

2.2 STRUGGLES IN AND OVER EVALUATION/APPRAISAL

2.21 Students evaluate/appraise teachers

2.211 Students' opinions drive management

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (47/53)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.1) Ss evaluate/appraise ts.1) S's opinions drive m (G:100)

This week students have been given forms on which to assess their classes, teachers, etc. Only half the classes get them each time, and none of mine did this time. It is interesting to observe the attitude of teachers to these. Some say they don't want to look and others rush to see if they got good reviews. Many teachers feel that they should not be assessed or observed at all, so it is clear that they don't view the process as one of providing a service to a customer.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (160/171)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.1) Ss evaluate/appraise ts.1) S's opinions drive m (G:100)

As far as teaching standards are concerned, there is little interest in them until there is a complaint, and then there is a great deal of scuttling about and allocation of blame. This happened the other day when a very inexperienced teacher was rostered to teach an elective class on English and Tourism (General English students have these electives one day a week - such things as IELTS Preparation, or Australian Studies or Drama), and students complained about the number of excursions she took them on. She had not been given any course outline for the elective and was not capable of organising one for herself. Nor should she have been expected to be. She had simply been thrown in. No-one considered the matter until the complaint was made, and then she was blamed because she could not swim.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (338/349)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.1) Ss evaluate/appraise ts.1) S's opinions drive m (G:100)

I remembered this morning (this is not strictly related to my last remark) the case of a teacher in an off-shore branch whose students said they all hated pair/group work. They did not want to do it, they said, because the reason they had paid for the course was to speak to the teacher. Despite of explanations of the benefits, they refused to budge. Sydney top management's attitude was "Stop all pair/group work immediately"; lower level management (themselves ex-teachers and products of the communicative method era) said "Let's think up new ways to get them to accept it"; the teacher said "they must be forced to accept it or there is no way they can be taught". Of course, these were not ELICOS students as they were in an EFL situation, but it illustrates well the way that teachers and management think.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D2.txt (174/185)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.1) Ss evaluate/appraise ts.1) S's opinions drive m (G:100)

Something else which happened today was that a student who is in the

other EAP class came to me and said he wanted to change over into my morning class. He used to be in a class of mine and it was flattering for me that he wanted to come back for more. I told him the procedure -- the necessity to speak to his present teacher first then to a senior teacher or the DoS -- and that he could tell them it's fine by me if he comes into my class. I didn't ask him why he wanted to change class because I assumed he was not satisfied with the other teacher and, because of my own past negative experiences, I don't like other teachers being subjected to that. There are similarities with the "cigarette man" incident almost a fortnight ago, but this time in reverse.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D2.txt (187/204)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.1) Ss evaluate/appraise ts.1) S's opinions drive m (G:100)

I'm naturally always happy when students like being in my class and I want the DoS to know it too, particularly as on a few occasions over the past few years she and her predecessor "had words" with me regarding students who didn't like me or my teaching and I was put through the wringer of lesson observations to see whether I was up to scratch or not. This is a conflict due to the "quality control" of teaching by the management. The trouble is that students become "clients" who can damage a person's employment prospects and management can use it to intimidate or get rid of a teacher they no longer want, for whatever reason. We deal with hundreds of students, but naturally like humans everywhere they don't to the boss to say something positive, but to complain. I really dislike the regular student evaluation system here and the way it is dealt with so that you often do not even hear about it if you have positive appraisals, but it makes your life hell if a couple of students, for whatever reason, complain. It's really out of proportion if we are expected to please almost all of the people all of the time. No further entries made until the end of week four.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (159/174)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.1) Ss evaluate/appraise ts.1) S's opinions drive m (G:100)

My class increased in size from 6-12 and we were moved, ironically, to a smaller room so another class of 16 could have our old room. This new room is an awkward shape - some students cannot see the board at all unless they stand up and take about five steps. Ridiculous. Some of the 'old' students commented that the room was very small and I agreed. Should I have? I said I would say something about it but also hinted that students' complaints received a quicker response than teachers'. 'Yes, I know' replied the student 'because we pay money'. I nodded in tacit agreement. I know management would scream if they heard this. He went and complained at breaktime and so did I. I know whose complaint will be followed up first, I have been in this situation so many times - a room which is too small, unsuitable, noisy, badly located (once in a class of kids with bars on the windows on the second floor with no fire escape!) that I feel fed up. Do I shut up and accept the unacceptable or encourage them to complain - especially when they are paying a lot of money.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (250/255)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.1) Ss evaluate/appraise ts.1) S's opinions drive m (G:100)

Head Teacher overheard bowing to student complaints about levels resulting from oral and written tests. Several changes as a result. It seems the customer is always right. I suppose the last few days have highlighted just how arbitrary placement really is. I've always had doubts about the precision of the testing instruments but I'm even more cynical about the process.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (264/275)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.1) Ss evaluate/appraise ts.1) S's opinions drive m (G:100)

After Tuesday's reflection on self identity today I approached my work from the position of a service provider rather than a teacher per se.

It actually went quite smoothly and after one little customer service (we try harder) event a Pre-Int student trotted out her first tag question. 'You're a good teacher aren't you ?' I was a little taken aback by this. Initially but going the extra mile from a service perspective seems to be read as good teaching. Bloody revelation. I wonder if it wouldn't be something to include in teacher training courses. Not only is it read as good practice by S's, Management also interpret it as quality education. I would still disagree with any argument that failed to contrast the two though.

2.22 Managers evaluate/appraise teachers

2.221 Managers equate 'happy' students with good teaching

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D2.txt (202/204)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.1) M equate happy ss & good t (G:100)

It's really out of proportion if we are expected to please almost all of the people all of the time. No further entries made until the end of week four.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D3.txt (33/49)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.1) M equate happy ss & good t (G:100)

I suppose this brings me to the problem of economics versus education within our industry. Classes closed, put together, students at inappropriate levels to facilitate numbers. I could write forever about this but I'm sure you get the gist.

Marketing issues are always difficult - what does a teacher do when a student is in the wrong level due to classes being full?

What does a teacher do when its freezing in the class and the students are more interested in the internal climate and complaining about the studying?

Where is the teacher and where is the marketing manager within each teacher?

I remember being told numerous times to smile and greet students around the school - even rude obnoxious bastards!

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D3.txt (68/70)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.1) M equate happy ss & good t (G:100)

I suppose its also important to consider the classes you hate - whether it be the topics or the students. Is it the case of a smile all day? (I sound negative but there are classes I love)

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (204/210)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.1) M equate happy ss & good t (G:100)

Discussion of the program and debate about a textbook driven versus a generic syllabus caused the Director to make remarks about dependence on the books (teachers not students) people becoming lazy, I felt this was insulting to all in the room. Never could students be at fault, lazy, incapable bad language learners, lacking in motivation, everything came back to the teacher - ignores basic findings n L2 research regarding factors determining success in language learning.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (257/269)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.1) M equate happy ss & good t (G:100)

Differing expectations, conflicting goals, nationality, age, motivation, the image the school gives, what actually happens and what a student expects are all pulling at each other*. In the middle is the teacher. I nearly decided to leave the industry that afternoon. I know that it was impossible to keep all my students happy , teach them in a way I felt was worthwhile and that they were also satisfied with. I am always aware of the fact that students must be kept happy or they'll complain (I alerted the Head Teacher who talked to the student, who is content for the moment). I feel that I have to be all things to all people, a magician. That afternoon I wondered what course of action I should take and how I should teach - was I a good/bad teacher, what stance should I take. How should I be?

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (301/313)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.1) M equate happy ss & good t (G:100)

My difficult student situation was sorted out - everything was OK because it wasn't my lessons that was a problem. The Head Teacher actually said 'She was very happy with you ... you are a very good teacher... but we knew you were a very good teacher anyway! Nobody at this school has ever observed or seen me teach - students thought I was good so I must be. Student is unhappy with other teacher Z so she must be bad. Students' judgements about quality of teaching seem to be holier than thou. I was amazed that students degree of satisfaction with the product was confused with/equated with actual quality*. This leads to an endless cycle of s/he's a good teacher s/he's a bad teacher - a game which I'm expected to play. Being good/bad seems critical in determining students satisfaction and is also the reason given for ultimate success or failure.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (3/15)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.1) M equate happy ss & good t (G:100)

While passing through the library a senior teacher entered with a group of Japanese people in tow. I remember stopping and wondering what my role in their passage should entail. Initially I was unsure who they were - visitors , prospective students, enrolled students or study tour participants or agents. When I decided they were new to 6 the next question was whether to assume a helpful smiling demeanour, carry on with my business or wait for the teacher to introduce me. I settled for a hesitant smile and excused myself. The senior teacher gave little indication as to whether this was what was expected. This is not the first time I've been undecided as to what role I should adopt - teacher or customer service rep. Those present ten Japanese students (?), senior teacher, relief librarian, students in library and myself.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (38/49)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.1) M equate happy ss & good t (G:100)

2. In pairs in the later stage of a similar workshop. We were discussing whether or not students should have to really stretch in class. My partner suggested that the lowest common denominator is the place to aim, therefore ensuring a warm fuzzy feeling of achievement for every lesson. He related this to customer contentment. I took the view that it was better to make people reach higher and that pitching to the middle of the class or higher was better. Others to an interest in this and it surprised me to feel like I was being case as someone who was unconcerned with student happiness (Not so).

A vocal group maintained that customer satisfaction was the most n.
b. factor to be kept in mind during the lesson. Keep em happy!

