

A STUDY OF TEACHERS' CONCERNS WHEN IMPLEMENTING AN INNOVATION IN TAIWAN

Chia-Chen Wu

Introduction

In 1997 a new English language textbook was introduced into Junior High Schools in Taiwan which aimed to replace structurally based textbooks with materials which were more communicative and contextually based. The present study, conducted three years after this innovation, sets out to examine how the teachers involved reacted towards it, investigating in particular what kinds of concern they experienced. An understanding of such shared concerns can help curriculum designers more effectively plan in the future for the implementation of educational innovations.

The context

Before the publication of the 'New Textbook' (henceforth, 'NT') in 1997, all teachers in junior high schools in Taiwan used the nationally prescribed textbooks. These followed a structure-based syllabus and encouraged grammar-translation and audio-lingual approaches. Their contents consisted of 'vocabulary and pronunciation', 'reading and dialogues', 'comprehension questions', 'sentence patterns' and 'oral practice (mechanical drills)'. Appendix 1 presents a list of the features of and outcomes derived from the use of this textbook:

The need to improve the oral and aural skills of learners and the realisation that even after many years of English they tended to have made little progress led to the development of new curricula and hence the NT, which claims to adopt the Communicative Approach. Appendix 2 sets out the aims and features of the NT. In Taiwan, the Communicative Approach is innovative because it places emphasis on the learning process itself and not just the product; it focuses on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language and, linked to this, encourages the use of authentic texts and the learner's personal experiences. These features are opposed to the prevailing structure-based approach to teaching in Taiwan, and adopting the Communicative Approach therefore requires teachers to understand and master a new concept of teaching whilst at the same time coping with problems

such as a heavy teaching load, large class size, lack of school support, rigid syllabuses, and parental concerns and interventions.

The NT had been in use for three years at the date of this study, but it is hard to say whether this innovation has been successfully implemented or not since little evaluation has been carried out. However, from my own experience of using it for two years, I suspected that most of the teachers tended to adopt the previous structure-based approach in interpreting the NT. Thus, my motivation for this study was to see if this was the case and what kinds of concerns teachers had which may be preventing them from using the NT in the way the writers intended.

Focus on teachers

In the following extract, Fullan (1993: 4–5) stresses the crucial role teachers play in the change process:

To become expert in the dynamics of change, educators — administrators and teachers alike — must become skilled change agents. If they do become skilled change agents with moral purpose, educators will make a difference in the lives of students from all backgrounds, and by so doing help produce greater capacity in society to cope with change.

During the implementation of the NT, have teachers in Taiwan fulfilled Fullan's basic assumption about educational change and become more 'skilled' in dealing with innovations? The editors of the NT comprised a group of professionals ranging from university lecturers (including two native speakers) to teachers of senior and junior high schools. Before the implementation, a number of seminars were conducted by the editors in order to present the content and the methodology of the NT to the teachers. According to my personal experience, however, only one or two teachers in a school would be able to attend the seminars due to the limits of time and resources. Moreover, those teachers who attended the seminars did not always transmit relevant information to other teachers in their school. Ren (1999:53) claims that over 70 percent of teachers attended the in-service training programmes about the NT only rarely or not at all. Apart from specific INSET for the introduction of the NT, there has been little sustained and organised in-service education in general for teachers and, when it is available, uptake is not very high. Partly this is because there is little administrative support in the schools for teachers to attend INSET courses (for

example, if a teacher voluntarily attends a teacher training programme, the missed lessons need to be covered by themselves on their return); in addition, attendance on INSET courses is not rewarded or recognised in any way – it is not, for example, entered on teachers' appraisal forms.

The complexity of the change process

Teachers themselves undergo different kinds of change while implementing innovations. Conceptually, they must understand the theoretical basis of the innovation and how it can be applied to real life. Here I am using the terms 'change' and 'innovation' interchangeably to refer to any planned process or event in education that has as its aim some improvement —there is an intended outcome which is seen as more desirable than what went before. Certainly, change does not always happen for the best and there are often unexpected outcomes, which in themselves may lead to further changes and innovations. Stacey (1992, cited by Fullan (1993: 19)) holds the opinion that the change process is uncontrollably complex, and in many circumstances 'unknowable'. According to Fullan (1993: 19), this is one of the fundamental reasons why controlling strategies do not work. Here is an authentic example. In 1996, there was an 'innovative' Minister of Education in Taiwan. After taking his position, he endeavoured to encourage a substantial number of educational changes such as small-class teaching and the 'Multi-Enrollment Project'. The Multi-Enrollment Project was aimed at abolishing the national joint entrance exams in order to redirect the heavily examination-oriented pedagogy in Taiwan towards the real essence of 'education'. All the possible factors affecting the success of the innovations such as teachers, parents, and administrative systems were carefully taken into consideration and it seemed that everyone could foresee a bright future. Nevertheless, unexpected variables emerged: owners of the 'Bushibans' (cramming schools) protested vigourously against the new policy and claimed that thousands of people in this industry would become unemployed if the national examination were to be abolished. Furthermore, they united with some other political interest groups to pressure the Minister to resign. Finally, this 'Minister of New Ideas' left his position in 1998.

