clear and well understood” (Teacher 4) and ensures that “the students understood...almost everything with no difficulty” (Teacher 6).
Table 8.1: Teachers’ descriptions of the ‘successful’ lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Teachers’ explanations of the preferred model</th>
<th>Model</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>“When the students respond... when there is interaction between the students and the teacher... when they (the pupils) are able to reproduce what is taught to them... When he (the teacher) makes himself clear and well understood.”</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>“In my opinion the competent teacher is the one who tries to teach his students with easy English, who tries to encourage all the students to participate in class, who tries to make his lesson an organised and well-planned lesson and to make sure all his students participate... even if the there are some students who do not like to participate, he makes the effort to help them participate.”</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td>“... he’s competent because he was able to make his students learn what is meant to be learnt; that is, we feel at the end of the lesson that the students participated well, understood... almost everything with no difficulty.”</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T8</td>
<td>“If I find in that session that the objectives have been reached and that he conveyed the message(s) he wanted to convey in a smooth way and I observed that all the students have understood... I mean he knows how to deal with the difficulties (of the learners)... knows how to explain (a difficult point) to all of them.”</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T10</td>
<td>“As long as the teacher has an objective and as long as he or she gets to that objective... the wider the gap gets, the more you can say that the lesson was not ‘good’...(Plus) the personal addition... the personal character, the way the teacher communicates with others... the quick perception of [what the learners want to say] yeah, something about learners and there are, you know, reactions... the human side anyway!”</td>
<td>T/I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T11</td>
<td>“The way the lesson went smoothly... the skills he integrated the skills in a smooth way... the skills lead to one another in a smooth way without any [interruption?] interruption... also lead to the production phase; to writing, for example.”</td>
<td>T/I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T12</td>
<td>“… the method of the teacher... the techniques used... the time spent on each part... the interaction between the students and the teacher... and the questions he asks... It is first of all the relationship between the students and the teacher, the organisation of the activities and of the behaviour of the students [because that tells you?] Yes, everything the student does tells you about the teacher.</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T13</td>
<td>“The objectives of the teacher... how far the pupils acquired the different words or [the different items] the different items. The way of presenting the grammatical rule. How it was done. The practice of this grammatical point by the pupils...”</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T14</td>
<td>“I concentrated on the way the teacher tried to present his/her material to the pupil and the way she tried to get the pupils involved... teacher interaction and student interaction [yeah] and also the lesson management [the steps?] the steps to follow.”</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T15</td>
<td>“When the objectives are clear... When the pupils understand the objectives of the lesson. You feel that the pupils, of course, have understood something from the lesson... mainly the most important part of that lesson.”</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another important consideration in the teachers' view of a 'successful lesson' is the fact that they witnessed that the learners were responding to the teacher's stimuli. This was mainly referred to as 'interaction' or 'communication' between the teacher and the pupils (Teacher 4, Teacher 6, Teacher 12, and Teacher 14). Considering the tendency to focus on directing the lesson towards the objectives, what they probably meant was a type of interaction, initiated and monitored by the teacher as a way to diagnose 'understanding' of the items taught. The interaction, as they understand it, is an important sign that the students are still on board and going with the flow of the activity as the teacher had planned it. The participants who mentioned interaction as a criterion were not really making any reference to other communication patterns in the classroom, say, interaction between learners or between teacher and a small group of learners. Teacher 14 was the only teacher who talked of "teacher interaction and student interaction" while Teacher 10 talked of communication between learners and teacher as a manifestation of rapport between teachers and learners. The concern with teacher-learner communication reflected a view of lessons as dependent on a dialogue of the Socratic type between teacher and learners. This practice is in fact a unilateral teacher initiated communication pattern that helps at the same time to maintain the level of student attention and pace. As explained by Doyle (1986), a communicational element is necessary for the management of content especially if it occurs in question/answer format.

Judging from the views expressed by the participants, a lesson is considered 'successful' when the teacher:

- Sets clear objectives and manages to achieve them;
- Breaks down input and distributes it over connected activities;
- Diagnoses and attends to pupils' difficulties accordingly; and
- Allows time for a production/reproduction phase.
Thus, the participants seem to convey a perception of the teacher as manager of the lesson and the people involved in it. It follows that teacher-centred teaching is implicitly perceived to be key to the success of a lesson. The teacher moves summarised above are typical of the view of teaching as technology and the teacher as manager of the teaching/learning process. The teacher as manager strives to teach according to a pre-determined plan and sees to it that the lesson proceeds according to the plan. Underlying this conception of practice is a view of teaching as science. Lesson planning by implication was a pre-condition for ‘successful’ teaching. As explained earlier, many teachers depicted the typical English lesson as a linear progression towards the pre-determined objectives. This perspective entails a view of the lesson as a smooth flow towards the objective(s). The smoother the flow, the more successful the teaching is believed to be. Lessons are thus considered ‘good’ lessons when structured into activities the timing and sequence of which are pre-determined and steered by the teacher during the lesson.

Moreover, the participants highlighted what they referred to as ‘interaction’ between teacher and learners (the class as a group). The purpose of this communication process is to obtain ‘responses’, ‘answers’, ‘participation’, and ‘involvement’ that assure the teacher that the pupils are coping with the content. This description implies that the teacher as manager initiates this type of interaction by asking the ‘right’ questions to capture the learners’ attention and to check their ‘understanding’ of the content as presented to them. Indeed, the participants did not seem to question that through this ‘efficient’ model of teaching they were establishing a learning atmosphere that consigned the learner to a role of the passive recipient of various instructions. More importantly, they were speaking of the teacher-centred style with a fair degree of confidence, making no mention of improvisation or learner involvement. Teacher 10 mentioned attentiveness to the learners’ reactions, but on the whole, the teachers made no mention of the learner perspective, learner input, or any form of negotiation of learning. Evidently, they did not see the lessons as jointly constructed by teacher and learners. There was no mention of expressions of the teacher as person through display of humour, for instance. From the teachers’ descriptions emerges a portrait of robotic teachers whose role is to deliver the
curriculum (the ‘what’) by applying techniques and procedures (the ‘how’) in a rational orderly fashion following a pre-determined plan. The participants seemed to perceive the role of the teacher as a technician who manages to deliver well-structured and well-planned lessons with confidence, smoothness and momentum (Doyle 1986, Robertson 1989). I see a parallel with the participants in the Olson (1981) study who were practising ‘high influence teaching’. They described teachers metaphorically as ‘prime movers’ and ‘navigators’. He wrote describing the features of the practice of a teacher as ‘prime mover’:

Prime mover activities involved lecturing, note giving, seat work, and other forms of transmitting and guaranteeing information, and creating attention and involvement. Teacher as navigator involved greater pupil participation, but with firm teacher control over the point and direction of the lesson, as in question-answer sequences, recitation and guided discovery. (266)

I have pointed out in chapter 2 that the interpretation model of teaching would be congruent with the goals of the new ELT syllabus in Tunisia. The principles of co-operative teaching/learning embedded in the methodological recommendations of the syllabus and, to some extent, translated in the new textbooks require a shift away from whole class, teacher-led instruction. In Table 8.2, I contrast the transmission and interpretation model drawing on Kennedy’s translation of the ideas proposed by Barnes and Shemilt (1974) in order to highlight the assumptions underlying each conception with reference to the teacher’s task, teacher role, learner role and the educational process as a whole.

With reference to the criteria synthesised in Table 8.2, the analysis of the participants’ ideas about the ‘successful’ lesson situates them on the transmission side. Following the interpretation model of teaching, the emphasis is on co-operative (also discovery-oriented) learning. Within the interpretation perspective, the teaching/learning situation is perceived as a joint construction of the teaching that goes on. The interpretation model assumes that teachers and learners are equal partners in this exchange.
Table 8.2: Assumptions underlying the ‘transmission’ and ‘interpretation’ models of teaching/learning (based on Kennedy 1991)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSMISSION</th>
<th>INTERPRETATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHING</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmitting knowledge to pupils</td>
<td>Setting an environment for the construction of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHER ROLE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To set the tune and pace of the lesson</td>
<td>To encourage involvement and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEARNER ROLE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient of a product</td>
<td>Active participant in the shaping/construction of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDUCATIONAL VALUES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education leads to the acceptance/preservation of established knowledge</td>
<td>Education leads to the development of self-expression and creativity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, the findings show that the participants’ views of the ‘good’ lesson were in line with the views they expressed about the curriculum and textbooks analysed and discussed in chapter 7. Their conception of the ‘successful’ lesson stemmed from a view of the lesson as a curricular unit as explained by Prabhu (1992):

“The curriculum normally is organised as an incremental sequence of teaching units, the sequence as a whole meant to achieve a large objective, and each unit in it meant to achieve a subobjective. Classroom teaching is seen as a steady movement from the first unit to the last, and any given lesson is viewed as the completion of one small part of the journey. What happens in a lesson is, from this perspective, best understood by reference to earlier and later lessons and by seeing the logic of the overall sequence” (226).

To place the focus on the learner and the organisation of instruction around tasks carried out in pairs and groups might distort the picture that these teachers had constructed of the ‘successful’ lesson. For instance, tasks performed in group are favoured by proponents of this model as they are perceived to present a learning situation whereby the individuals in each group work jointly and construct knowledge through interaction with one another. The ELT curriculum in Tunisia is based on a pedagogy that fits the description of the interpretation model above. The
teachers are required to teach through pair/group work and expected to promote learner autonomy. The findings clearly indicate that the participants, with one exception or two, held views of the ‘successful’ lesson that are rather congruous with the transmission model of teaching. It is, therefore, of interest to analyse their views on the implementation of pair and group-work activities and the promotion of learner autonomy/independence to gauge further this tendency. These two issues in my view can reveal the type of engagement the participants are having with curriculum innovation in Tunisia.

The findings in the previous section signalled possible difficulties with the implementation of change. The teachers’ views in relation to the application of a learner-centred pedagogy that seeks to promote learner autonomy can serve as indicator of their position towards the ‘established’ and ‘new’ model of conducting lessons. The views teachers expressed about the implementation of pair/group work might indicate further the degree to which they have/have not adjusted to the requirements of the current ELT innovation. In the interview protocol, I focused on two issues related to this presumed shift in pedagogy. The first deals with classroom interaction and the organisation of instruction around pair/group work tasks; and the second deals with the more abstract goal of fostering learner independence/autonomy. I am examining the teachers’ responses in the following order. Firstly, I will focus on discussing the teachers’ responses in relation to pair and group work in the classroom, and then proceed to analysing their ideas on the prospect of promoting learner autonomy in the language classroom and the way(s) of pursuing it in practice.

8.2 VIEWS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PAIR/GROUP ACTIVITIES

The discussion of the implementation of pair/group work in the classroom followed a question on the importance of interaction in the classroom. The aim of connecting these two issues was to help the participants articulate their views in relation to the presumed contribution of ‘interaction’ to language development. I also followed my
initial question with prompts about the problems that might arise from operating them in the classroom and especially, about the quality of learner production. By doing so, my aim was to gauge their position regarding the accuracy/fluency debate in CLT. The examination of the views teachers expressed revealed that they held three different positions towards implementing pair/group work activities. One group discarded such activities, a second adapted them within a frame of the established lesson pattern and a third group justified them with enthusiasm. However, there are common areas of concern across the board especially voiced by the first two groups that signal the attempt to put the ideas into practice resulted in tension. I shall begin by exposing the views of the teachers who rejected pair/group work and proceed to analysing the views of the ‘cautious’ adopters of the change. The views of the teachers I called ‘enthusiasts’ will be used to extract the rationale for the implementation of such activities. I will conclude this section with a summary of the areas of concern associated with the attempt to switch to teaching through pair/group work.