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (132/146)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.1) M equate happy ss & good t (G:100)

Once again ASLPR rating time and customer expectations etc play as big a role as competency or preparedness for a jump up to the next class.

There seems to be a number of coded phrases that mean 'Put this person up to keep them happy' or 'it's necessary to achieve a balance in class numbers for this person to be promoted'.

Typical eggs are - 'She always does her homework'

What dya reckon?

- 'His attendance is good, what do you think?'

Of course only the senior teacher can say these things. It's a very confusing process. It would be a whole lot easier if it was a little bit more upfront.

Japanese schools are much more upfront with this type of thing.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (264/275)

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evaluate/appraise ts.1) M equate happy ss & good t (G:100)
After Tuesday's reflection on self identity today I approached my work from the position of a service provider rather than a teacher per se.

It actually went quite smoothly and after one little customer service (we try harder) event a Pre-Int student trotted out her first tag question. 'You're a good teacher aren't you ?' I was a little taken aback by this. Initially but going the extra mile from a service perspective seems to be read as good teaching. Bloody revelation. I wonder if it wouldn't be something to include in teacher training courses. Not only is it read as good practice by S's, Management also interpret it as quality education. I would still disagree with any argument that failed to contrast the two though.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D7.txt (15/48)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.1) M equate happy ss & good t (G:100)

It has been, at least up until now, a policy of the school that all excursions outside the school be organized around and relevant to the topic of study for any one class, within any one module[4 weeks].It goes without saying that an excursion to the zoo, however enjoyable for a great deal of students, would not be recommended if your topic for the month/week was Health and Lifestyle. Even though this policy caused some frustration amongst some of the more 'hedonistic' students, and not a little consternation amongst some members of staff, it was generally considered fair and therefore, adhered to. In effect, it was a reasonable policy and at the very least it gave students a sense of structure and purpose, which many of them lament is often missing from course outlines. For me personally, it offered a way out. I'm sure I'm not the only teacher who doesn't particularly savour those sticky moments on the 'populist' excursion routes when you're stuck for conversation with a low -Elementary class. At the end of the day, this more structured approach to excursion outings helped me in my planning of activities for the entire module, and the personally gruelling excursion that was to come.

Then came the dreaded news at the Friday arvo meeting, that we are now officially untethered to the policy regarding excursions; that future excursions are to be FUN. I've just spent 3 odd months telling my EAP students that we can't go to the Aquarium, the Zoo or the cinemas in George St, because they are not relevant to our topic. I'm sure when I tell them this module, that we can go anywhere they like, they'll be wondering about the relevance that I so forcefully administered to various disappointed classes.

The most frustrating thing is that I feel as though my authority has been stripped away to some degree. Even if I wanted to continue with excursions that dealt particularly with the topic at hand, my students would protest that the other classes were doing FUN things and that they weren't. Let's hope that the new policy remains so that the students don't think we're taciturn . Over and out!

2.222 Managers appraise teacher's 'attitude'

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D8.txt (78/93)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.2) Managers appraise teacher's attitude (G:100)

I ask, what is all this about? Vicky resumes: your answers were different. You have problems with the organisation, you found the situation in the staffroom puerile. Everyone else talked about teaching problems but you criticised the organisation. I say: but I don't have any problems with teaching! I am growing more incredulous by the minute, I can't believe that I'm hearing. Vicky passes the buck to Simon to continue, which is funny because he doesn't really know me. Simon says nervously looking at Vicky (this man's eye contact is hopeless). 'We perceive you have an attitude problem'. I ask, have I ever not done what was required of me? No, he replies, but sometimes you behaved with bad grace. I can feel the reality of the room and the moment slipping and sliding all over the place, this can't be happening? I ask for an example. He looks at Vicky and says hesitantly, 'When Maria (social organiser) comes into your class, she sometimes feels unwelcome'. My mouth actually drops open. I'm go because Maria feels unwelcome!

2.223 Managers priorities not explicit

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (67/92)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.2) Ms appraise t's attitude.Ms' priorities not explicit. (G:100)

Something interesting happened to day with regard to the selection of video material. I prepared a memo to be circulated to staff on the condition that it was not attributed to me - I did this for the Head Teacher, for whom I feel sorry because she is besieged from both sides and has no-one to have a cup of tea with. Anyway, she told me that the memo was to be circulated by management, but that they had decided to delete one paragraph. This was one which indicated that we were currently experiencing a downturn in business, mentioned in connection with the inadvisability of bad-mouthing Australian education to those who were in the process of buying some of it.

I thought this was particularly interesting as it revealed the fact that management is aware of the tension between the teachers' perception of their role and their view of management with its eye on the bottom line. This might seem obvious, but sometimes it becomes obscured in our institution where there is such verbal stress put on quality control.

I believe that a management person even said: "We should take that out - we don't want them to think that we only care about the bottom line." Of course, that is precisely the case. I feel that there is little possibility that they are motivated by - say - a desire to further international relations. It is rather charming, though, like a fox pretending to be a chicken with the aid of a few glued-on feathers and as cardboard beak. I suppose I find it charming because it is so little likely to fool anyone.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (156/166)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.2) Ms appraise t's attitude.Ms' priorities not explicit (G:100)

I'm becoming more comfortable with the undercurrent here now that I've had a chance to think about it more carefully. However, I can't help thinking it would be much better all round if management and their representatives could be a bit more explicit about their aims and expectations. It would go a long way towards cutting back the hypocrisy that this is an educational institution. It's much closer to a business that deals in education.

By failing to acknowledge exactly the nature of what's going on its almost as if they are doomed to be an inefficient business and an ineffective educational institution.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (289/297)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.1) Ms evaluate/appraise ts.2) Ms appraise t's attitude.Ms' priorities not explicit (G:100)

Asst Hd Teachers approaches a teacher about a student who is leaving. 'Does x deserve our highest marks? What do you think?' there seemed little doubt what sort of answer this type of question was supposed to elicit. Of course the teacher supplied the answer that was required and the student received the highest marks. This has happened quite a few times over the last month and its usually because the student in question (or their agent) is able to influence repeat or further business for the company. I don't know if it's talked about explicitly in some instances but it always seems to be just under the surface.

2.23 Teachers evaluate/appraise managers

2.231 Pressure to be silent

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (51/63)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.1) Pressure to be silent (G:100)

Many of these recent innovations do not yet seem to have their origins in teaching staff but come down from above - admin and management. It seems like teachers' lives are going to have to be adjusted in order to fill in with the needs of the school.

I can already predict that it is the teachers who are more experienced and have further qualifications who quietly question the validity, necessity and wisdom of these new pieces of paper. The real dilemma will come when we are asked to comment at a staff meeting. The newest teachers will happily agree to anything, older ones will murmur, some will speak up and others will not because it would cause too much trouble - it's easier to keep quiet and you will at least keep your job!

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (82/124)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.1) Pressure to be silent (G:100)

I'm writing about this incident particularly because it is recurrent

in a multilingual teaching situation - 2 of which I have experienced (Britain and Australia) where s's live with a host family in order to improve their English. Today they talked about /reviewed their new living situations. There is often dissatisfaction - today P said she was moving into a flat because she was unhappy - had requested non-smoking and no animals) got smoking and animals and was living in a 3m x 3m room in bunk beds which was very noisy - room and board cost \$170 a week - they asked me if I thought it was cheap or expensive, how much bills were etc, which parts of Sydney were cheap to live in. This situation happens time and time again. As a teacher I know I'm supposed to send them to the people who organise homestay, not join in with and support their criticisms - I don't always do this - sometimes we know that some people take s's for financial reasons only, provide poor conditions and little interaction, others are mansions with friendly welcoming Australians.

I think this situation comes about because (esp. for lower level students with limited communication skills in English) their teacher is the one person they see on a daily basis, talk to and trust . I am torn between my roles as school representative one ought to defend the product but over this aspect I have no control but I learn a lot about similar dilemmas occurred when a student showed me photos she had of a filthy bathroom in her homestay and asked 'Is this normal?' I had to say that I thought it was disgusting but do not forget being told at a recent meeting by the marketing manager that it didn't help things when we sided with students against management on issues concerning student welfare, school activities, visas, attendance , fee payment and changing classes and anything else one could imagine. It seems that the teacher is required to play a silent mindless role whilst at the same time being responsible for everything that happens in the classroom every day of the week. Connected to the above - yet another new form introduced - teachers are to note any problems they encounter and forward this to Senior Teacher/Admin immediately. This is to catch/anticipate problems to avoid complaints from agents months later. I feel like I'm expected to be part educator, part marketing manager. What infuriates me is that that is no avenue /channel for teachers' problems/complaints or dissatisfaction . Their resolution brings little financial advantage or satisfaction and allowing them to be aired would mean a total rethinking of the way the school was organised. Student grievances are to immediately noted, passed on and dealt with whilst some teachers are quietly discontented. Where is the teachers' memo/suggestion box?

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (349/359)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.1) Pressure to be silent (G:100)

ANOTHER HORRIBLE STAFF MEETING

I went to this one because the DOS was giving a workshop on Classroom Management. Instead the Head Teacher lectured us about do's and don't's for 1 hour 20 mins - with 10 minutes left over for discussion of problem students etc.

We were told not to sympathise with students who complain about large classes and small rooms etc etc. Most staff suggestions were met with such a poor response that most of us felt quite brow-beaten by the end.