8.2.1 REJECTION

Five teachers (Teacher 2, Teacher 4, Teacher 8, and Teacher 15) stood out as rejecting the idea of having to set up for ‘interaction activities’ such as group-work or pair-work. Below is an overview of their reasons for abandoning the idea. Teacher 4 mentioned class size as an obstacle to the efficient running of group activities. The fact that she gave priority to the management side of teaching seemed to have determined her decision:

“...(w)hat is not good about that is that having classes of 38 and 40. That is not practical! It is not practical to have pair or group work when you’ve got [forty!] Yeah. With 42 pupils, it’s very difficult to manage. I personally do it twice or three times a year. That’s it. For the rest of the time, I conduct my lessons through the worksheets and the way I usually do it.” (Teacher 4)
In response to my prompt about the quality of language production resulting from such activities, she turned out to be disturbed by the inability to attend to learners’ errors during the activity. She explained:

“...(T)hey (learners) make lots of mistakes and...You can't ignore them. You can, of course, select some mistakes and correct them with all the class but they make so many mistakes when they speak and, I suppose, because they do not have the basics first [ehm]. That's my opinion about it. You can't ignore mistakes! You have to correct them and so you have sort of mixed feelings. Should you do this? Should you do that? That's why I try to limit these group-work and pair-work eh..I have peer correction sometimes with that but “who can correct this pupil?”...It takes a lot of time.” (Teacher 4)

It appeared that this teacher objected to these activities because of the difficulty they engendered to control time and learner production of language. She, therefore, chose to use class time more efficiently by carrying out instruction in the usual teacher-fronted style. Her view of language learning as learning form first (‘the basics’) seemed to lie behind her decision to drop the use of pair/group work activities.

Similarly, Teacher 15 expressed dissatisfaction over the potential of losing control over the production of learners during pair/group work. He contended:

“T:...in most of our textbooks, there are some activities which involve the pupils to work in pairs but does it really work when you have about 36 pupils? Can you move from one desk to another? To listen to who is going to say the correct answer? It's not possible! I don't think communicative teaching is...You need a small class. I mean, to impose communicative teaching in a big class is a mistake!

F: But some trainers may say, “Well, I can show you how to do pair-work in a classroom of one hundred.”

T: Of course, I can do pair-work but it doesn’t work all the time. It depends on the kind of activity. I mean, you can’t prevent the pupils from talking in Arabic because they sometimes talk in Arabic. They make the question in Arabic and answer in Arabic. You cannot listen to everybody at the same time.” (Teacher 15)
From this teacher’s perspective, class size made matters worse. He assumed that had the classes been composed of only twelve pupils instead of the average thirty-five, it would have been much easier to monitor the pupils’ production. For both teachers (Teacher 4 and teacher 15), the most important goal was to oversee the production of the pupils. Underlying their position is a view of language learning as the mastery of form for subsequent ‘accurate’ use.

Besides the concern over the use of the mother tongue during pair/group work, Teacher 8 mentioned the problem of off-task behaviour and the problem of noise.

“...I worked with this in the beginning but well, up to now I find that it is a waste of time. Well, in theory it is an opportunity to communicate, etc. What you find in reality is two people talking together in Arabic all the time and it is an occasion for them to talk of something else and the main problem for this (to implement pair-work activities) has to do with the overcrowded classes we have...Imagine twenty pairs (laughs) and you have colleagues next door...they won’t say that there is a speaking activity, they will say that you cannot control your class. For this reason, I try to avoid it. Honestly!” (Teacher 4)

He implied that if the learners switched code or deviated from the subject matter learning could not take place. In addition, he preferred to project an image of himself as the efficient manager to match the view of classroom order surrounding him in his immediate professional environment. He settled for an alternative communication pattern he described as follows:

“As for communication, any pupil who has an idea or wants to criticise anything concerning the lesson or who has a different point of view has a right to raise their hand and to speak and someone who has a different opinion I give him an opportunity to speak especially with the baccalaureate pupils. I find it better.” (Teacher 8)

However, this type of ‘communication’ is a way to establish and maintain order. The less orderly exchanges that typically arise in pair-work situations causes tension for him. The hand raising policy was a way for him to establish a particular flow of the communication that has to pass through him. Though giving permission to express
one's opinion or to voice criticism is not to be equated with opportunities for language use, in pairs or in group, his strategy becomes a plausible compromise.

Along the same line, Teacher 2 objected to interaction activities because these would give rise to 'inappropriate' behaviour on the part of the learners. She interpreted deviation from the topic of discussion in class as a sign of questioning the teachers' authority.

"Frankly speaking, I am not sticking to this approach (the Communicative Approach). I just use it when I have an inspector in or my trainer because I am obliged to do that. It is necessary to teach in a communicative way but I usually don't stick to that because it is not always necessary to have interaction with the pupils...you start to lose respect. They start to talk about English and then they start to talk of something else..." (Teacher 2)

With this risk in mind, she abandoned pair or group work and thus prevented what she perceived as 'inappropriate' behaviour from occurring.

I have thus far presented the ideas of the teachers who objected to applying pair/group work activities. Their arguments indicated that the teachers who avoided using such activities did so for classroom management considerations. The organisation of instruction around pair/group work conflicts with their understanding of essential characteristics of effective classroom management. They saw pair/group work as engendering noise, waste of time, and off-task behaviour (not sticking to the topic at hand and using the mother tongue). All these are 'unacceptable' within the school culture. Good classroom management depended in the teachers' view on order and control. Seeing the same 'norms' and 'transactions' of whole class instruction would not be maintained some teachers decided to abandon the idea. They also expected the same type of language production in pair/group work would be of similar nature as the one expected of students in the teacher directed class. They felt the necessity to establish direct personal contact with each group of students and monitor their production. Clearly, these teachers have not made the shift in perspective and because they could only see the disruptive aspect of pair/group work,
they decided to drop it. Below is a group of teachers who were in contrast trying to align themselves with the innovation.

8.2.2 CAUTION

Under this category, I analyse the views of teachers who appear to fit the pair/group work activities within a Presentation, Practice, Production lesson pattern\(^{19}\) that progresses from a teacher-controlled interaction pattern to a freer type. As spelled out by Teacher 1, the teacher would gradually allow the learner to play a participatory role. He explained:

"...In the beginning it is true even today in the Communicative Approach, the teacher has to speak [yeah] for at least fifteen minutes or twenty or ten minutes just to set for the task, to explain something or to read, etc. But as long as we go through the lesson, allright? The triangle is going to change [right!] It is in the beginning that the teacher speaks but little by little, he gives the floor to the kids [step by step]. The kids are going to produce, to innovate..to speak and by the end of the session, the whole class is going to be speaking and absorbing and learning what they have learnt and what they have acquired. So this interaction is very essential in the way that it makes all kids active, involved, help one another, speak and use the language in its proper way and use the structures if they learned a structure, etc." (Teacher 1)

He also recommended that fellow teachers invest time in establishing this new work tradition in Tunisian classrooms:

"So you try it with a little noise and get the kids familiarised..get used to such things and little by little they will do it in the right way. If my colleagues many years ago had prepared the kids I am teaching now..., I wouldn't suffer today [yeah] because in the 7\(^{th}\) form when I say "divide in two groups, three or four"...they still laugh. They still do not take it as a serious thing." (Teacher 1)

Thus, the teacher coaches the learners and gradually allows them more initiative in order of them to use the language already introduced in the first stages of the lesson. Teacher 12's account below reflected this pattern:

\(^{19}\) Also referred to as the 'three Ps' triangle (see Woodward 1991: 117).
"...It is usually simple words and of course practice of some, especially enacting situations that they learnt in a unit or, especially after a listening or studying a conversation. It is easy to imitate a conversation like a conversation between a patient and a doctor. It's easier for them, of course, after listening to the conversation OK? With the pair-work activity, they practise those situations and memorise them and especially they learn more when a pair-work or a group-work activity comes after [something they have already discussed in class?] Yes, like after a telephone conversation or interview." (My own emphasis in Italics) (Teacher 12)

Thus, she implemented these activities as practice and reinforcement opportunities. It is also worth noting that she talked of these activities in behaviourist terms. Her use of pair/group work is similar to the use of communication activities within an Audio-lingual framework whereby learners 'memorise' chunks of language by 'enacting' and reproducing similar situations. In response to my question, Teacher 7 reported a similar strategy:

"F: And after an interaction activity they produce things in writing. You ask them to produce things in writing?

T: ...I would rather start writing a conversation and enact it in class. It's the other way around." (My own emphasis added in Italics) (Teacher 7)

The last two cases revealed that pair-work activities involved learners in reproducing some language items selected and presented by the teacher during the presentation phase of the lesson. The implementation of communication activities within a Presentation-Practice-Production lesson model gave the teacher assurance that the lesson was flowing according to plan. This presents a picture of teachers attempting to implement the innovation by adapting it to the tradition in place. In this way, the implementation of pair/group work activities would cause the least disruption to the 'norms' in place.

8.2.3 ENTHUSIASM

This section examines and discusses the views of the participants who emphasised the need for implementing pair/group work activities despite the difficulties and constraints. These teachers, I referred to as 'enthusiasts', were willing to tolerate all
the problems mentioned by the other participants. Consider Teacher 10’s response to my prompt about the constraints on implementing these activities:

“F: There are problems related to the implementation of pair-work and group-work. That is, one is the problem of class size and the other is the use of the mother tongue or French. You know that happens in group-work and pair-work.

T: I think we should not exaggerate these problems anyway. It’s a matter of space. The classrooms we have are not large enough and the desks are not easy to move around but still you can overcome this problem with a little bit of patience and the students themselves get used to not necessarily move the desks but move themselves. As for the second problem...In my opinion, this is not a serious problem...If it is one of the ways to attain the objective...eventually...they (the pupils) are going to produce something in English...in the meantime they’ve said something in Arabic or in French...I’m not going to stop an activity just because of that!” (Teacher 10)

Another teacher suggested to overlook the problems associated with the implementation of pair/group work and to concentrate more on what the learners could do during these activities:

“The learner is going to feel a little bit independent and to use the language in a natural way and in a contextualised way. For example, if I want to have a conversation about...for example “in the shop” and one is going to be the shop assistant and one is going to be the customer, it is going to be natural [even though they make noise or use Arabic?] No problem! The most important thing is how the learner is going to give a message and to receive a message. That’s very important. Of course, he is not going to use a lot of Arabic or a lot of French. That way it is not going to be an English conversation but sometimes there is one word or two words that they use in Arabic or French [so they learn even more English that way!] Yeah!” (Teacher 13)

Teacher 3 also suggested that fellow teachers tolerate learners’ errors and focus instead on developing in the learners the habits to work in this way:

“...perhaps over the years...when you start this from the beginning...the first class and throughout the first year of learning English...the students get used to speaking English all the time and to interaction...Well, you can correct whenever you can and then you ask sometimes their classmates to correct...Well, I think that when they make small mistakes, it is not important after all! We teachers make mistakes, don’t you? I do.” (Teacher 3)
Besides recommending that fellow teachers use pair/group work in their classrooms and train learners to develop the suitable habits and attitude towards working in group, the participants who were in support of the use of pair/group work activities, articulated a rationale for using such activities and were able to suggest a set of pedagogical solutions to possible classroom management problems. The arguments they advanced can be classified under two categories: arguments related to the affective domain and arguments related to language development.

Teacher 1, Teacher 3 and Teacher 5 argued that pair/group work activities could contribute to boosting the learners’ self-confidence and increase the level of their engagement in class work.

“...So to improve their communication, to make them speak and to make them have faith in themselves and make them confident. [Yeah] So pair-work, group-work is...beneficial in the sense that everybody is going to be involved. They’re going to talk. They can learn from one another.” (Teacher1)

“...(T)his type of activity is very positive because when a learner wants to answer or to ask his classmate he does it without hesitation. His classmate is his equal. First of all, he thinks this activity is a game; and second,...he is not embarrassed to ask his mate a question or answer his question even if he makes mistakes and this is why group-work and pair-work is important!” (Teacher 3)

“I like this type of activities because they facilitate communication. It is an intelligent way of making the students work...if you give the same task to one pupil only, he is not going to be encouraged to work on the task but with the group they work together and in the end give the answers.” (Teacher 5)

Teacher 10 and Teacher 11 assessed the value of pair/group work from a language development perspective as an opportunity contributing to the learners’ communicative abilities.