It wasn't learning, rather lecturing on school policy and rules.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (18/22)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.1) Pressure to be silent (G:100)

While leaving a Writing Group meet R, C, and B and I chatting about teaching policy connected with Ran into DOS. He challenged or made some remark, felt the need to halt conversation and assume role of deferent employee. Hate that feeling. Always felt that way with him.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (52/58)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.1) Pressure to be silent (G:100)

Conversation in Staff Room. Head T. put an overseas researcher in a Pre Int class. The student subsequently proved to be an elementary Student. Teacher was told to 'dumb down the class for the duration of her stay at 6. This struck me as a poor solution, but the constraints of the staff room gave me no permission to offer an opinion. It certainly didn't seem like a smart idea to say anything. The whole measure of each lesson was to be modified.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (81/105)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.1) Pressure to be silent (G:100)

Professional Development Session today threw up similar feeling to previous one. This dealt with a workshop that sought to provide metaphors for individual teaching style. Once again several assistant head teachers were present and I couldn't help thinking that it was unwise to be completely open about personal teaching philosophy.

When paired with a teacher who I trusted and who had always taught at 6 for an extended period. I remarked that it felt uncool to talk about or challenge some ideals. She told me that it best to be extremely careful about what I said in the earshot of some teacher (senior teachers!) as they would make judgments about personnel based on these comments.

She seemed particularly tuned in to the institutional culture and it was reassuring to hear her voice some of the reservations I had been personally entertaining about there matters. She stressed that saying the right things and being seen to fit into the school and its implicit assumptions about teaching was more important than what went on in the classroom.

Writing this journal has become somewhat of a covert (outlaw?) activity and I think I'll keep it locked in my briefcase from now on.

Today's observations continue to be a worry in the light of ongoing insecurity of tenure/job security.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (149/166)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.1) Pressure to be silent (G:100)

H teacher asked me to brief a new teacher who is coming in to teach a demonstration lesson in my class. I wonder if being asked to pass on the cultural agreements we all tacitly make with the company is part of this. Am I supposed to say 'that which a Head Teacher doesn't dare say/' Should I? Perhaps it's an acknowledgment from the school that I can be trusted to keep silent.

I'm becoming more comfortable with the undercurrent here now that I've had a chance to think about it more carefully. However, I can't help thinking it would be much better all round if management and their representatives could be a bit more explicit about their aims and expectations. It would go a long way towards cutting back the hypocrisy that this is an educational institution. It's much closer to a business that deals in education.

By failing to acknowledge exactly the nature of what's going on its almost as if they are doomed to be an inefficient business and an ineffective educational institution.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (192/196)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.1) Pressure to be silent (G:100)

An agent bailed me up after class today. Once again that dilemma about role. He asked me for a report - I slipped into Company Marketing Rep mode but I couldn't help feeling that this really wasn't my job. I suppose a straight referral to reception was an option. However best be silent.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D8.txt (256/265)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.1) Pressure to be silent (G:100)

I have given up on the sleeping pills and try to sleep when I can. Today after work I rang [regulatory body] to tell them my tale of woe. A very sympathetic lady listens and says: Sandra must see that she can't do this. I feel better, and listened to. I also call the Union; of course, I wasn't in the union, was I? Was going to join when I was more 'permanent'. They advise me I can represent myself in an unfair dismissal case. I tell them that at the recent union meeting teachers felt unable to speak up about an issue because Vicky was present - and now I learn she is not even in the union! What am I uncovering here? What can of worms?

2.232 Teachers' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (66/79)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.2) Ts' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted (G:100)

I have a new 'small' Pre-int class of 8 students. The class is a good one and as most are good Elementary level I'd rather it didn't grow. I was told that classes were starting small and my class could grow to 16 - many to be added next week. The pressures of continuous enrolment and large class size mean I won't be able to devote sufficient attention to slower and weaker students but know from previous experience that objections to large class sizes will be

met by looks of disapproval from management. I will somehow be at fault for causing trouble, rocking the boat. We all know that financial concerns are uppermost - that we can never have 2 classes of 8 when there could be a class of 16. These considerations also affect placement decisions - students will be moved up or down so that class sizes are neat and may be moved up because they've already 'done the book' of a certain class. Objections will be met with stony looks.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (113/124)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.2) Ts' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted (G:100)

Connected to the above - yet

another new form introduced - teachers are to note any problems they encounter and forward this to Senior Teacher/Admin immediately. This is to catch/anticipate problems to avoid complaints from agents months later. I feel like I'm expected to be part educator, part marketing manager. What infuriates me is that there is no avenue/channel for teachers' problems/complaints or dissatisfaction. Their resolution brings little financial advantage or satisfaction and allowing them to be aired would mean a total rethinking of the way the school was organised. Student grievances are to immediately noted, passed on and dealt with whilst some teachers are quietly discontented. Where is the teachers' memo/suggestion box?

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (192/225)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.2) Ts' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted (G:100)

Staff meeting at which new programs were discussed - there was lots of subtle criticism which was basically ignored - it would still be introduced.

I again brought up the problem of long versus short-term students and their conflicting goals which created a great deal of dissatisfaction. Director replied that that was 'the nature of the beast' and that was the teacher's challenge - to balance and manage this, implying that good teachers could and did, bad ones couldn't and didn't. I felt, once again, that teachers' comments, constructive criticism was being ignored. Wanted to scream.

Discussion of the program and debate about a textbook driven versus a generic syllabus caused the Director to make remarks about dependence on the books (teachers not students) people becoming lazy, I felt this was insulting to all in the room. Never could students be at fault, lazy, incapable bad language learners, lacking in motivation, everything came back to the teacher - ignores basic findings in L2 research regarding factors determining success in language learning. This meeting was, for me, a culmination of problems which have been building up for a long time. I feel that I am in a constant state of crisis and am undecided about attending the next meeting because

1) teachers' views are ignored or used against them.

2) the people in charge don't know what they are doing - re.

Methodology, language learning.

3) classes are getting bigger, rooms smaller and I can't do my job properly

- 4) inexperienced teachers are conducting placement tests.
- 5) there is no 'management by consensus', only by tyrannical rule.
- 6) teachers are expected to do more and more without an increase in pay or thanks.

It goes on and on.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (227/247)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.2) Ts' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted (G:100)

On this same day, I taught a 'study skills' course which wasn't that at all, the cause is a PET exam practice book and I feel a sham standing there pretending to teach them stuff that wasn't general English. It was too easy and dreadfully boring, when I told the Head Teacher this - she could do much because that was the least troublesome of the courses. I find it problematic because I know these options are being offered so that the school can be seen to be offering a diversified product . The problem is less the problem itself but knowing that offering criticisms or suggestions for change won't be well received and that I have to think carefully before doing this in front of management? Will I be re-employed, regarded as a troublemaker? Will the person I talk to understand what it is I'm talking about? I doubt it - the week has been filled with constant sources of tension and stress. Tomorrow - new students and a third room change an trying to help these s's assimilate in the middle of a course when I feel they're just being added to classes to reach the school max of 16. The only way I can deal with numbers like this is to go on automatic pilot and do fairly mundane stuff - I think the students are quite happy with this but I feel frustrated when I know I/they could achieve more in a class of 8. This has happened at every school I've worked at.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (349/359)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.2) Ts' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted (G:100)

ANOTHER HORRIBLE STAFF MEETING

I went to this one because the DOS was giving a workshop on Classroom Management. Instead the Head Teacher lectured us about do's and don't's for 1 hour 20 mins - with 10 minutes left over for discussion of problem students etc.

We were told not to sympathise with students who complain about large classes and small rooms etc etc. Most staff suggestions were met with such a poor response that most of us felt quite brow-beaten by the end.

It wasn't learning, rather lecturing on school policy and rules.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (90/98)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.2) Ts' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted (G:100)

I just received a call from the director. The school has decided to definitely not open an Elementary I class. Instead some of the stronger elementary students will be artificially moved up. This includes a 6 month booking - a student should really move up sequentially through the levels to attain the fluency he lacks.

The repercussions of this decision are greater than it appears. In order to move up, my students, students in higher levels will also be artificially forced up - a very disastrous effect.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (152/160)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.2) Ts' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted (G:100)

Today at the staff meeting, teachers complained of having to wear 'sunnies' in order to bear the glare of the late-rising winter sun. They revealed that students have been complaining that the back of their necks have been getting burnt as they turn from the reflected glare. Everyone insisted that we write these complaints into the minutes of the meeting, as their numerous requests to management over the past years for vertical blinds have gone ignored. OHP's, needless to say, have become a useless tool, even though many new ones were purchased for the new building.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (218/222)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.2) Ts' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted (G:100)

As we teachers persistently informed the directors and management about our ability to cater for the level mix in a maximally, or should I say 'oversized, elementary class. Nevertheless, they refused to open an Elementary 1 class due to cost saving measures.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (224/236)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.2) Ts' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted (G:100)

In any case, returning to my original point of the consequences of this choice. This past week, I inherited the LINT 3 class, and the student who had been at the school the longest., was in many ways the weakest. She refused to speak and wanted me to feed her words on a silver spoon, which she then ineptly reiterated. This particular student was one who had clamoured to be move up, even though I counselled her and advised her against it because of her lack of fluency, inaccuracy, pron difficulties, etc.