“...(E)specially in a context like Tunisia where the students have no opportunity to speak anywhere else...being in class and doing a pair-work activity or a group-work activity, gives the chance to the learner to speak English and to share with the others and to have a practical side of the learning of that subject.” (Teacher 10)
"Well, these activities are helpful in the sense that they enhance the pupils' communication. I mean they enhance their fluency...they become fluent pupils because they are experimenting with the language. They are experiencing the language. They are speaking the language and the advantage of such activities is that they encourage the pupil to speak. It is giving all the pupils the chance to speak including the shy ones. All of them are involved..all of them speak the language because what is language if not communication." (Teacher 11)

The following two teachers presented organising instruction around pair/group work as an opportunity to practise a learner-centred teaching/learning process.

They (pair/group work activities) help them (learners) practice the language..communicate in a natural way..have self-correction...the main focus is how to communicate, receive a message and give a message to the others..and the learner is not going to feel that the things he learns are coming from the teacher..well, part of it..and to feel someone who is active not in a passive position. (Teacher 13)

...(W)hen they (the pupils) are in class, they ask and answer. It's a real situation for them. It's more helpful than speaking to the teacher or the teacher speaking to them. It makes teaching more pupil-centred. (Teacher 14)

To recapitulate, the views expressed by the participants quoted above indicate that they embraced the theoretical principles underlying the recommendation to organise teaching around pair-work and group-work commonly found in the CLT literature (Breen and Long 1985, Stern 1992). In the main, they saw that pair/group communication activities could provide learners with opportunities for practice and experimentation with language use. They found that the practice with communication during pair/group work would compensate for the limited exposure to English and opportunities for communication with English speakers outside the classroom (Teacher 1, Teacher 10 and Teacher 11). Teacher 13 and Teacher 14 believed that organising for work in groups helped to engage learners in ‘natural’ communication situations and to take an active role in their own learning. Teacher 3 and Teacher 5 believed that such activities increased learner involvement and motivation through collaboration with peers. In fact, even the participants who discarded these activities
in class (Teacher 2, Teacher 4, Teacher 8 and Teacher 15) did not dispute the benefit of such activities. In the section below, I will attempt to summarise the areas of tension that emerged from the participants' comments.

8.2.4 AREAS OF TENSION

Attempts to make shifts in pedagogy are not devoid of tension. A number of concerns emerged from the data as the teachers reported on their experience with the implementation of pair/group work activities. Some teachers appeared to have mixed feelings about the quality of the learning expected to occur as a result of the application of a communicative methodology in general and in particular free communication activities. These fears revealed that the change in the curriculum had rendered the achievement targets ambiguous for these teachers.

The most important sign of tension is the feeling of unease some teachers experience with the issue of accuracy and fluency. While doing what they can not to interfere with the ongoing ‘interaction’ amongst learners, teachers felt at the same time uncomfortable ignoring mistakes. This is especially the case for Teacher 12 who was conscious that learner errors should be tolerated, but reported finding it difficult to overlook errors attributed to a grammatical point which was the focus of the lesson. Moreover, Teacher 4 objected to the new focus on oral expression before ensuring mastery of the basics. She maintained that pupils do not benefit from the tasks because they do not have the required level of proficiency to engage in free communication. With reference to general standards, one teacher criticised the new curriculum vision. She commented putting the criticism mildly and diplomatiscally:

"...(T)he Communicative Approach is introduced because now the needs..our needs are not really to make pupils write but to make them understand and know how to read..even if they produce things which are not correct, we say they are managing things.” (Teacher 6)
These three teachers believed that the formal teaching of grammar and emphasis of the reading and writing skills learning a language were the only way to bring about learning. They were, as a result, disturbed to see fluency prioritised over accuracy.

Another area of ambiguity came from the inevitable situation of learners switching to the mother tongue during the pair/group work activity. Teacher 9 annoyed by the fact that her pupils would not stick to English while working in pairs or groups. In the following exchange, she reported on a situation she encountered in class the same day:

“T: ... just this morning when I heard a lot of Arabic, I said: “It is not an Arabic lesson. You must speak in English.” It is impossible. They think in Arabic.

F: So how can this problem be solved? How do you deal with that?

T: First I forbid them to use Arabic and say “even say it in French if you like and think about it in French because Arabic is their mother language and it is easier for them to think in Arabic. Sometimes in a writing paragraph, I find some Arabic ideas translated into English. It is simpler to translate from French [it’s closer!]…” (Teacher 9)

She raised the complex issue of code switching during group-work (Hancock 1997). Her position could be attributed to the tradition of teaching English through the English medium and the assumption associated with it that learning a language through another could give rise to errors of transfer. In addition, her attitude might have been influenced by her own experience as a learner. She had learnt English back in the sixties through the French medium and the Grammar Translation Method.

The third problem mentioned by teachers was the problem of the pupils’ behaviour and attitude during pair/group. The participants reported having to invest time and effort to establish new working habits in their pupils. They also mentioned having to monitor the pupils’ initial reactions to the freedom from teacher control entailed by the activities. Talking of pair-work, Teacher 14 reported how her class of beginners had to adapt to this new arrangement:
"...[M]y pupils last year were not really...they were not able to do the pair-work from the first session. They actually were not satisfied. When I said "pair-work"..."work with your classmate" and repeating the gesture (gesture used for pair)...and sometimes the students are lazy and do not want to work. They call me saying "Mrs he doesn't want to work!" (Teacher 14)

Another teacher, Teacher 7, reported on the reaction of beginners and how they had difficulties speaking out:

"...[I]n the beginning they are quite afraid to speak but when they get used to it, they are more willing to participate.” (Teacher 7)

In the two cases above, the pupils had difficulties adjusting to this working mode. The learners failed to engage in work because they lacked the work strategies to engage in this type of activities. The learners' previous learning experiences instilled in them a fear of making mistakes, which also explained why some teachers thought that 'weaker' learners were not inhibited to ask their peers for help.

Though Teacher 3 was enthusiastic about the organisation of instruction around pair and group work activities, she admitted that such arrangement gives rise to disruption to the usual classroom order:

"It (the activity) does turn into a mess sometimes. Sometimes you have to stop and to show that you are not happy and then you have to tell the pupils and make them aware of the importance of such an activity because it is for the best...” (Teacher 3)

Conscious of the impact of this new way of working on the teacher-learner relationship, Teacher 10 felt the need to appeal to his pupils' co-operation by claiming his authority as a teacher. This was how he went about it:

"...[S]ometimes it (working in pairs or groups) doesn't work especially if you make the learners feel this is something imposed on them. But if you talk to them...I think there is no harm in talking to the students about everything. I believe a good teacher has nothing to hide...that's the textbook. We are supposed to do that and that and I want it to be that and that way because I believe I'm in a better position to judge that it is going to be more beneficial for you and the more you respect this, the better it is.” (Teacher 10)
Teacher 6 noted that the new informal type of atmosphere gave rise to inappropriate comments from learners about the instruction they were receiving.

"I don’t allow moving from here and there because pupils misunderstand the method [well they need time!] They misunderstand the method and many of them..you can hear them..If you ask some pupils they say: “it’s not a lesson!” or “it’s not learning!” ..“it is not this English. It is really having a nice time”. (Teacher 6)

The *laissez faire* atmosphere engendered by the situation of students working in small groups comes into conflict with this teacher’s view of classroom order and requires of her additional effort to reduce the potential of what she considered disruptive behaviour.

It can be deduced from the views expressed above, that the teachers had to deal with two aspects of learner reaction to the new classroom order. They had to teach their pupils from scratch how to undertake these activities and to be on the watch for disruptive behaviour resulting from a misinterpretation of the freedom entailed by the new classroom dynamics (Prabhu 1992). The teachers’ accounts confirm the view that change increases the teacher’s workload and puts additional pressures on them. From a classroom management perspective, the teachers’ comments reveal that the innovation rendered the usual classroom order fragile and harder to maintain increasing thus the teachers’ workload.

The concern over classroom order was coupled with doubts about the learning outcomes. The last concern was reflected in the divergent views about whether the ‘good’ or the ‘weak’ learners actually benefit from undertaking pair/group work activities. Some teachers (Teacher 6, Teacher 7, Teacher 8 and Teacher 11) asserted that this mode of learning was not suitable for ‘weak’ learners. Indeed, Teacher 7 and Teacher 11 insisted that the ‘weak’ students failed to benefit from such activities because of their low level of proficiency.
“F: Do you think that (using pair-work) helped the ‘weak’ pupils as well?

T: Honestly? No! Because they have, as I said, a loaded programme and really a short time for the teacher to help the weaker pupils.

F: You mean the ‘weaker’ pupils do not benefit from interaction?

T: It is hard for the ‘weak’ pupils to follow up.

F: Is it because their English is weak or because of their personality?

T: I think it is because of poor English!” (Teacher 7)

Teacher 11 first mentioned two possible causes but finally settled for the linguistic explanation:

“...(B)ut some pupils don’t interact either because they are embarrassed or because they can’t speak the language. They don’t know how to express themselves. May be they feel it but they don’t know how to formulate their thoughts. They want to do it but they can’t [they haven’t learnt this in their real life may be!] Yeah, even their linguistic background is poor [the weaker ones then!] Yeah.” (Teacher 11)

Other teachers argued that the ‘weak’ learners could not benefit from pair/group work activities because they were more likely to misbehave and to withdraw from work. Indeed, Teacher 6 pointed out that the ‘weak’ pupils are the ones who “go astray”, “discuss other things” and “misunderstand the method”. For Teacher 15, a ‘weak’ pupil is by definition a lazy pupil. He contended:

“...What is a ‘weak’ pupil? A ‘weak’ pupil is a lazy pupil (interviewer laughs)...a ‘weak’ pupil is a pupil who didn’t know how to love that language...how to like that language [so someone with a bad attitude?] Yeah! A bad attitude to English. [So even if you have pair-work and group-work, for a weak learner this is not going to ..] I don’t think group-work is going to improve fluency or grammar.” (Teacher 15)

By contrast, other participants (Teacher 2, Teacher 5, Teacher 13, and Teacher 14) argued for the opposite. They reported that these activities are particularly beneficial for the ‘weak’ pupils. They found that the ‘weak’ pupils became more involved and were able to use the activities as opportunities to ‘pick up’ language from their peers.
Teacher 2 posited that the group work arrangement was more supportive for the less confident learners. Teacher 5 made the following observation:

"...I try to put in groups a mixture of 'good', 'average' and 'not so good' pupils and I noticed that the average pupils listen to the 'good' student so they listen to him when he says something...I noticed that the 'average' pupil learns new words from his friends. This is a good way to learn." (Teacher 5)

The above views raised the unresolved issue of whether instruction through tasks undertaken in pairs or in groups was more conducive to learning than the 'traditional' modes and whether it could cater for all learners (Sheen 1994). In the context of this study, the participants' comments revealed uncertainty and confusion over whether engaging pupils in solving tasks in groups brings about improvement for pupils of low attainment level or the opposite.

By comparison to the teachers' conceptualisation of the 'successful' lesson analysed in section 8.1, there seemed to be less certainty and agreement among the teachers when discussing the implementation of pair-work and group-work in the language classroom. The analysis revealed three different attitudes to this type of teaching activities and divergent views as to their impact on learner behaviour and attainment. The teachers who decided to discard pair-work and group-work activities (Teacher 2, Teacher 4 and Teacher 8) had for alibi the physical environment of the Tunisian classroom, class size and time constraints. These teachers were keener on asserting their pedagogic authority and enacting the curriculum than on venturing into an uncertain territory. As for the 'cautious adopters', it appeared that they had found a way of reconciling between the teacher directed style of teaching and the laissez faire mode presumed of a CLT methodology. They fitted the pair/group activities into a PPP lesson pattern so that these activities could be synchronised with the usual sequence of teaching activities. Besides a lesson management strategy, these teachers mentioned other micro-level strategies that ranged from restricting learner movement to monitoring group composition and role distribution within it. It seems that only under these conditions could pair/group work activities make way into their classrooms. Pair/group work when fitted into a PPP lesson pattern preserves the
structure and flow of the lesson as an organised and structured activity and the role of the teacher as a rational professional.