Nevertheless, when the school itself decided to do a reshuffle, we chose this student go up. The philosophy was one I've seen repeatedly arise, that is 'give the customer what s/he wants, regardless of educational objectives.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (273/297)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.2) Ts' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted (G:100)

At the staff meeting today, a few promises were made relating to problems I've mentioned in this journal. The school has agreed to put up some blinds at the (college) to shade the students from the glaring sun. However, they have decided only to put a tinted shade on either side of the sliding glass door. I sincerely doubt this is going to protect the students from sunburn, and it certainly is not going to darken the room enough to use the OHP.

The directors also said that the repairman would be coming to the study centre. despite this gesture in the right direction, though, the teachers have their doubts that this will solve the undependability problems of this resource. After all, the repairman has come in several times before, and the equipment always seems to break down soon after. Perhaps a new language lab is in order.

Finally, we were also promised that the mess in the computer lab would be straightened out. The network that (B) had installed will be removed. I just hope that the new networking isn't worse. As well, students who want to use e-mail will now have to pay an extra fee, and they will be issued with a disc at the beginning of their course. Perhaps the changes in the computer lab are motivated more by the promise of these profits than they are by a desire to have a dependable resource for teachers and students. Whatever the underlying cause, I suppose that we staff can only feel grateful if the improvements actually materialise after these months of madness.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (211/225)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.2) Teachers and managers.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ms.2) Ts' opinions are ignored/reinterpreted (G:100)
Another teacher is crying in the staff room at the moment. She has been censored or chastised in some way for using video material concerning Pauline Hanson.

This is a similar situation to the one previously experienced by me and several others. (X) is calming her down. Teacher is the media person responsible for taping radio, TV. Apparently the company sees this material as being out of kilter with the kind of image that 6 is trying to promote.

She was given a not that included the following: 'No matter what your missionary aims are.....'

The fact that she was sent the message rather than being invited to discuss it seems to be a feature of an organisation or a body corporate rather than a school.

2.24 Students evaluate/appraise managers

2.241 Teachers support students against managers

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (82/97)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.3) Students and managers.1) Ss evaluate management.1) Ts support ss against m (G:100)

I'm writing about this incident particularly because it is recurrent in a multilingual teaching situation - 2 of which I have experienced (Britain and Australia) where s's live with a host family in order to improve their English. Today they talked about /reviewed their new living situations. There is often dissatisfaction - today P said she was moving into a flat because she was unhappy - had requested non-smoking and no animals) got smoking and animals and was living in a 3m x 3m room in bunk beds which was very noisy - room and board cost \$170 a week - they asked me if I thought it was cheap or expensive, how much bills were etc, which parts of Sydney were cheap to live in.

This situation happens time and time again. As a teacher I know I'm supposed to send them to the people who organise homestay, not join in with and support their criticisms - I don't always do this - sometimes we know that some people take s's for financial reasons only, provide poor conditions and little interaction, others are mansions with friendly welcoming Australians.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (159/174)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.3) Students and managers.1) Ss evaluate management.1) Ts support ss against m (G:100)

My class increased in size from 6-12 and we were moved, ironically, to a smaller room so another class of 16 could have our old room. This new room is an awkward shape - some students cannot see the board at all unless they stand up and take about five steps. Ridiculous. Some of the 'old' students commented that the room was very small and I agreed. Should I have? I said I would say something about it but also hinted that students' complaints received a quicker response than teachers'. 'Yes, I know' replied the student 'because we pay money'. I nodded in tacit agreement. I know management would scream if they heard this. He went and complained at breaktime and so did I. I know whose complaint will be followed up first, I have been in this situation so many times - a room which is too small, unsuitable, noisy, badly located (once in a class of kids with bars on the windows on the second floor with no fire escape!) that I feel fed up. Do I shut up and accept the unacceptable or encourage them to complain - especially when they are paying a lot of money.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (114/129)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.3) Students and managers.1) Ss evaluate management.1) Ts support ss against m (G:100)

As for next week, it looks as if the school is going to concede on the level split for elementary. Hopefully, the weaker students will go back to the beginning of the syllabus/book, and the stronger ones will go on to the more challenging material. Unfortunately, my work week has been cut down to 2 days - a common occurrence this time of year, even when you've worked for a company for 5 years - so I won't be here to speak on behalf of students. At least my teaching partner will be able to speak up for them. However, neither one of us are sure what level we will be given. The school often prefers, I suppose out of convenience, to randomly assign teachers to levels and change them almost every course. This usually destroys the little consistency the students can get from the fact that their teacher knows their needs, strengths and weaknesses and can fend for them as best as s/he can in the midst of a myriad of chaotic forces! If a teacher really wants to stay with a level, s/he usually has to be very persistent in requesting this.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D8.txt (286/300)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.3) Students and managers.1) Ss evaluate management.1) Ts support ss against m (G:100)

There is a curious sense of unreality about work. The students know the real reason I am leaving. I'm not going to bullshit them, there's enough of that going on here. Besides, they're not daft; as one said, the numbers might go down but we'll still need a teachers on Monday morning. Two Czech girls ask me for coffee: when I get outside the

building, I find about ten current and former students who give me a cheer! Some of my old students from last October are even there. They present me with a silver bracelet. My faith in myself as a teacher is restored - I had well and truly lost it. Felt I couldn't care less if I never taught again. My imminent departure seems to have acted as a catalyst for these students who have lots of grievances about [name of college] anyway. They want to send a petition to the college and I'm really touched; also, a general letter of complaint. I tell them what they choose to do is their business but that I am very pleased at their support.

2.25 Teachers evaluate/appraise students

2.251 Pressure to easify assessment:

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (20/44)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment (G:100)

I have been filling in for people on holiday until the new term starts, so I've had the chance to see some classes that I don't usually get to see. I've been teaching an 'intermediate' business class for a week now. the school obviously wants to offer 'business English' to anyone who asks for it, and probably some parents pressure their children to take it. In fact, it's a bit of a farce. A lot of the students are really elementary, but as there aren't any textbooks for elementary business English, the lowest class is simply called 'intermediate' and forced to use an intermediate book. It is way above the heads of about half the class.

Students in this class are required to do a 20 minute presentation in order to graduate with a certificate in business English. From what I've seen of the drafts, they would seem more likely to take 5 minutes rather than 20, but I've been told that everyone must pass.

This is part of a general problem, which is that most classes tend to be over-rated - we often, for example, have intermediate classes which are really elementary. There is a kind of conspiracy that when ASLPR ratings are handed out they must fall within a bandwidth that has been established as acceptable for each class level. Teachers who stray outside this are asked to change their assessments, or simply have it done for them by their supervisors. Most teachers just accept this. New teachers find it puzzling, but soon realise that there is nothing they can do about it.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (56/63)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment (G:100)

Last Friday's presentations were as I had feared they would be. The worse students knew themselves that they hadn't done well, as they refused to look at the video of their presentations, but sat with their eyes cast down. I dutifully marked them all up. The range, which was actually about 1-5 was upgraded to 6.5 - 8. Some teachers justify this on the grounds that the truth would be too discouraging, and the students would no try any more (not that they are trying too hard

now).

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (217/225)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment (G:100)

I have seen some of the writing produced by students in the EAP stream, examples which have been regarded as good, and I thought they were terrible. I feel that students wishing to enter university in any discipline should have to pass HSC English (I find IELTS a very poor substitute), but I know this would reduce the numbers to almost zero. I know that there is enormous pressure on academics to pass all full-fee-paying students, and I have personally heard parents in Taiwan say of their offspring who have failed to gain a place in a university there : "Never mind, we'll send him/her to Australia."

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D3.txt (185/192)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment (G:100)

We had a discussion last week regarding 'testing' and I feel that too many teachers are catering the test for their students to achieve great results. I do not advocate an unfair test and am well aware of the pitfalls of assessment but without an accurate measure of ability our classes often become unworkable. Some teachers seem to think a mark of 60% is a fail or in someway a representation of their own failure to 'teach'. Seems we have so many students with a pass rate of 80 - 90% who can't speak.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (174/186)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment (G:100)

Oddly enough, students are very aware of all those things once they have been at the school for a while. I also found I also found out that one of my new students will be starting FCE examinations in less than two months' time - he is very early Pre-intermediate and my comments at last meeting about stricter entry testing requirements for Cambridge have gone unheeded. I pity the poor FCE teacher who will have to mould a Pre-Int student in Upper Int material. I wonder why the school doesn't take more care about things like this - exam results would be better, students more satisfied and teachers would have an easier task. The whole problem of entry testing, levels, exam candidates, comes up time and time again. But if he has the money and wants to do a more expensive exam class - let him.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (101/112)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment (G:100)

Today one of the students that was forced up to LINT come to me. He said the class was too difficult for him and that he wouldn't be able to take the class test on Friday. I agreed with him and gave him the revision test that the elementary class would be doing, so he could do that one instead if he wanted to.

Also, with my elementary class, I decided that it wouldn't be fair to give them the test officially, since they've arrived at various stages

of the course - the most recent only yesterday! Instead, they started the test this afternoon and will finish it over 2 nights as homework. Hopefully, this will create less anxiety for those who don't know some of the material.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (244/261)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment (G:100)

The winter season saga of students constantly coming and going reached the heights of absurdity today. As we were taking the compulsory class photos for the four students leaving at the end of week 2, a girl I had never seen before was not only hovering around us smiling at me, but she was attempting to wedge her way into the photos. Not wanting to exclude any (college) students or hurt anyone's feelings I didn't question her. However, after the proceedings, she approached me, wanting to know where her certificate was. I naturally felt awkward about not having one prepared, but at the same time felt somewhat justified. After all, this girl had simply been dumped in our level after a month at the school. She couldn't have enjoyed the change very much, because she hardly attended. Even the last day she had skipped class entirely and had simply make an appearance at the end to get the certificate.

Perhaps one could pin the problem on the slack student, but I feel the school should have pointed out that she was leaving the very next week they shifted her to our class!

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (61/74)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment (G:100)

HT asked me to fill in an early leavers form for a student who had already departed. This form rates S, the 4 macro skills (ASLPR) and their performance in class. After due consideration, I gave her the form. She was a little disappointed in my ratings. She asked me to reconsider. I replied that I had thought it through carefully, yet she indicated that it was too low. I resented amending it and she asked me to erase my results and mark it for her attention. Presumably she intended to reflect a more glowing performance than I thought appropriate. She explained this by saying that he was a special case and that she would take care of it. The implication was that my professional opinion didn't sync with another issue that I should have been aware of. I can only guess that there was a sales issue to consider. This type of thing is not atypical, T's usually intuit the situation better than I did.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (250/255)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment (G:100)

Head Teacher overheard bowing to student complaints about levels resulting from oral and written tests. Several changes as a result. It seems the customer is always right. I suppose the last few days have highlighted just how arbitrary placement really is. I've always had doubts about the precision of the testing instruments but I'm even more cynical about the process.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (289/297)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment (G:100)

Asst Hd Teachers approaches a teacher about a student who is leaving. 'Does x deserve our highest marks? What do you think?' there seemed little doubt what sort of answer this type of question was supposed to elicit. Of course the teacher supplied the answer that was required and the student received the highest marks. This has happened quite a few times over the last month and its usually because the student in question (or their agent) is able to influence repeat or further business for the company. I don't know if it's talked about explicitly in some instances but it always seems to be just under the surface.

2.252 Students resist teachers' assessments

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (94/110)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment.S's resist ts' assessments (G:100)

On another topic - I was glad to see the end of my 'fill-in' class today. Poor souls, it is hard for elementary students to be dragged through the briar bush of Business Objectives. This is one of the worst examples I have seen of the phenomenon of the class which has to be treated as if its members were at a much higher level than they actually are. When it gets this extreme it seems obvious to me that it must be counterproductive even from the commercial point of view. However much the material is simplified, it still remains beyond most of them, and they feel cowed and beaten by it.

It should certainly be possible to write a business course for elementary students which used business vocabulary and business contexts. But there would be little incentive for the school to do it as the number of students is so low. These students strongly resisted the advice I gave them, and which I am sure they have also received from others, to go into a General English stream. They thus connive at the their own misery.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (377/384)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment.S's resist ts' assessments (G:100)

I was thinking today that if I were asked to choose the most common area of conflict between pedagogical and financial concerns in this school it would be the placement of students in classes. It is almost impossible to demote a student, even if they have been seriously misplaced in the first instance, and the labels on the classes have very little to do with the students in them. Most 'advanced' students are in fact intermediate, and some of them are closer to pre-intermediate. Only the lowest levels are accurately.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (224/231)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment.S's resist ts' assessments (G:100)

In any case, returning to my original point of the consequences of this choice. This past week, I inherited the LINT 3 class, and the student who had been at the school the longest., was in many ways the weakest. She refused to speak and wanted me to feed her words on a silver spoon, which she then ineptly reiterated. This particular student was one who had clamoured to be move up, even though I counselled her and advised her against it because of her lack of fluency, inaccuracy, pron difficulties, etc.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D7.txt (51/76)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.1) Ts assess ss.1)Press. to easify assessment.S's resist ts' assessments (G:100)

Well, it's the beginning of the new module today. Last Friday I told a student, a Japanese woman, that her English wasn't yet good enough for her to be able to go to the next level. I was very aware that her good friend, also in my class, was going up a level and that there would be hell to pay. These students have been like bloody Siamese twins since day 1! And of course on Friday, when I finally came face to face with her, she was obviously very upset that she wasn't going up with her friend. I was diplomatic and sensitive to a tee, but nothing would console her and she broke down. This made me feel terrible, but I continued to try to explain the problems that she had with her language acquisition, and that if she had just another month in Pre-EAP, things might be better for her in the next module. Enter Monday morning, and there she is! Not in Pre-EAP as I'd suggested, but in EAPS, the intermediate level class I have this module ! Apparently Ross, the EAP Syllabus Director had spoken with her and suggested that she go up to EAPS and not EAPV [a level even higher in which her friend is now enrolled]. I did feel rather guilty about making her cry the other day, but now I was angry. Admittedly I had spoken with Ross about this student's negative response to my suggestion, [it was for her own good that she stayed in Pre EAP], but I never thought that Ross would over turn my decision. Effectively what he's done is undercut my professional opinion, and I've been left with the Big Bad Wolf syndrome. And the irony is.....today the same student didn't stop saying, "I don't understand". When do I put a student up or leave them where they are? Does it depend on theatrics, whether a student can convince a teacher to promote them?

2.253 Pressure to improve attendance

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D7.txt (185/199)

CODE: 2) The practices are.1) Evaluation practices.1) Teachers and students.2) Ts evaluate/appraise ss.2) Ts monitor ss' attendance.Pressure to be lenient (G:100)

There is

an ever present pressure being applied to us to perform with our particular classes. It started with the friggin Art Project class, and now it continues into the general running of our normal classes.

The pressure being applied manifests itself in the following ways: A student may remark that I marked his/her attendance 'too harshly'; in other words I was being honest about a lack of punctuality, etc. Word gets back to the student's agent, who complains to a member of Admin.

Senior teacher ,DOS or other approaches me demanding to see my class role. For the sake of keeping things peaceful, I'm asked to be 'lenient' with my marking. What the f--- does that mean? You were telling us, when we started here as new teachers, that the rolls were legal documents, and that it was very important that they were kept diligently!! What the hell do I do in a situation like this one?

2.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER PRACTICES

2.31 Classroom teaching

2.312 Class composition

2.3121 Students are wrongly placed

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (20/44)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.1) Ss' are wrongly placed (G:100)

I have been filling in for people on holiday until the new term starts, so I've had the chance to see some classes that I don't usually get to see. I've been teaching an 'intermediate ' business class for a week now. the school obviously wants to offer 'business English' to anyone who asks for it, and probably some parents pressure their children to take it. In fact, it's a bit of a farce. A lot of the students are really elementary, but as there aren't any textbooks for elementary business English, the lowest class is simply called 'intermediate' and forced to use an intermediate book. It is way above the heads of about half the class.

Students in this class are required to do a 20 minute presentation in order to graduate with a certificate in business English. From what I've seen of the drafts, they would seem more likely to take 5 minutes rather than 20, but I've been told that everyone must pass.

This is part of a general problem, which is that most classes tend to be over-rated - we often, for example, have intermediate classes which are really elementary. There is a kind of conspiracy that when ASLPR ratings are handed out they must fall within a bandwidth that has been established as acceptable for each class level. Teachers who stray outside this are asked to change their assessments, or simply have it done for them by their supervisors. Most teachers just accept this. New teachers find it puzzling, but soon realise that there is nothing they can do about it.

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CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.1) Ss' are wrongly placed (G:100)

I was thinking today that if I were asked to choose the most common area of conflict between pedagogical and financial concerns in this school it would be the placement of students in classes. It is almost impossible to demote a student, even if they have been seriously misplaced in the first instance, and the labels on the classes have very little to do with the students in them. Most 'advanced' students are in fact intermediate, and some of them are closer to pre-intermediate. Only the lowest levels are accurately.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (66/79)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.1) Ss' are wrongly placed (G:100)

I have a new 'small' Pre-int class of 8 students. The class is a good one and as most are good Elementary level I'd rather it didn't grow. I was told that classes were starting small and my class could grow to 16 - many to be added next week. The pressures of continuous enrolment and large class size mean I won't be able to

devote sufficient attention to slower and weaker students but know from previous experience that objections to large class sizes will be met by looks of disapproval from management. I will somehow be at fault for causing trouble, rocking the boat. We all know that financial concerns are uppermost - that we can never have 2 classes of 8 when there could be a class of 16. These considerations also affect placement decisions - students will be moved up or down so that class sizes are neat and may be moved up because they've already 'done the book' of a certain class. Objections will be met with stony looks.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (174/186)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.1) Ss' are wrongly placed (G:100)

Oddly enough, students are very aware of all those things once they have been at the school for a while. I also found out that one of my new students will be starting FCE examinations in less than two months' time - he is very early Pre-intermediate and my comments at last meeting about stricter entry testing requirements for Cambridge have gone unheeded. I pity the poor FCE teacher who will have to mould a Pre-Int student in Upper Int material. I wonder why the school doesn't take more care about things like this - exam results would be better, students more satisfied and teachers would have an easier task. The whole problem of

entry testing, levels, exam candidates, comes up time and time again. But if he has the money and wants to do a more expensive exam class - let him.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (2/30)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.1) Ss' are wrongly placed (G:100)

This is my second month with this group (following on from Elem 1). I was away for the first week of the course and, upon my return, I have found the problems encountered last month have only compounded this month.

The main difficulty, which I find compromising my professionalism, is the huge disparity between the students' levels in this group. In my experience teaching TESOL, this problem is so recurrent that I feel that every month it crops up again. It is a constant threat to one's professionalism and it makes tremendous demands on the teacher in terms of preparation time.