8.3 VIEWS ON TEACHING TO FOSTER LEARNER AUTONOMY

The exploration of the teachers' views regarding the meaning and operation of learner autonomy in the English language classroom revealed that the majority of the participants highlighted the need to pursue the goal of developing learner independence in the language classroom. Indeed, the analysis of the responses revealed that the majority believed that the principles of learner autonomy were actually in operation in English language classrooms in Tunisia. To illustrate their views, they mentioned undertaking tasks as opportunities to train learners to be independent from the teacher, to assume responsibility for the completion the tasks and to progress by learning from one another. However, the teachers' views on ways to operate learner autonomy out of class depicted the teachers as holding modest aspirations for learner autonomy. An examination of the responses showed that the participants based their arguments for autonomy merely on Applied Linguistics grounds (Little 1991, 1995) as they did not, for instance, extend the arguments for promoting autonomy to general education goals (Dickinson 1995). By contrast, there were teachers who did not seem to see any link between learner autonomy and learner attainment (Teacher 7, Teacher 8) or autonomy and gains in language development (Teacher 4 and Teacher 15). I will start by analysing the views of the teachers who explained how they put the principles of autonomy into operation in and out of the classroom.

8.3.1 THE PRINCIPLE OF LEARNER AUTONOMY AND CLASSROOM PROCESSES

Some teachers maintained that learner autonomy/independence could be achieved through pedagogical processes that developed in learners the ability to participate actively and independently in the teaching/learning process. Teacher 1 and Teacher
12 saw that the ELT curriculum in place already fostered learner autonomy through the tasks included in the textbooks. This was how Teacher 1 saw the pupils work in groups and independently from the teacher:

"...If they (the pupils) get stuck, they always have dictionaries... so resort to your dictionaries... have one person interested in the dictionary. If you don't know a word, check your dictionary... ask X, for example, to explain the word in English and for pronunciation... try to see whether it is a noun or [to make sure] a verb... just to make sure. This is good work. I mean it is quite beneficial and it is true that it teaches the kids how to be autonomous, how to depend on themselves. Why do you depend on the teacher? The teacher is nothing... So do it yourself [assuming responsibility] assuming responsibility." (Teacher 1)

Thus, this teacher perceived dependence on the teacher as a state of mind that can prevent learners from achieving autonomy. Likewise, Teacher 12 believed that learner independence would be the natural outcome of the 'new' shift in pedagogical practice that would give way to learner initiative. She used pair/group work as an illustration of such processes at work:

"The purpose of group-work and pair-work is partly to encourage them (the learners) to be independent from the teacher, to be autonomous eh... to act without being controlled by the teacher. Of course, the teacher is there to guide, to prompt when help is needed but that is especially when the students ask for help. But the more group-work and pair-work we do in class, the more autonomous [they become] yes. This is the preparation for the future." (Teacher 12)

For Teacher 5, learner autonomy followed from involving learners in assuming responsibility for tasks as a group with the teacher as observer and facilitator. She contrasted the teacher role within the 'old' teacher-pupils interaction pattern and her role as facilitator when the pupils are engaged in the pair/group work activity:

"... Before we used to have the teacher interact with one pupil at a time. Now we have students interact with one another so they can write a dialogue together without the intervention of the teacher eh... they are responsible for that. There is a task. It is their task. They have to produce that dialogue. He has to talk with his friend and I look at them... I listen to them but I do not intervene. That way they become a bit independent from the teacher OK?" (Teacher 5)
Teacher 13 explained how the teacher as guide gave initiative to the learners to construct the content of the lesson. She explained the shift in teacher role from knowledge provider to guide in the following terms:

"...(T)he learner is supposed to give some ideas himself about a certain topic. We don't expect that the teacher will give all the ideas... "Copy this in the copybook" and that's all... the teacher should give the opportunity to the learners to express themselves, to think about a subject, to participate and not to give the subject and everything ready for them..check some words in the dictionary, correct the homework by themselves, etc." (Teacher 13)

The teachers also suggested that it might take learners a while to adjust to this new role and consequently, it would be essential that teachers resist expectations from learners that went counter to the goals of fostering independent learning. Teacher 11 gave an account of what a teacher might do during a reading activity to carry out the strategy:

...(S)uppose that we have a reading text and one of the questions is try to find word reference. "what does this word refer to?" Well, the pupil might ask his teacher: "What does this word refer to?" [Yeah!] Well, a teacher shouldn't rush to the answer. He should let his pupil think about it and to try to [manage on his own] yes, to try to find the answer all by himself... The teacher should say: "Well try to guess from the context. Try to get the meaning of it!" Because reading is a process of constant guessing. Well, if it is impossible for them, the teacher can ask them to go home and use a dictionary. This is one way. Teachers can create habits in their pupils. They (learners) can be autonomous and rely on themselves. In the long run, whenever a pupil encounters a problem, he will automatically rely on himself. (Teacher 11)

A paradoxical situation arises from the strategy described above. The teachers have to be more authoritative and persistent in order to train learners to be independent. As Teacher 14 reported, it would be a necessary step in the beginning of every school year for the teacher to be firm in order to set the new rules and procedures that will help serve that goal.
“T:...Actually when they are in the beginning of the year, pupils...tend to want to be spoon-fed...to get most things from the teacher (and have her) do most things for them.

F: So when you are starting a reading comprehension activity...so they ask: “Mrs what is this word?”

T: Okay! So yes, they depend on you as a teacher to have even a small activity. To fill in a questionnaire, for example, so they tend to ask you “what’s this?” “how to do that?” They get you to their seats and they ask you so many questions as if you were going to do the task for them but I think afterwards when they’re used to your system and you make them change their habits, they become independent.” (Teacher 14)

In a sense, these teachers had to be persistent with students who had no previous experience with this type of educational process. They highlighted thus the central role of the teacher in promoting learner independence and the need for her to assume the role of facilitator and guide in the teaching learning situation. Although claims about these teachers’ classroom practice could not be made on the basis of personal reporting, they seemed to be in support of the idea of fostering learner independence/autonomy as an educational goal.

In contrast, the analysis revealed that some teachers did not seem to be ready for the shift. The following extract shows that this teacher is not aware of the underlying philosophy of learner independence.

F: How important is it that teachers train their learners to be independent, autonomous learners...?

T: In the beginning..how important?

F: Yes, how important is it for learners to be independent?

T: From the teacher or what? Well, (he laughs) well, in theory that’s important! There are pupils who are excellent let’s say..really excellent pupils. I think when they reach this level of excellence.I mean they understand everything, they read at home, they read newspaper articles..yeah, in this way I think these pupils..only this elite ..these pupils can be independent. The others can not. Not any pupil can be independent. (Teacher 8)
Thus, he believed that the teacher's pedagogy had no bearing on learner independence and that 'excellent' learners were successful with learning the language because they were endowed with the capacity to undertake independent work. In other words, he believed that it would not be possible to develop through some pedagogical strategy autonomous learners.

Another case in point was Teacher 15 who rejected the new propositions of learner-centred pedagogy recommended through the current ELT curriculum. He protested in response to my question about learner involvement:

F: ...You know the stereotype we have...we'd sit patiently and wait for the teacher to set up for the lesson and we only spoke when the teacher wanted us to speak.

T: What was wrong with that method?

F: It's not that it was 'wrong' but we were fitting into that picture. We were as learners expecting that to happen in our classrooms. We didn't...you see what I mean?

T: Yes, I see what you mean but I still don't believe in that. (Teacher 15)

From the accounts above, it can be deduced that in order to promote learner autonomy teachers found it necessary to bring about change in learners' attitudes to class work. Thus, the learners' agenda emerged from the above teachers' accounts as an important variable interfering with the attempt to promote learner independence. They, as a result, found it necessary to resist the learner's old habits and expectations. With reference to the teaching of reading strategies, some teachers suggested that fellow teachers train their pupils how to infer the meaning of words by themselves. It is evident that the teachers had to exercise even more complex management skills and to be even more assertive to ensure the successful implementation of a group-work activity as an instance. It is for this reason that many teachers would not find the change easy to do. The participants in the study who seemed to have achieved some degree of success with the management side of implementing the innovation had nonetheless mixed feelings about the shift in pedagogy. Teacher 4, Teacher 6, Teacher 8, Teacher 12, and Teacher 15, for instance, questioned whether the students
were receiving sufficient input from the teacher and expressed doubts about the 'standards' that can be expected out of language provision following this pedagogy. On the whole, however, fostering learner autonomy was regarded as a viable educational goal. The participants associated two educational values to it: teaching learners how to assume responsibility and how to be self-reliant. The teachers who attempted to extend the idea of autonomy to learning out of class say they resort to types of assignments that, in their view, served the aim of supporting autonomous learning. In the following section I report on these attempts and discuss their implications for learner-teacher roles.

8.3.2 'INDEPENDENT LEARNING' OUT OF CLASS

An examination of the teachers' responses yielded a number of typical activities teachers considered likely to promote independent learning. The list below represents a set of activities proposed to learners in the order most frequently cited by the participants:

- Giving presentations on topics related to the curriculum;
- Writing dialogues, summaries, essays and (informal) poems;
- Reading books, newspapers and magazines in English;
- Reciting chunks of language;
- Enacting dialogues.

A distinction needs to be made between the teachers' responses. A number of teachers were in fact talking of recommendations to learners rather than activities they followed up in class. These teachers did not go further than *telling*, *advising*, and *urging* learners (their own words) to undertake independent work as deduced from the following replies:
"I tell them to watch films in English. I give them books to read and entice them to go out and use their English with the tourists." (Teacher 2)

"...I advise them to listen to songs and then to read English newspapers whenever they can." (Teacher 3)

"...(R)eading in English (is needed) because when they go to university, they are going to need English especially in scientific subjects. They have to go to libraries to do research and rely on themselves. The teacher can urge the pupils to start doing that since the secondary level." (Teacher 4)

The teachers quoted above probably saw that individual work would lead to better achievement in language learning but seemed to leave it for the learners to develop the skills required for successful independent learning. This position might be explained by a perception on their part that autonomy was an attitude rather than a capacity (Dickinson 1995, Little 1997). They tended to assume that as long as the learners adopted the idea that it was necessary for them to take initiative and responsibility for their own learning, they would become autonomous/independent users of English. Furthermore, they seemed to perceive that autonomous learning would be the natural product of exposure to language content from different sources. Undertaking the extra work mentioned by these teachers, whether it was watching films, listening to songs or reading, implied imbibing content rather than learning how to use it. Their views were based on the assumption that the learner would transfer the absorbed input to other situations where 'autonomous' engagement with the target language would be required.

Other participants who elaborated on what they do with learners to help them develop a capacity for autonomous learning mentioned engaging learners in project work, writing assignments, briefing and summarising of short stories and newspaper/magazine articles. These activities had one common denominator. They all aimed to develop in the learners the ability to acquire language and to use it subsequently to express themselves in writing or orally. Presentations entailed practising self-access to resources in the community at large but teachers were
conscious of the limitations in the context in terms of the availability of resources in English. Considering this constraint teachers reported having to think of what information was available to learners before assigning a project. For instance, when Teacher 13 asked her learners to make a research on vocabulary related to food, she knew the only source of information for her pupils was the dictionary. Teacher 1, in contrast, seemed to have found a way around the situation. He mentioned having involved the pupils in collecting 'realia' needed to teach vocabulary related to medicine, doctors and drugs. He described how he dealt with the descriptive notices found with medicine in the extract below:

What's that? It gives you information about the drug...If you have a paper like this, just take it and read it...and then after a second session I'd say, "Can you give me all the words that you found? What do you say to a patient to explain how to use the medicine?" And they say, "Well, a pill before lunch..twice a week..three times a week"...This is a skill to me as I have enabled them when they become old or probably in the future when they read a paper like this, they can understand the use of it. (Teacher 1)

Besides covering the content of the unit in a pleasant way, his learners were given the opportunity to develop strategies to interact with texts in English and to become aware of what kind of information such documents were likely to include. He believed that should a similar situation arise in their life out of class, the learners would be able to approach similar texts with confidence.