For example, last month we enrolled a Swiss German student who was a true beginner rather than an Elementary student. He was without the basic knowledge - of numbers, days of the week, written or spoken English of any kind - that the other students possessed. Fortunately, he was confident and tried to get whatever she could out of the lesson, so, the school did not make any special provisions for him.

This month there are 3 such students that have been thrown into Elem 2 and a handful of other weaker new students. They should be doing Elementary 1, but the school obviously wants to save money and has jammed them into a class of 15. I spoke to the director about this problem, and he said that we might be able to create 2 next week when some new students arrive.

In the meantime, I have to spend twice as long preparing lessons in order to meet the needs of 2 distinct groups being taught at the same time.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (73/76)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.1) Ss' are wrongly placed (G:100)

Last week we allowed the stronger students to move up to LINT. This helped the level split a bit, but one still exists - in content as much as level, since new students have been introduced into the group more than once a week.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (52/58)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.1) Ss' are wrongly placed (G:100)

Conversation in Staff Room. Head T. put an overseas researcher in a Pre Int class. The student subsequently proved to be an elementary Student. Teacher was told to 'dumb down the class for the duration of her stay at 6. This struck me as a poor solution, but the constraints of the staff room gave me no permission to offer an opinion. It certainly didn't seem like a smart idea to say anything. The whole measure of each lesson was to be modified.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (132/146)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.1) Ss' are wrongly placed (G:100)

Once again ASLPR rating time and customer expectations etc play as big a role as competency or preparedness for a jump up to the next class.

There seems to be a number of coded phrases that mean 'Put this person up to keep them happy' or 'it's necessary to achieve a balance in class numbers for this person to be promoted'.

Typical eggs are - 'She always does her homework. What dya reckon?'

- 'His attendance is good, what do you think?'

Of course only the senior teacher can say these things. It's a very confusing process. It would be a whole lot easier if it was a little bit more upfront. Japanese schools are much more upfront with this type of thing.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D7.txt (51/76)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.1) Ss' are wrongly placed (G:100)

Well, it's the beginning of the new module today. Last Friday I told a student, a Japanese woman, that her English wasn't yet good enough for her to be able to go to the next level. I was very aware that her good friend, also in my class, was going up a level and that there would be hell to pay. These students have been like bloody Siamese twins since day 1! And of course on Friday, when I finally came face to face with her, she was obviously very upset that she wasn't going up with her friend. I was diplomatic and sensitive to a tee, but nothing would console her and she broke down. This made me feel terrible, but I continued to try to explain the problems that she had with her language acquisition, and that if she had just another month in Pre-EAP, things might be better for her in the next module. Enter Monday morning, and there she is! Not in Pre-EAP as I'd suggested, but in EAPS, the intermediate level class I have this module ! Apparently Ross, the EAP Syllabus Director had spoken with her and suggested that she go up to EAPS and not EAPV [a level even higher in which her friend is now enrolled]. I did feel rather guilty about making her cry the other day, but now I was angry. Admittedly I had spoken with Ross about this student's negative response to my suggestion, [it was for her own good that she stayed in Pre EAP], but I never thought that Ross would over turn my decision. Effectively what he's done is undercut my professional opinion, and I've been left with the Big Bad Wolf syndrome. And the irony is.....today the same student didn't stop saying, "I don't understand". When do I put a student up or leave them where they are? Does it depend on theatrics, whether a student can convince a teacher to promote them?

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D7.txt (202/211)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.1) Ss' are wrongly placed (G:100)

I'm totally in the dark regarding my extension studies class this module. There are some really hard bitten Slovaks amongst them, and of course a good share of the immovable Japanese who still refuse to speak. The other major problem is that the class ranges in ability from Intermediate to Advanced, so you can imagine the kind of problems I'm facing. Last week I obviously created a lesson that went

well over the heads of most of the intermediate students, but even though it was difficult, there were times when students had time to speak freely [irrespective of the content of the lesson], and still missed the opportunity of using their speaking skills.

2.3122 Too many students in classes

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D3.txt (136/146)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.2) Too many ss in classes (G:100)

I think it's time to mention the difficulties of large classes - with particular reference to the varying levels within each class. Usually I teach advanced classes but recently I've been teaching beginners. I think the biggest problem that I've faced is that I've noticed that I tend to ignore or forget about some quiet students (in my class of 17). Even though I remind students I find the more outgoing students continue to gain my attention. I also have an occasion given up trying to explain something to a student who is having extreme difficulties understanding - I know its bad but due to time constraints I often just smile and move on leaving the student somewhat in limbo. It's that dreaded time factor coming into play again!

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (66/79)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.2) Too many ss in classes (G:100)

I have a new 'small' Pre-int class of 8 students. The class is a good one and as most are good Elementary level I'd rather it didn't grow. I was told that classes were starting small and my class could grow to 16 - many to be added next week. The pressures of continuous enrolment and large class size mean I won't be able to devote sufficient attention to slower and weaker students but know from previous experience that objections to large class sizes will be met by looks of disapproval from management. I will somehow be at fault for causing trouble, rocking the boat. We all know that financial concerns are uppermost - that we can never have 2 classes of 8 when there could be a class of 16. I These consideration also affect placement decisions - students will be moved up or down so that class sizes are neat and may be moved up because they've already 'done the book' of a certain class. Objections will be met with stony looks.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (239/247)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.2) Too many ss in classes (G:100)

the week has been filled with constant sources of tension and stress. Tomorrow - new students and a third room change an trying to help these s's assimilate in the middle of a course when I feel they're just being added to classes to reach the school max of 16. The only way I can deal with numbers like this is to go on automatic pilot and do fairly mundane stuff - I think the students are quite happy with this but I feel frustrated when I know I/they could achieve more in a class of 8. This has happened at every school I've worked at.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (60/80)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.2)

Too many ss in classes (G:100)

Today we got another new student - which pushes our class size over the max. limit of 15. Once again, I was grateful that someone was absent, because the students have been complaining that the class is too crowded.

Tomorrow I'll need to do a jigsaw listening instead of the language lab, because we simply won't fit with the broken down machines.

At least the director has recognised the ramification of not having opened on Elementary class three weeks ago. He has promised to try to open one on Monday, since we have yet more new students enrolling in the middle of the course.

Last week we allowed the stronger students to move up to LINT. This helped the level split a bit, but one still exists - in content as much as level, since new students have been introduced into the group more than once a week. This regrouping and introducing and rearranging is extremely disruptive and occurs frequently at the college. It becomes hard to do revision, to build on what we've learned or to give tests. As a teacher, the lack of consistency in my class members constantly compromises my professionalism.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (213/241)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.2)

Too many ss in classes (G:100)

I have been moved off the problematic elementary level, but as I previously predicted, the lack of concern for originally placed students at the correct level has negatively affected the dynamics of the higher ones. This could plainly be seen by the poor performance of the students who have been artificially and prematurely forced up to the LINT 3 class due to lack of room in the lower levels. As we teachers persistently informed the directors and management about our ability to cater for the level mix in a maximally, or should I say 'oversized, elementary class. Nevertheless, they refused to open an Elementary 1 class due to cost saving measures.

In any case, returning to my original point of the consequences of this choice. This past week, I inherited the LINT 3 class, and the student who had been at the school the longest, was in many ways the weakest. She refused to speak and wanted me to feed her words on a silver spoon, which she then ineptly reiterated. This particular student was one who had clamoured to be moved up, even though I counselled her and advised her against it because of her lack of fluency, inaccuracy, pronunciation difficulties, etc.

Nevertheless, when the school itself decided to do a reshuffle, we chose this student to go up. The philosophy was one I've seen repeatedly arise, that is 'give the customer what s/he wants, regardless of educational objectives.

The result of following such a philosophy was the same on this occasion as always. A student left up without truly improving her fluency, perhaps the one area where we can sometimes make a

significance difference.

2.3123 Students enrol continuously

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (66/79)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.3) Ss enrol continuously (G:100)

I have a new 'small' Pre-int class of 8 students. The class is a good one and as most are good Elementary level I'd rather it didn't grow. I was told that classes were starting small and my class could grow to 16 - many to be added next week. The pressures of continuous enrolment and large class size mean I won't be able to devote sufficient attention to slower and weaker students but know from previous experience that objections to large class sizes will be met by looks of disapproval from management. I will somehow be at fault for causing trouble, rocking the boat. We all know that financial concerns are uppermost - that we can never have 2 classes of 8 when there could be a class of 16. I These consideration also affect placement decisions - students will be moved up or down so that class sizes are neat and may be moved up because they've already 'done the book' of a certain class. Objections will be met with stony looks.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (75/80)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.3) Ss enrol continuously (G:100)

new students have been introduced into the group more than once a week. This regrouping an introducing and rearranging is extremely disruptive and occurs frequently at the college. It becomes hard to do revision, to build on what we've learned or to give tests. As a teacher, the lack of consistency in my class members constantly compromises my professionalism.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (101/112)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.3) Ss enrol continuously (G:100)

Today one of the students that was forced up to LINT come to me. He said the class was too difficult for him and that he wouldn't be able to take the class test on Friday. I agreed with him and gave him the revision test that the elementary class would be doing, so he could do that one instead if he wanted to.