Teacher 10 also reported on how he used project work. The students used the World Wide Web as information resource. He outlined the rationale of the presentation as follows:

"...(Y)ou work on it (the assignment) and then you share it with others...and they (the pupils performing) feel they are doing something with that subject. They are not there to receive information; they contribute...because the basic thing is to communicate. To communicate is not only with what (information) you have to give the others but also taking this information from others." (Teacher 10)
He describes what steps he follows to coach the pupils in charge of the project:

"... (W)hat I do usually is that I take this information, I read it and then devote one hour or two for the students to summarise that and then we give it to the other students." (Teacher 10)

As pointed out by Teacher 10 and Teacher 1, it was a way to vary the nature and source of the course content and a way to allocate to the learner a participatory role in the learning/teaching process. As can be gleaned from his account, this teacher had to be assertive in his effort to provide counselling and coaching. Not only did he initiate the activity he also felt the need to take control of the material to be provided by the presenters for their audience (Teacher 10).

The teachers who reported that they involved learners in giving presentations to foster independence, did not elaborate much on the presentation phase. This might have been due to their focus on the content the pupils were likely to acquire and to communicate to the rest of the class. From this perspective, the pupils were merely encouraged to acquire that content, select it and communicate it to others.

The second most important type of activities teachers assigned as an attempt to promote autonomous learning was writing. These assignments varied from writing summaries of short stories, a few pages from a book, dialogues, and biographies to the writing of poetry. Teachers dealing with beginners at the Basic Education level (Teacher 5, Teacher 7 and Teacher 14), mentioned assigning guided writing and especially writing dialogues in order to encourage learners to experiment with using the language to communicate something to others. This form of assigning individual work out of class simply involved learners in further practice of what had been learnt in class. Teacher 7 gave an example:

"For example, I would want them to write a biography. I would give them few notes like the date of birth, etc. and then they'd develop it into a full paragraph that probably ask one of them to come write it on the board and do peer correction." (Teacher 7)
Assignments of the sort were intended to shift the instructional process from a focus on form to a focus on language use and communication. These assignments served as opportunities to revise, fine-tune and expand the language covered during the lesson but did not involve much risk-taking or ‘autonomous’ use of the type that might be required of the learner in real life situations.

Besides the issues at the level of conceptualisation discussed above, there might be practical problems in the way of pursuing even a ‘technical’ version of learner autonomy (Benson 1997) as an objective in the Tunisian English language teaching situation. This could be attributed to the lack of support for English in the society at large. For example, Teacher 12 pointed out to a problem finding short stories in English that would match the mental age of the learners:

"...(T)he books that we find for beginners are stories that they learnt in primary school...if I ask my students to read...as beginners...to read Snow White ...they wouldn’t like to read Snow White ...it is not at the age of fifteen that they are going to read Snow White.” (Teacher 12)

Teacher 6 mentions that her school had just acquired a monolingual dictionary for the pupils’ library otherwise the pupils would have to rely on pocket size, bilingual dictionaries. Teacher 3 asked the pupils to buy newspapers in English but knowing that they were too expensive for pupils, she suggested they would share them.

The teachers’ views about teaching that is geared towards promoting learner autonomy indicated that the majority of the participants were in support the idea of promoting learner independence through classroom pedagogy. They were conscious that the aim of fostering learner independence followed from an emphasis on learning language for communication and that it can be achieved through learner-centred teaching. Learner autonomy was believed to be achievable mainly through the completion of tasks. They also were conscious that the teacher needed to play the
role of facilitator and guide in order to help learners take a participatory role in classroom work. These views indicate that the participants saw that learner autonomy depended on whether the teacher attempts to give responsibility to the learners.

However, the teachers did not seem to have a perception of autonomy as extending beyond the tasks in the textbooks or the teaching of reading strategies. The participants who mentioned assigning work out of class to foster autonomous language learning did so on personal initiatives. Due to lack of support for English in the community at large (Walters 1999), the teachers reported having to provide the learners with material, and thus, exercise control over what language content learners could be exposed to during this activity. In that sense, there was little room for the development of the skills likely to lead to autonomous language use outside the classroom. Even in the restrictive meaning of autonomy in applied linguistics, the task of producing the autonomous user of the target language requires more than just independence from the teacher. As Littlewood (1999) put it,

"Learning language for communication involves developing increasing capacities to make choices (of language and meaning), to relate to others and to develop one’s voice in another language" (88).

There was nothing in the data that indicated awareness of the connotations of autonomy as choice and negotiation on the part of the learner.

8.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter I first dealt with the data related to the teachers’ perceptions of ‘successful’ teaching and discussed them in the light of the transmission and interpretation models of teaching. The discussion pointed to a mismatch between the teachers’ conception of ‘good’ teaching and the recommendations of the new English curriculum. The last two sections examined the teachers’ accounts of their experience with implementing pair/group work and with operating principles of learner autonomy. The findings pointed to areas of tension regarding the implementation of
interaction activities. The teachers in the study were mostly concerned with the issues of classroom order and the teaching of grammar, reading and writing.

The data on the teachers’ views of the ‘successful lesson’ analysed in the first part of this chapter revealed that the teachers in the study attach great value to organised input from the teacher to the learner. The teacher’s ability to be in control of teaching/learning situation emerged as a central feature of what they perceived as ‘good’ teacher performance. It was through control of content and the teaching activities that the teacher ensured that the lessons ‘flow’ towards the predicted objectives. The participants valued the teacher-learner communication flow and saw in it cues that the teacher was “making himself understood” and taking the learners’ response to the teachers’ cues as ‘involvement’, ‘understanding’ and ‘learning’. They talked of materials “presented” to the learners by the teacher and thus projecting a view of the teacher as the main actor in the learning/teaching situation. From this perspective, the teacher is assuming the responsibility for the teaching and the learning. All the learners have to do is to go with the flow and absorb what is presented to them.

When the participants spoke of the implementation of pair-group work activities in the Tunisian school setting, signs of divergence in views began to surface. The teachers who rejected the idea of applying pair/group work mentioned reasons such as students using the mother tongue rather than English and switching to topics unrelated to the task. They also complained about the problems associated with class size that made the control of student production and behaviour impossible. By contrast, a number of teachers talked with great enthusiasm of pair/group activities. These participants maintained that teachers focus on what they referred to as “the objective” or “outcome” of these activities. The objective was to have learners “produce something in English” (Teacher 10) or “use the language in a natural way” (Teacher 13). They proposed that fellow teachers train their learners how to behave and how to perform tasks within a pair/group work arrangement (Teacher 1).
The data also revealed that the pair/group work activity was generally organised in the final stage of the ‘three P’ lesson pattern. Thus, these activities represent only a small segment of the lesson as time unit. As noted by Prabhu (1992) the situation is understandable. He comments:

“...(A)ny new method or curriculum is sure to be unsettling to the stable routine in each classroom and likely, as a result, either to be discarded as unworkable or to be absorbed into a new, stable routine devoid of its conceptual substance. A change in classroom routines can be productive of learning only to the extent it is motivated and sustained by conceptual exploration by the teachers themselves.” (225)

The analysis showed that shifting towards practice that emphasised the creation of a more varied and complex interaction pattern among the people in the classroom caused tension for the teachers in a context like Tunisia. Except for the enthusiasts who seemed to down-play the problems associated with pair/group work, the majority of the participants seemed to experience difficulties coping with the more varied and loose type of communication flow in the classroom. The tension was caused by the perceived necessity to give way to learner self-expression and the sense of helplessness experienced by the teacher who insists on overseeing closely what each and every pupil within the group says and does.

As to the issue of learner independence/autonomy, the same teachers believed that learner autonomy was already in operation within the framework of task-based instruction. Teachers who were aware of the link between CLT methodology and the goal of promoting autonomy had included fostering independence on their teaching agenda. In that sense, the teachers perceived learner independence/autonomy mainly in the technical sense; that is as a move away from teacher-led instruction (Benson 1997). However, some teachers did not see the link and argued that only a minority of talented outstanding students could be autonomous implying that autonomy could not be taught by specific educational processes. Teachers who held a view of autonomy as attitude interpreted the learners’ inability to work independently as reluctance to engage in self-instruction. It seemed that the teachers’ perception of
their learners could influence the way they approach the task of fostering learner autonomy. As Benson and Voller (1997) remarked that

“the key issue is whether it is possible to ‘teach’ learners how to be autonomous with at the same time denying their autonomy” (7).

Teachers who think only a minority of pupils can be autonomous do not seem to see the necessity to engage with the goal with the rest of the class while as Little (1995) put it, the aim is to bring about more success in learning. In his words:

“...(O)ur enterprise is not to promote new kinds of learning, but by pursuing learner autonomy as an explicit goal, to help more learners to succeed.” (175)
CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSION

9.1 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

The principle research questions addressed in this study were:

1. What views of language learning and teaching emerge from the teachers' accounts of previous learning experiences at the pre-teaching and probationary phase of their career?

2. What do the teachers see as the knowledge base for teaching English in the Tunisian context?

3. How do the teachers understand and implement some aspects of CLT pedagogy?

Based on the findings related to the above questions, I attempted to address a further question:

4. Does the innovation match the teachers' conceptual frames and what can be done to improve EFL TED provision, if at all necessary?

I explained in chapter one that the intended reforms in general education and ELT language education were motivated by economic changes in Tunisia and in the world generally which bring about a post-modern industrial and educational condition (Lawton 1995, Hargreaves 1994). The political and economic circumstances that motivated the 1991 educational reform and the promotion of English in education were explored and analysed in detail in chapter three. Tunisian teachers, like other teachers in the rest of the world, see their world of work revolutionised by technological developments, structural changes and educational reforms (Kennedy 1991, Young 1998). However, organisational structures (White 1988) and established
educational ideologies (Clark 1987) in many parts of the world stand in the way of providing supportive mechanisms for teacher improvement and active participation in the educational process (UNESCO 1998). In Tunisia, the context of the present study, the TED system is, as revealed in chapter four, an insulated one. The academic education of prospective teachers is in the domain of universities while teacher ‘training’ is within the hands of the Ministry of Education. Thus, TED is practised as a linear process that presumes that the acquisition of theoretical and practical pedagogical knowledge is a disconnected process in the teacher’s mind. This lack of a linkage is in part responsible for the gap between the stated goals of the educational reform and the approach followed by the training institution to TED.

One major discrepancy is the way the teacher is perceived. It is still assumed that teachers are mainly implementers of the curriculum and that they are expected to change practice according to the requirements of the national policy. This situation puts limits on the teachers’ (and the teacher educators’) initiatives, creativity and the motivation for reflection and innovation. Thus, the exploration of the FC philosophy and procedures, dealt with in chapter four, depicted a system that functions from a deficit perspective to in-service education (see section 4.3 and Table 4.2). The FC provision focuses on the behavioural and thus deals only with surface changes and short-term objectives as perceived by the decision-makers in the training institution. The repercussions of such an approach on the teachers’ perceptions of themselves as professionals are detected in many instances in the study and especially in the findings of chapters seven and eight. Paradoxically, the exploration of the stated goals of the new ELT curriculum and recommendations it put forth for pedagogy revealed that the application of its underlying principles would require a shift from the teacher-directed mode of teaching that characterises the typical lesson in a Tunisian EFL classroom (Abdesslem 1992). The curriculum designers also seem to be seeking to democratise the teacher-learner relations in the language classroom and in the teaching/learning process. Thus, chapter three and chapter four pointed out to a paradoxical situation whereby an educational reform conceived along the principles of progressivism is being introduced within a scientist (modernist) technocratic educational system heavily marked by top-down processes. I argued that as a result
of this discrepancy the dissemination of the intended 'innovation' might be hindered by a disjunction between the teachers' conceptual frames and the innovation.

Moreover, the findings in chapter four indicate that the approach to TED in Tunisia is not in tune with recent developments in TED in the world. The current emphasis in the field on teacher reflection and teacher enquiry as being central to improvement in teacher professionalism brought under scrutiny perceptions of teacher expertise as mainly technical, behavioural or an applied science (Schön 1983, 1987; Wallace 1991). Furthermore, TE is moving more and more towards the participatory model (Crandall 2000: 36) and shifting from attempts to merely reconcile the 'training' and 'education' orientations to engaging teachers in the process of 'development' and reflection. This type of shift in approach to TED has not been made in Tunisia. Focus is laid on what problems surface in teacher performance and what technical skills teachers are perceived to lack in reference to a 'desired' teaching model that is, in turn, determined in reference to a particular teaching method (at present CLT). This study pointed out to the shortcomings of this approach that presumes that all teachers should teach in a similar fashion.

The data collected and analysed mainly in chapters seven and eight provide evidence for teacher heterogeneity in reaction to the required change in pedagogy. The findings in these two chapters send a strong message to teacher educators in Tunisia that teachers will always find a way to personalise their practice. The teachers' ideas about pair/group work especially show clearly that the participants were interacting with the innovation and searching for balance between their personal convictions about language and language learning, their priorities in the classroom, and their understanding of their learners' interests. The problem with TED provision is that it fails to see this heterogeneity and proposes one menu for all. Most importantly, it does not engage at all with teachers' thinking processes and it is not clear whether the teachers are perceived as thinkers and decision-makers. The teachers, whose role is crucial in the diffusion and the implementation of change, are treated as mere deliverers of the curriculum, and thus, their views on matters that concern them are
never elicited. In that sense the present research uncovered by means of a semi-structured interview technique some of the teachers' implicit theories, beliefs, convictions, anxieties and concerns pertaining to the implementation of the innovation.

Chapter six yielded a number of insights about the participants' perceptions about language, language learning and learning to teach. First, the teachers' personal accounts of their experiences as learners of language revealed that they were taught the language following more 'traditional' approaches to language teaching. The teachers are therefore asked to teach in ways they have not been taught before. The findings in chapter eight indicate that there is correlation between the teachers' views of language and language learning explored in chapter six and their views of the innovation and of their task as teachers. Teacher 4, Teacher 8, and Teacher 15 who held a view of language as system and learning language as mainly learning the grammar, valued input from the teacher and controlled practice. On these grounds, they were in opposition to the organisation of instruction around pair/group work (see section 8.2.1). Their objections stemmed from their conviction that learners needed to be provided with accurate and well-structured input from the teacher followed by controlled practice. They believed that accurate production of language by learners was important and that learners' errors have to be stopped. Thus, their justifications for dropping pair/group work activities were in correlation with their views of language as system. For instance, Teacher 15 insisted that substitution exercises were valuable because in these situations learners will feel they are producing language and not making mistakes.

The position of the cautious adapters of these activities (see section 8.2.2) can also be attributed to these teachers' views of language. It is notable that Teacher 1 and Teacher 12 held a dual view of language learning as form and communication. They saw language learning as the internalisation of structures and rules of accurate use but at the same time are open to a view of language as communication. Their cautious position towards the innovation is reflective of their attempt to balance these
two dimensions. Teacher 1 insisted that the Communicative Approach did not mean forgetting about grammar and de-emphasising accuracy. He pointed out how during group work, he made provision for the verification of the meaning of words, spelling and pronunciation by the learners themselves. Teacher 12 who pointed out in her account of her language learning experience that she had made tremendous progress just by focusing on grammar talked of her uneasiness at the lack of provision for conscious practice. She reported that she would always allow time to provide further (mechanical) practice and to deal as quickly as possible with the errors spotted. If we look closely at the views of language held by the teachers who were enthusiastic about the prospect of basing instruction on group work, it becomes evident that these teachers held a more liberal view of language use. Teacher 5, Teacher 10, Teacher 13, and Teacher 14 held a naturalistic view of language learning and were convinced that learners learn language from various sources and by experimenting with it. Incidentally, these teachers' reports on their own learning experiences echoed a similar strategy. This is especially the case for Teacher 10 who as learner experienced risk-taking by being open to any source for learning language and by engaging in authentic communication.

The findings in chapter six related to the teachers' appraisal of their experiences of learning to teach during the probationary training, confirm the conclusions reached in chapter four about the vocational character of TE course provision. Another important finding was that the teachers themselves believed that teacher 'expertise' was practical in nature. They highlighted the value of demonstration lessons and revealed how the teachers as trainees went about learning about teaching from the demonstration lessons. The data shows that the teachers' experience as probationary teachers during the stage marked them as professionals while they were divided as to the value of the mémoire de fin de stage as a learning experience. Some teachers took it seriously and talked about it as a major event in the process of acquiring competence in teaching while another group thought it was merely an administrative requirement. The findings in chapter 6 related to these two components indicated that the process of TED during the probationary period was a process that consigns the probationary teacher to a passive role watching a 'demonstration lesson' (‘sitting
with Nellie’) performed by a more expert practitioner. The mémoire as a task presumes looking for pedagogical solutions from books and journal articles related to teaching practice in order for them to find ideas they can presumably transfer to the classroom situation through a process of trial and error. The findings then point out to a dual approach to TE through these two components revealing perhaps two views of teaching expertise: one that sees teaching as merely a craft (practice) and a second that sees teaching as theory-applied. This is another manifestation of the lack of linkage between the different phases. It appears that from this point of view the possibility that what the teacher learns during these two experiences will not come into conflict. In that sense, the training probationary teachers was designed and carried out as a unidirectional and linear process. During the two learning experiences, there is no room for interaction with the probationary teacher’s personal views and individual teaching context. For instance, there is no opportunity to report on their experimentation, if ever, with the ideas ‘picked up’ during the ‘demonstration lessons’ or from the references used for the research mémoire.

In chapter 6 (section 6.3.2), it became clear that the espoused discourse of ‘development’ as self-development, self-questioning, and self-improvement resulting from the FC rhetoric raises questions about its applicability. The findings in the earlier part of the chapter show that there is no provision for research skills and no engagement with teacher sense making and interpretation of teaching. The data gave indication that the teachers themselves talked of their own ‘development’ from the perspective that their task was merely to ‘deliver’ the curriculum. For instance, they talked of ‘development’ as an outcome rather than a process. They expected the outcome of ‘development’ to be the potential improvement of their subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge in order to deliver the curriculum in an efficient way. They also perceived that ‘development’ can be achieved through reading in search for ‘practical’ pedagogical ideas and background information about the course content in order to help learners succeed in national examinations.
The findings in chapter seven confirmed further that the teachers, the novice as well as the experienced, perceived their role within the system as deliverers of the content in the textbooks. Thus, they projected a perception of their task and role as being textbook-driven and exam-driven. The teachers did not, for instance, see development in participating in curriculum development or in undertaking research. This situation points to the repercussions of the ‘training’ and ‘re-training’ approach of TE provision. Perhaps these findings do not raise high hopes about the prospect of teachers going beyond the textbooks, the exams and the learners and engaging in reflection or venturing into self-questioning. Clearly, there is a need to help them widen their perspectives as language teachers. Indeed, the findings in chapter seven depict the participants as conceiving their role as transmitters of the content of the curriculum to the pupils. Following from this conception they perceived teacher knowledge for teaching EFL as mainly requiring two types of knowledge: knowledge of the subject (the language to be taught) and knowledge of pedagogy. This apparent lack of awareness on the part of the teachers of the importance of these issues in the teaching/learning situation and especially in the light of the orientations of the ELT curriculum. Surprisingly, the teachers seemed to perceive learners as recipients of instruction. When they referred to ‘knowing learners’, for instance, they meant paying attention to the affective and not the psychological. No mention was made of learning styles, strategies, difficulties nor the prospect of individualising instruction.

Another instance when the participants talked from an assumption that learners were recipients of instruction was when they were describing the ‘successful’ lesson (see section 8.1). In the overall flow of the lesson as they described it, there was no room for learner negotiation or the teacher changing course. These findings give another indication that on the conceptual level as well as the technical level the teachers are remote from a learner-centred pedagogy. The teachers’ perception of teaching and of what goes on in a language lesson does not seem to be in tune with this expected goal. Following their description of the ‘successful’ lesson and the ‘competent’ teacher, the teacher emerges as the main actor in the teaching/learning situation. In their candid descriptions of the ‘competent’ teacher, the participants did not seem to see that they were depicting an authoritative, domineering teacher whose priority was
the course content possibly at the expense of being sensitive to learner difference or individual needs. At this level of the analysis it seemed doubtful that the teachers would ever adopt a CLT methodology. Indeed, the findings emerging from their views related to ‘method’ (see section 7.1.5 and 7.1.6) can be interpreted as a dismissal of CLT principles under the guise of ‘eclecticism’. As to their views of pair/group work and how they incorporate them in the lesson as unit, the teachers’ conservative tendencies become more apparent. In other words, the teachers are incorporating the innovation within the ‘old’ the lesson structure of the Direct Method.

On the basis of the analysis of data on the implementation of pair/group a finding was reached that only a direct approach to CLT (Celce-Murcia et al. (1997) and a ‘weak’ version of CLT (Howatt 1984, Holliday 1994) could be expected in the Tunisian school context. By the same occasion, it can be deduced that only a ‘weak’ version of task-based teaching (Skehan 1996) is being put into application as the pair/group work tasks are incorporated within this controlled lesson pattern. The findings in chapter 7 and chapter 8 send a clear message about the need to assist teachers to reframe their conceptions of teaching/learning in order to match CLT pedagogy. Though there were slight differences between the teachers’ positions on the issue of communicative activities, the data indicated that the teachers conceived teaching English as the presentation of language input to the learners followed by some form of restricted ‘communication’ practice. The aim assigned to the communicative slice of the English lesson was merely perceived as a way to compensate for the lack of exposure to English outside the classroom. Moreover, the data revealed that from the teachers’ perspective, the goal of teaching English was not communication as much as it was learning a pre-determined content (especially vocabulary and grammar) to be rehearsed at a later stage of the lesson in simulation activities.

Furthermore, the research findings in chapter seven and chapter eight especially show that the teachers were too conscious of their task as teachers of English as a
school subject. In fact, this restricted perception of the goal for teaching English in school explains the overall conservative attitude to CLT. It is perhaps not too far fetched to presume that the teachers were remote from the objectives of the ELT curriculum and functioning from a more 'down to earth' view of their pupils' needs. As noted by Sheen (1994) with reference to the European context, the teachers in Tunisia perhaps conceived their task from a perspective of teaching English for academic purposes. The Baccalaureat exam was indeed used as a reference point by the teachers in the study and as an argument to justify the emphasis on form, accuracy and teacher control of the teaching/learning process.

The ideas expressed by the teachers in relation to the innovation pointed out to the need for teacher educators to help teachers see their work from a broader perspective. A starting point could be to bring about change in the way teachers perceive and approach their task as English language teachers. The desired change requires raising teachers' awareness about their own conceptions of education, teaching/learning and teacher and learner roles (see Richards and Lockhart 1994). It will then be possible to attempt to re-orient them to match the goals of the educational reform and the ELT curriculum. The teachers' views of the curriculum and the textbooks show that they are not relating to the textbooks in an autonomous way. Thus, there is a gap between the objectives of the ELT curriculum and the conceptions of teaching English at the school level. The findings in chapter eight, for instance, show that teachers do not carry the goal of promoting learner autonomy beyond the objective of language learning (see section 8.3.2). However, the ways in which they proceeded differed. For instance, Teacher 4, Teacher 10 and Teacher 13 give it a self-access perspective but each one practices in a different way. There was variation in the extent to which the teachers provided support to learners in the process. The majority left the learners to their own dispositions as they simply gave them assignments to be carried out at home. The others tell them, advise them or entice them to engage in independent work (Teacher 3, Teacher 4, and Teacher 12). The teachers who believed it was teachable linked it with assuming responsibility and self-reliance. It is surprising that only one respondent raised that issue from a social perspective. These findings point out to the need for teachers to be rounded up on issues that are central
in the ELT curriculum. They need to be assisted at the conceptual level to develop the frames of reference that facilitate their translation of the curriculum objectives. A move from the focus on the technical in TE provision to dealing with the conceptual level might be the way ahead. Creating opportunities to discuss meanings, understandings, interpretations surrounding autonomy or group work as an instance is much more likely to bring about change in teacher perceptions that serve the goal of the curriculum. It is necessary to balance the conceptual and the practical in order to expect any improvement in teaching.

In section 9.2 below I elaborate a theoretical framework inspired by the findings in this study and informed by practical ideas tried by other teacher educators in various contexts. These suggestions are meant to address the major gaps identified in the study; namely, the lack of collaboration between universities and the training institution and the technical bias of the probationary and in-service training. Most importantly, the proposal below focuses on engaging the cognitive processes of learning to teach. As the success of any proposal will depend largely on the people involved in implementing it and the local conditions surrounding the main actors, I shall accompany my proposal with a number of recommendations for ways of promoting English in education and in the community at large.