Also, with my elementary class, I decided that it wouldn't be fair to give them the test officially, since they've arrived at various stages of the course - the most recent only yesterday! Instead, they started the test this afternoon and will finish it over 2 nights as homework. Hopefully, this will create less anxiety for those who don't know some of the material.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (244/261)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.1) Class compositions.3) Ss enrol continuously (G:100)

The winter season saga of students constantly coming and going reached the heights of absurdity today. As we were taking the compulsory class photos for the four students leaving at the end of week 2, a girl I

had never seen before was not only hovering around us smiling at me, but she was attempting to wedge her way into the photos. Not wanting to exclude any (college) students or hurt anyone's feelings I didn't question her. However, after the proceedings, she approached me, wanting to know where her certificate was. I naturally felt awkward about not having one prepared, but at the same time felt somewhat justified. After all, this girl had simply been dumped in our level after a month at the school. She couldn't have enjoyed the change very much, because she hardly attended. Even the last day she had skipped class entirely and had simply make an appearance at the end to get the certificate.

Perhaps one could pin the problem on the slack student, but I feel the school should have pointed out that she was leaving the very next week they shifted her to our class!

2.3124 Students are hard to control

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D3.txt (51/66)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.2) Ss are hard to control (G:100)

Last week I had a problem in my class of students continually speaking their own language - after many years of teaching I usually politely ask them to leave a speak outside in their language - on this occasion it was some oh so cool French students who each time I asked them to leave, apologised profoundly but then continued to rave on in French. After days of this I really lost my patience and blew up but I wonder if this is necessary - I was feeling pressured that week - I often feel as though I dragged the student off the street, held a gun to their head and said 'learn English' - this continues to fascinate me.

I'm also constantly aware of disinterested eyebrow raising students who I want to slap across the face! HARD

Another problem is the disinterested student - the moaner, the sleeper, the victim. How effectively does one handle them when you have to see them everyday? The perfect formula stills eludes me.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D3.txt (93/96)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Otherpractices.1) Classroom teaching.2) Ss are hard to control (G:100)

These issues are hard culturally and I almost had students killing each other in my class this week about different issues. We have cultural awareness packages today which are great but I don't think we still do enough.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D3.txt (148/154)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.2) Ss are hard to control (G:100)

I have also developed a bad habit or trying to please students who are really 'negative' in their attitude or behaviour. It really annoys me that I focus so much on them and not on the students who really want to learn and who work really hard. I've spoken to my colleagues and they all say the same thing that when someone is being really negative

it gains their attention and they try to please that student often at the expense of the others.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (236/246)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.2) Ss are hard to control (G:100)

It was brought to my attention that in testing recently (controlled listening, reading and writing) a teacher was reprimanded for sending two students out for cheating.

I found several cheating in my class and felt unable to do much more that raise an eyebrow.

The loss of face clients experience is apparently bad for business.

Once again the integrity of the education compromised by business concerns - typical.

2.3125 Managers control teaching materials

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (2/18)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.3) M controls t materials (G:100)

There has been some friction today between management and teachers about the selection of video materials. Management is concerned that teachers do not pay enough attention to commercial concerns in their choice of materials - e.g. one teacher recently showed a video of a 60 Minutes segment stating that Australian education was much inferior to that of Taiwan. There has also been some attempt on the part of management to stop teachers from using material on Pauline Hanson, as they feel that reporting of her pronouncements has already done some commercial damage. Teachers feel that management should not interfere in their selection of materials. It seems to me that teachers rarely choose material because it offers a good example of some particular type of language. They are more likely to choose it because they feel it may stimulate discussion, or because they are personally interested in it. I think it is interesting that when I pointed out to management that they themselves were still using a placement test that vilified Aeroflot, someone said that they hadn't had time to replace it. (It stemmed from a time when we never had Russian students.)

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (240/257)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.3) M controls t materials (G:100)

The memo that I mentioned earlier on selection of materials was distributed today. I was in a uniquely advantageous situation to get feedback on it, since no-one knew I had written it. I must say that I was surprised at the vehemence of the opposition to it. A lot of people regarded it as censorship; since it asked them to take various factors into account when they choose material rather than asking them not to use anything in particular, I don't think that that was reasonable comment. Others wanted to react by taking everything to extremes - coming up with absurd suggestions about what they would have to avoid if they didn't want to offend anyone.

One person raised the matter of whaling and the Japanese - she said that Japanese should be told that this was wrong and that she saw nothing wrong with telling them. I said that if she felt this way, probably the best thing she could do would be to write to the Japanese Embassy, or to join some suitable organisation, rather than using her classroom as a pulpit - I said it a bit more tactfully than that - but I don't think she agreed.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (120/129)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.3) M controls t materials (G:100)

A lesson I had collaborated on with another teacher focussing on Pauline Hanson was vetoed by the Head Teacher. Reasoning was that it was too sensitive from a marketing perspective. The topic was in response to a student request. The tension between pedagogy and company demands was particularly obvious here. The other teacher was a bit surprised by all this and was under the impression that student generated subject matter was OK to use regardless of topic. I am no longer so sure about this. All the crap about needs analysis, social utility and authentic materials contents all seems like rhetoric these days.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (211/225)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.3) M controls t materials (G:100)

Another teacher is crying in the staff room at the moment. She has been censored or chastised in some way for using video material concerning Pauline Hanson.

This is a similar situation to the one previously experienced by me and several others. (X) is calming her down. Teacher is the media person responsible for taping radio, TV. Apparently the company sees this material as being out of kilter with the kind of image that 6 is trying to promote.

She was given a not that included the following: 'No matter what your missionary aims are.....'

The fact that she was sent the message rather than being invited to discuss it seems to be a feature of an organisation or a body corporate rather than a school.

2.3126 Pressure to standardise teaching

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (3/63)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.4) Pressure to standardise t (G:100)

At the end of a working day we were asked to say back for a special announcement. 'Course programs' were distributed for each level. We were to peruse them and discuss at the next staff meeting. It was not long before I felt that these programs were very odd indeed and even confused some teachers. They will eventually replace the present lesson plan record in which teachers record what was taught every session. The new program consists of units (1 unit per week) divided

into subgroups - structures are to be tick off when taught and dated. Initially one would think this was an efficient way streamlining the school's teaching program. It is actually an ill-informed move which seems to have no guiding principles/methodology in mind. I am familiar with 2 basic systems: 1) a course based largely on a coursebook, with supplementary activities 2) a curriculum - fully-referenced which lists a range of structures, lexis and skills which should ideally be covered each week. Each has their advantages and pitfalls. This 'new' program seemed an unsatisfactory mix of both and caused me to feel distinctly uneasy about whether whoever had designed this program knew what they were doing. My program for Pre-int level was loosely based on the Headway Pre-int book yet it was also to be used by teachers who used a different book 'Language in Use' for which no references were given. Unit's are divided into the trad. Categories 1) structures and functions 2) themes and vocabulary 3) speaking and listening activities 4) reading and writing 5) additional resources used. Despite the new direction the program is taking there is little acknowledgement of this ie structure is all important and used to teach functions and this is supplemented by themes and vocab - I wondered what all this was leading to and still have to decide how I will phrase my comments. I had a long discussion with another teacher who, despite many years of experience, felt totally confused by this document. It takes the headings of the coursebooks as its aim - yet presents as an independent program - or is it a syllabus. My sneaking suspicion is that it will be used as a way of checking that teachers are covering the necessary material. Instructions such as 'Please insert the date each structure was taught' give me a good idea of what the designer of the form thinks language teaching/learning is all about. I would heartily disagree with many of the assumptions made and herein is my dilemma. I suspect that 'streamlining and controlling' the final product is the goal here. I feel that many new things /procedures are about to be/are being introduced into this particular school.

In addition, another form was produced - titled Original Teaching Activity; 'you will produce four of these a module' (5 weeks) in which an activity, its aims and procedures were to be described. I wondered if this was really for the use of all the teachers or whether it was more important that this would eventually be collated and printed in a booklet under the school's name (mentioned twice).

Many of these recent innovations do not yet seem to have their origins in teaching staff but come down from above - admin and management. It seems like teachers' lives are going to have to be adjusted in order to fill in with the needs of the school.

I can already predict that it is the teachers who are more experienced and have further qualifications who quietly question the validity, necessity and wisdom of these new pieces of paper. The real dilemma will come when we are asked to comment at a staff meeting. The newest teachers will happily agree to anything, older ones will murmur, some will speak up and others will not because it would cause too much trouble - it's easier to keep quiet and you will at least keep your job!

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (113/124)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.1) Classroom teaching.4) Pressure to standardise t (G:100)

Connected to the above - yet

another new form introduced - teachers are to note any problems they encounter and forward this to Senior Teacher/Admin immediately. This is to catch/anticipate problems to avoid complaints from agents months later. I feel like I'm expected to be part educator, part marketing manager. What infuriates me is that that is no avenue /channel for teachers' problems/complaints or dissatisfaction . Their resolution brings little financial advantage or satisfaction and allowing them to be aired would mean a total rethinking of the way the school was organised. Student grievances are to immediately noted, passed on and dealt with whilst some teachers are quietly discontented. Where is the teachers' memo/suggestion box?