9.2 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I mentioned in the introduction of the thesis that the main goal of the researcher is to reflect on ways to improve TED system. I will focus in this proposal on the three phases described in chapter six; that is, the pre-training phase, the professional training phase and the post-training phase. Since the overall structure of the TED system is a solid one in Tunisia, my proposal aims to revamp it from the inside. Firstly, it points to ways of establishing connectivity between the different stages and secondly, it proposes a number of innovations in the content and delivery mode TED provision. It is hoped that the recommendations will bring about a shift from a focus on modelling and imitation to understanding, from technicality to reasoning and
reflection, and from emphasis on homogenisation to a search for individualisation and heterogeneity among teachers.

This proposal rests on a perspective of development as a process that promotes in the prospective teacher qualities such as adaptability, flexibility and reflexivity. The present study revealed that the TED system that fails to recognise the necessity of developing these qualities in its teachers and therefore risks not being able to develop teachers provide the kind of education required in the 21st century (Hargreaves 1994, Young 1998, UNESCO 1998). The principal message of the thesis is that intended reforms will remain ink on paper without the adequate preparation of the teachers to whom educational reforms are passed down for implementation. It is on this premise that my proposal starts from the teacher and radiates to the world around her. The procedures I recommend here focus on activating individual and internal knowledge processes in agreement with Leinhardt’s (1988) contention that “(e)xpertise does not refer to doing things the ‘right’ or ‘preferred’ way” (147). The ambition is, therefore, to develop in the long term teachers capable of personal reflection and equipped with the tools for engaging in school-based inquiry either individually or with peers.

9.2.1 STRENGTHENING THE ELT COMPONENT AT UNIVERSITY

I will start with a suggestion in the way of linking universities and the training institution. It is a feasible idea since such links existed previously within the framework of the Ecole Normale. Mutual assistance and collaboration can therefore be envisaged and communication channels established between the Ministry of Education and different departments at university level. With reference to the preparation of EFL teachers, university-based lecturers involved in teaching ELT-related subjects could join forces to reflect on their experiences over the past years and draw general guidelines for the initial education of prospective teachers. Avenues for collaboration between the university-based staff and school inspectors need to be explored to invigorate the predominately theoretical courses with a practice element and the purely practice-oriented teacher training with education opportunities for practising teachers. University-based teacher educators can provide
support for practising teachers either in the training situation or by assisting with collaborative action research (my suggestion in 9.2.2 below). Subject inspectors can facilitate the integration of a practice element within the ELT component by coordinating collaboration with schools at the district level. They can also assist with input at university level by giving demonstrations, running workshops and coaching students undertaking research work in schools.

9.2.2 RENEWAL OF THE CURRENT IN-SERVICE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The forthcoming recommendations towards the renewal of some aspects of EFL TED provision was formulated by drawing on current thinking in teacher learning (Freeman 1996), teacher knowledge (Shulman 1987, Elbaz 1983), teacher development (Bartlett 1990), and teacher reflection (Schön 1983, Zeichner and Liston 1987, Calderhead 1987, 1990; Richardson 1990b). The role of teacher educators in Tunisia, as I see it, is to help teachers develop the ability to interact in a meaningful way with their context and critically examine new ideas in the light of their own frames of reference.

The reality of the TED system in Tunisia imposes an agenda on teacher educators whereby they have to give priority to the craft of teaching. I do not dispute this urgent need but I concur with a view of learning to teach as a process of sense making, interpretation (Freeman and Richards 1996), re-conceptualisation and theorising from practical experience (Ramani 1987). This research has pointed to the need to address the cognitive in teaching (Wood 1996, Johnson 1998) and to facilitate in TE the interaction process between theories developed by outsiders and the teachers' conceptual frames. TED provision needs to focus on opportunities to question and judge of the appropriateness of these ideas and their compatibility in the local context (Van Manen 1977, Widdowson 1990, Holliday 1994, Markee 1997, Grenfell 1998) through reflection on experience and knowledge. Below is a possible course of action that aims to attend to these dimensions of learning to teach. The suggestions made here do not aim to contest the importance of skill formation but
aim to introduce an element of cognition and reflection in the process of competency building, to encourage discussion, sharing ideas and multiple interpretations. In the light of these principles a number of alternative activities can be integrated within the usual course of action during the first probationary year and the post-probationary phase. A deliberate distinction is made between the two phases on the premise that the needs and concerns of probationary teachers are different from those of experienced teachers. Research on the teachers' lives and careers (Huberman 1993, 1995; Fessler 1995) and studies that focus on the knowledge growth of beginner teachers (Grossman 1990, Gutiérrez AlMarza 1992, 1996) indicate that experienced and inexperienced teachers have different interests, priorities and engage in different mental processes.

With reference to the first probationary year, I propose in addition to the usual 'demonstration lesson' and the discussion following it, alternative procedures that might give this 'professional training phase' a reflective orientation. The problem with the usual practice is the limited opportunity for personalised participation (see section 6.2.1). Observing demonstration lessons, very often unstructured, gives access only to the observable in teaching and thus the conceptual dimension is overlooked. A framework to help trainees acquire the skills of adaptation, as opposed to imitation, would include various focused observation tasks that involve the probationary teacher in active observation, understanding, interpretation and the exploration of alternatives (Fanselow 1990, Wajnryb 1992). The observation tasks recommended above divert the trainees' attention from the content and sequence of a whole lesson to explore the rationale for various types of procedures. More importantly, the teacher educator can focus on enabling the teachers with the type of research skills like using checklists, mini-questionnaires and writing reports on the observed teaching as a form of preparation for the practice of 'exploratory teaching' (Allwright 1993).

Alternatively, teacher educators may resort to lesson transcripts to carry out teaching analysis. As opposed to the live lesson, these analyses can be undertaken in pairs or
in groups to help trainees articulate their thoughts and reconsider their own interpretations in the light of those of peer trainees. Video viewing, which is already used by some trainers in Tunisia, can be explored further for its great potential for flexible use. Lessons filmed in the local context (Cullen, 1991) are in themselves data that can be used by trainees independently or with the trainer during training. Self-reporting techniques (i.e. diaries, journals, logs, etc.) are important tools in the training situation and, whether written immediately after the lesson or after recording a lesson, can help the novice teacher develop insights about teaching. Diary keeping is a valuable self-reporting technique that fosters in the trainee reflective thinking about teaching (Bailey 1990, Jarvis 1992). To maximise the benefit from keeping teacher diaries, Bailey (1990: 225) suggested that an external party like a peer or supervisor comment regularly on diary entries to generate further ideas and to stimulate thinking. Moreover, Porter et al. (1990) propose a list of journal assignments that might with a little caution be easy to replicate in a teacher education setting like Tunisia. Their ideas about the guiding questions, the “ground rules” for the journal, and the ways to establish a trainee/trainer dialogue give sufficient guidance for teacher educators to adapt these procedures to their own situation. Another set of suggestions is found in Bartlett (1990) in the form of a ‘mapping-informing-contesting-appraising-acting’ cycle of activities that I find potentially useful. Under informing, for instance, he suggests presentations by trainees about lessons they have themselves taught to the rest of the group. The presentation helps the trainee in question to articulate her intentions, describe her procedures and appraise the perceived degree of success of the lesson. It is a way for the teacher presenting to state explicitly her own criteria for performance and her own assessment of the skills needed for the implementation of the intended plan. The ‘contestation’ phase will follow naturally from the interaction with other peer trainees and the trainer.

These training procedures and the type of assignments associated with them can easily be incorporated into the present stage formula. Introducing innovation in the activities during the stage will certainly bring about greater involvement and participation by the trainees in their own knowledge development. Most importantly,
the variation of the type of activities as outlined above will naturally bring about change in the outlook of the *cahier de stage* and in the nature of the task of compiling it. Trainers will naturally find in the *cahier de stage* valuable input on beginner teacher thinking processes and their existing ‘conceptual frames’ periodically they can rely on to inform programming of training sessions. The information can perhaps be a viable supplement to the data collected about beginner teachers via the usual procedures of classroom visits.

Another suggestion is to introduce activities to encourage reflection on theory in order to strengthen the *stage* with an ‘education’ perspective. The present study revealed that the course provision during the probationary period overlooks the theoretical underpinnings of pedagogy and even the very recommendations put forth to teachers. This situation is problematic as a professional teacher is expected to develop awareness and knowledge of developments in the field in order to be able to make informed choices and decisions (Krashen 1983, Larsen-Freeman 1983, Floden 1985, Widdowson 1997). On the basis of the findings discussed in 9.1, the teachers are in need for theoretical input. I suggest that a series of readings and discussion sessions be integrated as part of the *stage*. These can consist of an information base about relevant pedagogical issues. They can also be in the realm of other peripheral domains of teacher knowledge as mentioned by the participants in this study (see especially section 7.1.1, 7.1.2 and 7.1.5). Trainers may wish to resort to university-based educators like specialists in ELT, Education, Sociology, and Psychology within the framework of the kind of partnership with the universities I suggested earlier (section 9.3.1) facilitated by the *Direction Générale de la Formation Continue* and universities. Trainee teachers should be involved individually, in pairs or as a group, in the appraisal of the readings, lectures, presentations and so on, in the light of their experience and attempt to related them to their specific work contexts. Trainee involvement and input into the discussions should be maximised so that the ‘received ideas’ be examined so that the trainees engage further in the construction, re-construction, and revision of meanings through their own frames of reference (Freire 1970, Schön 1983, Barnes 1992, Freeman 1996a). Trainers may think of meaningful follow up writing and reporting assignments to be included in the *cahier*
that can also contribute to the trainees’ language development. These activities may help probationary teachers develop awareness about the need for ‘pedagogical mediation’ (Widdowson 2000b) and the skills to do it.

I shall now attempt to make a number of other proposals for the second probationary year that might help teacher educators re-direct this learning experience. With reference to the mémoire de fin de stage, it has been deduced in chapter six (section 6.2.3) that it is mostly perceived as a requirement towards obtaining tenure. The topics usually focus on the What and the How of teaching and rarely on the Why. For instance, “Why use group-work?” is a completely different question from “How to use group work with beginners?” The first question encourages critical thinking about whether group work is feasible or applicable, and whether it is a plausible way of organising instruction. By contrast, the ‘how’ question evades the theoretical debate by focusing on the technical aspect. Critical processes are to be encouraged in every way possible to promote reflective practice. Considering the training processes I recommended earlier, it would be logical to follow up the work on encouraging second year teachers to use qualitative research methods appropriate for the study of teaching (see Allwright and Bailey 1991, Nunan 1992). I argued in section 6.2.3 that trainees tended to engage in a view of ‘theory applied’ which amounts to looking for solutions in the books in order to transfer them to the classroom context. The problem with this approach is that teacher either has to find a way to make them work or discards them. The mémoire de fin de stage as a requirement can be a stepping stone for the promotion of teacher research in our schools. A possible continuation of the mémoire can be that teachers undertake in collaboration with other colleagues, research as part of a common school-based project. The trainers can find ways to motivate and encourage these ‘exceptional’ teachers. I suggest that after one year of classroom focused concerns, it will probably be more promising to start opening up the probationary teachers’ horizons to the world of schools and the community as a whole. Topics evolving round school-level issues such as extra curricular activities, teaching/learning/testing of particular skills across the curriculum, the perspectives of learners and fellow teachers, parent involvement in children’s schooling, and the like may be explored.
The above suggestions are but illustrative examples of ways to integrate during the first two probationary years the cognitive and the reflective dimensions of teaching. They are significant, however, in a context like Tunisia where, as revealed in chapter six, the model during the first probationary year still rests heavily on the ‘demonstration lesson’, and to some extent, the workshop. I contend that the present practices during the stage encourage modelling, imitation and a passive attitude to learning. The learning activities suggested above focus on active participation, reasoning, questioning and reformulation of the solutions through a collaborative process among trainees and with trainers.

What follows from the plan described above is a change in the nature of the activity of compiling the cahier de stage. It will no longer be that repetitive, redundant activity of reporting what was seen and said during the stage sessions. It will be a mosaic of learning experiences and articulated personalised ideas about teaching (Ramani 1987). The scope of the mémoire as a requirement will be widened in the aim of changing the EFL teachers’ perception of their role as professionals. The narrow focus on practice and subject-related topics only strengthens their view of themselves as merely language teachers. It is hoped that EFL teachers widen this conception of themselves beyond that confined level and start to think of EFL as education and preparation for lifelong learning. If reflection, self-directed learning, self-development and self-evaluation are the features we are looking for in the EFL teacher of the future in Tunisia, then planning for new teacher learning experiences is a necessary step to make. I shall return to the role of the supervisory corps in 9.3 below.

This proposal for the post-probationary teacher will be aim to change the focus of the FC on a particular ‘official’ teaching method, a particular set of generalised textbooks and requirements dictated by examination considerations. In chapter six (sections 6.3.2 and 6.3.3) expressed the need for input in various domains of teacher knowledge; that is, not only the procedural. The findings in chapter seven and
chapter eight confirmed the need for action in this direction. Therefore, series of lectures, panel discussions, and presentations organised specifically for the experienced teacher can be set up at local level. Starting from the definition of co-operative development proposed by Edge (1992), local trainers might consider setting up what I will call ‘teacher self-help committees’ to participate in drawing a semester programme and participate in running it. Teachers should in every way possible be encouraged to take responsibility in their own development and use the CREFOC as a space for such activity. Besides improving the teachers’ familiarity with landmark studies in fields connected to pedagogy (Sociology, Psychology, Communication Theory, Education Theory, SLA, and so on), there should be room for broadening the scope of the themes included. These events should make provision for peer group interaction processes to encourage self-expression, framing and re-framing of personal meanings (Schön 1983, Barnes 1992). An overall strategy to encourage professional enquiry through collaborative research in schools is badly needed in a context like Tunisia. The findings in chapter six indicated that teachers of English work in isolation in the absence of school-level common goals that might help set the motions of collegiality.

Therefore, some form of informal collaborative research should be encouraged. Practitioners can be encouraged to engage in studying their own teaching, that of their peers or issues of common concern in the school using, for instance, classroom observation, mini-questionnaires, interviewing and the like (see Richards and Lockart 1994, Nunan and Lamb 1996 for more details). Teachers as a pool can focus on areas of concern at the level of the school such as extra curricular activities, learner expectations, testing or any issue that they deem worth exploring to bring about improvement. I recommend that teachers are called upon in the beginning of each school year, to identify research areas for classroom or school level research projects. Ideally, a brainstorming preliminary meeting can be organised by the trainer to facilitate the process of drawing up lists of possible general themes. Informal support from trainers, university academics, and possibly ELTOs is important to coach the teachers in their enquiry efforts and to sustain and boost their motivation during the process. Organising for a mid-way event during which teachers could
present work-in-progress to encourage further interaction among practitioners and possibly serve as a framework for informal assistance from academics and/or researchers in ELT and TE. As Tunisian inspectors are already coaching teachers in publishing booklets on testing and material development, it can be expected that they follow up teacher research and publish it in the form of yearly compilations. The teachers’ need to see the point of undertaking this research should be recognised. The prospect of its dissemination is then crucial, let it be at the local level.

Thus far a number of recommendations have been made that might contribute to the introduction of innovation in EFL TED practice. The above suggestions are but a modest attempt to reflect on the situation in the light of the major findings in this study and mainstream thinking in TED at a global level. It only suggests a possible course of action but perhaps the changes in the modes of delivery of TED are necessary to produce the qualitative shift in teachers’ work in the framework of the present school reform.

9.3 FACTORS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

The first important factor that might hamper the development of the enquiry attitude, is the lack of resources. To meet this requirement, an ELT project can be set up to vary and up-date the holdings in the CREFOCs. The teachers need resources for classroom use, books, references, specialised journals, newspapers and magazines for teachers. It can be envisaged within this project to equip CREFOCs with a media resource section needed by teachers for their research activity (duplication machines, audio and video recording equipment) and material development (appropriate language teaching software packages). A number of teachers can be trained to serve as resource assistants and provide support for fellow teachers. I have argued throughout this project that EFL TED in Tunisia suffers from a practice bias and that the data has revealed a tendency on the part of teachers to depend on ready-made solutions coming mainly from the trainers. For this reason, the selection of materials
will be a sensitive issue for the framework of the proposal. The data in chapter 6 indicated that considering the dearth of resources, teachers in Tunisia could be in the future vulnerable to the seductive effect of well-packaged materials. However, this situation might be overcome in the long run by means of the type of in-service teacher education events I suggested earlier as part of the *journées pédagogiques* or simply in the framework of the activities of the ‘self-help committees’. Examining and reviewing materials with peers and/or coached by trainers can be put on the TED agenda. The findings in this study (section 6.3.2) allow the prediction that teachers will be willing to spend a considerable amount of time reading either to up-date themselves in terms of pedagogy or in terms of subject-matter knowledge. At present, they seem to be engaging only in exchange of common recipes and practical ideas from fellow teachers. Let us follow Huberman’s (1985) recommendation to “(make) the greatest possible number of aids available in the most readily accessible useful form and let practitioners select their own mixtures” (254). It will perhaps be important to find a framework for the provision of a number of specialists with background in resource centre management and teacher development. They can provide regular advice and run periodical training sessions in self-access to and use of the facilities for teaching or research purposes.

The acceptance of and prospect of implementing the suggestions and recommendations proposed above depends on the trainers’ preparation and willingness to play the facilitator role. Trainers like teachers “come with their own dispositions, prejudices, motives, and, of course, intentions in training others to teach” (Grenfell 1998: 12). It will be up to the trainers to recognise the needs associated with the implementation of a proposal of the type I suggested here. As pointed out by Crandall (2000), “…one can expect that the way teacher educators were taught will be replicated in their teacher education programs unless conscious reflection upon teacher-education practice also takes place” (35). From that perspective the trainers’ agendas can be an influencing factor in the acceptance of the propositions stated above.
The second human resource factor is expectedly that of the teachers themselves. As non-native speakers whose use of English is limited to the classroom, Tunisian teachers might feel insecure with carrying out research and writing reports (see case studies in Richards and Nunan (1990). It is also possible that teachers will not be over-enthusiastic to engage in research or exploratory teaching. However, the interested teachers should not be left in a vacuum. They will need to be introduced to the processes of action research (Allwright 1993). For example, they will need to be trained especially in the principles and practice of qualitative research methods such as the techniques of self-reporting (keeping diaries and/or logs), data handling, and writing up reports. Therefore, it will be crucial to set up support mechanisms to assist them with writing up research and with classroom-oriented research skills.

9.4 ENGLISH IN THE COMMUNITY

In this section I will put forth a number of recommendations pertaining to improving the support system for English in schools and in the community in general. One way to go about this is to improve the resources in the English medium for junior learners of English in Tunisia. Alternative modes of library provision are essential to the promotion of English in education. At the level of schools, inspectors of English might sensitise school administrators to the need to supply school libraries with appropriate references for individual study. The British Council and The United States Information Service might consider a policy of de-centralisation and open annexes in different parts of the country (not necessarily coastal cities). Considering the expansion of English in education and the need to promote its use in the society at large, it will be necessary to establish more English language teaching units with a built-in arts programme for students, teachers and the larger public. Thus, exchange programmes for young learners of English can play a central role in the cultivation of larger numbers of more ‘competent’ speakers of English with valuable cross-cultural experiences. A pilot scheme, possibly sponsored by the Tunisian Ministry of Education and any agency/organisation active in an English-speaking country, might be set up for Basic and secondary education pupils.
Furthermore, empirical research that focuses on classrooms, learners and teachers is badly needed in Tunisia. It will be difficult to attempt to improve a situation that is not understood. I have suggested that teachers be engaged in small-scale research at the level of the schools. At university level there is a long tradition of imbalance in the areas of research. In the past the balance was in favour of Literature and civilization, then general linguistics, then socio-linguistics and recently in ESP. Though more research in ESP and EOP will always be needed (Daoud 2000), it is clear that research in EAP in higher education is lagging behind. This situation has particular implications for future teacher education. More research on the teaching of English in schools and university departments will create a research base for policy and curricula that are context sensitive (Rubin 1971, Holliday 1994). The suggestions above, if taken into consideration, will undoubtedly change the face of EFL TED at university and in the workplace.

9.5 A FINAL NOTE

This research project is a reflection on ways to prepare teachers for the demands of a post-modern perspective on education. It addresses the issue of how teacher educators can meet the challenge of preparing teachers who not only master their craft but who can also teach critical skills, learning-how-to-learn, self-access to information. I started this thesis by explaining the shift in industrial management from a modern to a post-modern model and how it affected education (section 3.2). If a parallel is established with education and teaching, teachers should not be regarded as mere implementers of decisions ‘from above’ in similitude of the assembly line production mode of modern times. They are required to develop abilities to question practice and to seek alternative solutions and courses of action. A conclusion has been reached through this research that considering these challenges, it will be necessary to give learners of teaching more responsibility for their own learning and to help them develop their own understanding of teaching through participatory modes of delivery. This project contributes to the field of TED
by demonstrating that TED provision based solely on a craft-based or a theory-based model of TED, though not to be discredited outright, falls short of preparing teachers who are able to change from within as professionals and to bring about change themselves. Moreover, it provides evidence through the research methodology it followed that exploring teachers’ views, beliefs and interpretations is a worthwhile orientation that yields valuable information for teacher educators.

Besides the pertinence of the issues addressed in this study from a global perspective, this research can be of high relevance to other Maghreb countries. These countries share the same educational profiles and experience, especially in the field of EFL TED, the same tension between a firmly established French model and an Anglophone perspective with a much higher pace of research and development. From a globalisation perspective these countries are facing the same challenge of reformulating the objectives of schooling, and by the same token, the objectives of TED.

At the local level, the present research project contributed to knowledge in the field of EFL TED in Tunisia in a number of ways:

(i) It helped identify the features of the EFL TED model;
(ii) It pinned down the orientations of the reforms in general education and in ELT and discussed its implications for TED;
(iii) It explored and explained the ‘conceptual frames’ from which a number of EFL practising teachers approached and interacted with the innovation;
(iv) It proposed practical solutions for teacher educators to bring TED provision in line with mainstream thinking in teacher education and the progressive spirit of the proposed reforms in ELT by suggesting ways to focus on fostering teacher interpretation and reflection as early as the probationary phase.
However, this study was but a modest contribution in an area that is, as to yet, relatively unexplored and it will therefore be useful to provide pointers for fellow researchers to pursue this interest in TED in Tunisia and similar contexts. Below are research areas that require more attention from researchers in the future:

1. *Research that focuses on trainee teachers:* I recommend especially longitudinal studies that focus on exploring the trainees’ perspectives on learning to teach. These studies will focus on the insider’s perspective and tell the story of the participants in the process of acquiring competence in teaching within the Tunisian EFL TED system.

2. *Research that focuses on experienced teachers:* I recommend studies on teacher knowledge in the Tunisian EFL context. These can be case studies that focus on a specific type of knowledge (e.g. tacit knowledge, situational knowledge, and academic knowledge) or on exploring, in more general terms, domains of teacher knowledge (e.g. pedagogical knowledge and subject matter knowledge). Studies can also focus on experienced teachers’ understanding of, for example, ‘effective teaching’, ‘learner evaluation’, and many burning issues related to teaching English in the school context.

3. *Research that focuses on teacher educators:* I recommend studies that focus on exploring specific areas of trainer activity such as training, teacher evaluation, supervision, development and evaluation of teaching materials and many other facets of their work. These studies will help develop and understanding of trainer perspectives.

4. *Research that focuses on the teaching of ELT-related subjects at university level:* I recommend an exploratory study that seeks to gauge the degree of relevance of these subjects to teaching in schools. This study will preferably focus on the perspective of the university academics involved in teaching these subjects and those of final year university students. A research project along these lines can contribute to finding ways to strengthen, if need be, linkages between academic education and the professional training of novice teachers.
This type of empirical studies suggested above will shed light on a number of variables within the field of EFL TED in Tunisia and beyond, and thus, build up a body of knowledge on which EFL teacher educators can base future decisions.
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