2.33 Professional development

2.331 PD is inadequate

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D3.txt (209/215)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.2) Professional development.1) PD is

I think my last point should be to emphasise the need for teachers to get together - not necessarily for an inservice as such but for an informal meeting to be given the opportunity to discuss resources, hints, ideas and problems. I think idea sharing pools were really well at my place of employment and should be encouraged in all institutions. These are not only unavailable for new teachers but also for those who have more experience.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D4.txt (127/156)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.2) Professional development.1) PD is inadequate (G:100)

A memo from the DOS about creating a system for teacher development - to help improve existing skills and techniques, increase knowledge and acquire new skills. I feel that this is a very good idea but clearly hype I will be working somewhere else but the time it is implemented. The DOS and Head Teacher have, to my knowledge, no further qualification in TESOL, Applied Linguistics (eg an MA or RSA Dip) and know less than I do about recent issues and directions in teaching/linguistics. I not only feel compromised professionally but insulted. The owner of the school has not bothered to employ people with the relevant and necessary qualifications. I have worked for a number of schools where observations were conducted on a regular basis. Like everybody I hate being observed , but welcome feedback and useful advice from those better qualified than myself, I'm not referring to teacher training. It is almost embarrassing that we will be observed by someone who is not qualified in the field. 'Excellence in language teaching' ie 'the pursuit of excellence' is one the school's aims and/or mottos and it is still unclear to me what this really is. Does this mean good results in Cambridge Exams using the latest methodology, sending students away happy, pushing students quickly up through the school. I suspect that all of this will not be done well at all , that simplistic ideas about teaching and learning

languages will be suggested and the old p.p.p. line will be pushed. My dilemma here is not one of differing methodologies but rather introducing teacher development because it is an important condition of being affiliated to X, the biggest chain of private ELT colleges in the world. Interestingly teacher development in itself is not enough of a reason we are being encouraged to 'help realise the company goal'! The word company makes me feel like a stockbroker not a teacher and this isn't the 1st time I've been involved in teacher development because we must be seen to be doing it.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (168/178)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.2) Professional development.1) PD is inadequate (G:100)

However, after the initial investment, attempts to actually manage this new resource started to fall apart. An ex-teacher knowledgeable regarding computerese was hired to organise the equipment and give teachers a few blitz 'how-to-do-it' sessions. There were only 2 or 3 of the latter, and these were largely confusing due to our large numbers and lack of prior computer training on the job. It has always surprised me how the school can expect lesson materials to be desk-top publishing standard and yet not be willing to assist teachers with adequate training (to remedy this defect personally, I'm now taking a course at (P) at my own expense - at least I'll be able to get a tax deduction from it).

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D5.txt (263/271)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.2) Professional development.1) PD is inadequate (G:100)

It is left to the teacher to check a lengthy leavers list at the end of each week, in alphabetical rather than class order. There is another list issued week 1 with the leaving dates, but if students enter the class at anytime after this point, these dates aren't listed. Teachers then have to make enquiries, search for Day 1 sheet if they're available, or access the (S) computer system. As far as the latter option goes, most teachers aren't trained to enter the database, nor does the need of passwords encourage them to try.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (204/207)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.2) Professional development.1) PD is inadequate (G:100)

Only my 'computer exam'. A guy quizzing me on how to open and close files with tasks that got progressively more difficult. It all felt a bit like a power trip. Gatekeeping, fractional teacher are given no access to training and no access to equipment without it.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (257/261)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.2) Professional development.1) PD is inadequate (G:100)

Providing edu-tainment tailored and sanitised for changing groups is probably the best job description for the kind of work 6 is undertaking these days. I guess I really don't mind but the fiction of the inservice sessions meeting teacher practice is sometimes a little hard to swallow.

2.332 PD has commercial purposes

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (173/181)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.2) Professional development.2) PD serves com. purposes (G:100)

Of course, we do now have a consultant two days a week who manages a staff development program. This is one of the saving graces. If we were talking about management motivation, though, I think that her appointment has something to do with the perennial question that sales and promotion people get asked by overseas agents: 'What is the difference between your school and the cheaper ones?' The presence of the consultant has been used extensively in marketing, as has the series of external inservices she is running for teachers from other schools.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D1.txt (364/370)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.2) Professional development.2) PD serves com. purposes (G:100)

Management are also trying at the moment to get the 'best' out of their investment in the professional development consultant by threatening the teachers with penalties if they do not attend the sessions. Some of the teachers are up in arms and are boycotting the sessions for this reason. The trainer is also very unhappy about it as she took the work on the understanding that attendance would be voluntary.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (25/36)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.2) Professional development.2) PD serves com. purposes (G:100)

Teacher Development sessions of the most pleasant part of my week. Today's "The Best laid plans.... lessons that come unstuck".

1. Group work was almost a confessional session. Participants were supposed to share frequency and personal strategies for coping with derailed lessons. A head teacher was in my group and it felt quite difficult to talk about bad lessons (recent ones) while Management is constantly cutting back staff and trimming hours of sessional teachers. Whether or not disclosure in a workshop is used as a basis of making decisions about teaching competency is hard to determine. I find it hard to believe it could be fully erased from a Management Agent's memory

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D6.txt (278/286)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.2) Professional development.2) PD serves com. purposes (G:100)

Professional Development Session today focussed on cross cultural difference and awareness raising (or something like that). It was held hot on the heels of attached memo.

The presenter went to great length to disassociate herself it from the memo however HT used the opportunity to point out the importance and relationship of both classroom management and materials content to future student numbers. I guess this was their idea (or hers) of issue management.

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D7.txt (289/328)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.2) Professional development.2) PD serves com. purposes (G:100)

I've never had a problem with other teachers observing any of my classes, however something has come up that has shaken me just slightly. Last week, the senior teacher in charge of curriculum development approached me to 'offer' her services as an objective observer/advice giver in the realms of classroom management. I agreed to have her observe my class for the first hour on Tuesday morning on the understanding that we would later discuss some the points that I inevitably forget to practice in my classroom; concept checking not the least most forgotten when I get carried away within the intricacies of simply 'teaching'.

Whenever I'm observed I try my hardest to relax and just imagine that the teacher is not there. In fact sometimes I've even tried to involve the visiting teacher in the running of the class, or at least get involved in the monitoring of particular students. Of the subsequent feedback, I've been nothing but totally positive and enthusiastic; at least until last week. The objectivity of the senior teacher was always guaranteed to the staff; a senior member who would be available to all staff who felt they would like some advice and/or constructive criticism regarding their abilities and performance as teachers. Not a bad idea! Basically what happened was this; The senior teacher entered my room, stayed 2 hours, which I considered excessive and even stared down one of my students who was being just a little insolent. I thought the idea was that the visiting teacher was to sit, observe and take notes; get involved yes, as is necessary, but only at the request of the teacher. Strangely, I found myself being more than observed. I felt as though the teacher was evaluating me far beyond what could be considered reasonable for the purposes of 'feedback'. During my session of observation, a few of the other teaching staff were peering into my room through the window, giving me little signs of encouragement, winks and expressions of exasperated disbelief that I had to endure 2 hours of this treatment. Later, discussing the ordeal with others, I mentioned my feeling of discomfort at being observed so strenuously and for such a long time, and they also advised me that I wasn't the only one to have been pressured into this kind of experience. According to them, it was a common practice of the senior teacher. I can only hope that the observation and the subsequent feedback I received, were kept confidential, and not used in any way to affect the outcome of a possible application for permanency which I'd like to make later this year.

2.34 Beyond the college

2.341 Excursions must be fun

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D7.txt (15/48)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.3) Beyond the college.1) Excursions must be fun (G:100)

It has been, at least up until now, a policy of the school that all excursions outside the school be organized around and relevant to the

topic of study for any one class, within any one module[4 weeks].It goes without saying that an excursion to the zoo, however enjoyable for a great deal of students, would not be recommended if your topic for the month/week was Health and Lifestyle. Even though this policy caused some frustration amongst some of the more 'hedonistic' students, and not a little consternation amongst some members of staff, it was generally considered fair and therefore, adhered to. In effect, it was a reasonable policy and at the very least it gave students a sense of structure and purpose, which many of them lament is often missing from course outlines. For me personally, it offered a way out. I'm sure I'm not the only teacher who doesn't particularly savour those sticky moments on the 'populist' excursion routes when you're stuck for conversation with a low -Elementary class. At the end of the day, this more structured approach to excursion outings helped me in my planning of activities for the entire module, and the personally gruelling excursion that was to come.

Then came the dreaded news at the Friday arvo meeting, that we are now officially untethered to the policy regarding excursions; that future excursions are to be FUN. I've just spent 3 odd months telling my EAP students that we can't go to the Aquarium, the Zoo or the cinemas in George St, because they are not relevant to our topic. I'm sure when I tell them this module, that we can go anywhere they like, they'll be wondering about the relevance that I so forcefully administered to various disappointed classes.

The most frustrating thing is that I feel as though my authority has been stripped away to some degree. Even if I wanted to continue with excursions that dealt particularly with the topic at hand, my students would protest that the other classes were doing FUN things and that they weren't. Let's hope that the new policy remains so that the students don't think we're taciturn . Over and out!

2.342 Socialising is compromising

TEXT: Diaries.Text only D3.txt (74/86)

CODE: 2) The practices are.2) Other practices.3) Beyond the college.2)Socialising is compromising (G:100)

Speaking of love what are the boundaries

here with professionalism? I know many teachers who have had affairs with students. How do you teach effectively if there's someone gorgeous in your class. I know sometimes I end up talking or teaching just to them. One must remain focused.

I've had a few hassles with crushes from Japanese girls - some have been a bit like fatal attraction - midnight phone calls (silly move to give out your number), stalking etc.

I'm not joking about this it's been a real pain. I've stopped socialising with students due to this and the fact that it can take over your whole life!