Change is complex because every new variable that enters the equation produces new reactions (Fullan 1991: 19). Furthermore, each separate educational

innovation is in itself multidimensional. More often than not, there are at least three components or dimensions at stake in implementing any new educational policy or project:

1. the possible use of new or revised *materials* (direct instructional resources such as curriculum materials or technologies);
2. the possible use of new *teaching approaches* (i.e. new teaching strategies or activities), and
3. the possible alteration of *beliefs* (e.g. pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new policies or programmes).

(Fullan 1991: 37)

All these three facets of educational innovation are undoubtedly necessary because they represent the means by which a specific educational goal or set of goals can be achieved. Equally, however, teachers may implement one, two, all, or even none of the three dimensions. A teacher could use the NT or new technologies without changing their teaching approach. Or a teacher may use the materials and alter some methods of teaching without embracing the beliefs underlying the change. Thus the process of implementing change is not a single event – it is a continuous process during which teachers will experience different concerns with different aspects of the innovation and it is this aspect of the process that my study focuses on. Based upon the ‘concerns-based adoption model’ (CBAM) discussed below I attempt to answer the following two questions:

1. What changes have teachers made during the innovation?
2. What are the stages of concern they have gone through?

The concerns-based adoption model (CBAM)

Teachers in pluralistic societies, which produce many competing versions of change, are often presented with changes as impositions. What are the changes and even ‘struggles’ teachers actually go through in the process of adopting innovations? Concerning the dynamic between teachers’ thought process and their actual actions CBAM attempts to describe the process an individual actually experiences during the adoption of innovation. Drawing on Fuller’s (1969) early work, Hall and Loucks

(1978) developed CBAM for describing the ‘concerns’ that professionals may have about an innovation. According to Hall, George and Rutherford (1986: 5), concerns are broadly defined as ‘the composite representation of the feelings, preoccupations, thoughts, and considerations given to a particular issue or task’. Within the context of educational innovation, this developmental framework of CBAM is built around the concept that teachers go through different *stages of concern* — relating to what they are worried or concerned about or while being involved in a particular innovation. Seven stages of concern may be identified as follows (Hall and Loucks 1978):

Stage 0 (Awareness)	Teachers have little awareness of the innovation and are not likely to be concerned about it.
Stage 1 (Informational)	Teachers are seeking an understanding of the innovation itself.
Stage 2 (Personal)	Teachers begin to express concerns about their ability to meet changing expectations.
Stage 3 (Management)	Teachers focus on implementation concerns.
Stage 4 (Consequences)	Teachers express concerns about the impact of the innovation on their students or families served.
Stage 5 (Collaboration)	Teachers begin to seek out relationships that will assist them in implementing the innovation.
Stage 6 (Refocusing)	Teachers express an interest in adapting the innovation or considering alternative innovations.

Table 1: Seven stages of concern in the Concerns-Based Adoption Model

This model assumes that change is an ongoing personal experience. The effectiveness of a change depends on the extent to which the change is matched to the needs and concerns expressed by individual teachers (Hall and Loucks 1978, quoted in Bailey and Palsha 1992: 227) and to identify these needs a questionnaire based on the CBAM called the ‘Stages of Concern Questionnaire’ has been developed (Hall, George and Rutherford 1986).

Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ)

This questionnaire is a specially designed instrument for assessing teacher concerns during the seven stages above. For instance, teachers may be asked to rate statements such as the following on a scale from 0 (= ‘irrelevant to me’) or 1 (= ‘not true of me now’) through to 7 (= ‘Very true of me now’):

- I don’t know what this innovation is.
- I would like to discuss the possible use of this change.

- I would like to know how much time and energy is required to adopt this innovation.
- I evaluate the impact on my students and their families.
- I help others with this innovation.
- I know of other approaches that are better.

Originally, there were 150 items in the SoCQ, and research was then conducted to reduce them into a 7-factor and 35-item questionnaire (see Table 2). However, through examining the psychometric properties of the SoCQ, Bailey and Palsha (1992) found low reliabilities for the Awareness Stage and the Refocusing Stage and so proposed a revised model and a reorganised instrument for measuring teacher concerns: a 5-factor (Awareness, Personal, Management, Impact and Collaboration) and 35-item questionnaire (Table 2). In addition, Shotsberger and Crawford (1999) suggest a more abbreviated, 5-factor and 27-item model. The next section will discuss the original SoCQ and the two revised models.

Comparison of the three versions of SoCQ

The following table illustrates the assignment of items to proposed stages of concern for the original SoCQ and the two modified SoCQs:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Original SoCQ</i>	<i>Bailey & Palsha's SoCQ</i>	<i>Shotsberger & Crawford's SoCQ</i>
1. Don't know what the innovation is.	Awareness	Awareness*	Awareness
2. Not concerned about the innovation.	Awareness	Management*	N
3. Occupied with other things.	Awareness	Management*	N
4. Concerned with other things.	Awareness	Awareness*	Awareness
5. Not interested in learning.	Awareness	Management*	N
6. Limited knowledge about the Innovation.	Information	Awareness*	Awareness
7. Like to discuss possible use.	Information	Personal*	Personal/ Collaboration
8. What resources are available.	Information	Personal*	N
9. Immediate requirement for use.	Information	Personal*	Personal
10. How better than current practice.	Information	Personal*	N
11. Effects on professional status.	Personal	Personal*	Personal
12. Who will make the decisions.	Personal	Personal*	Personal
13. How my tasks will change.	Personal	Personal*	Personal
14. Time and energy required.	Personal	Personal*	Personal
15. How my role will change.	Personal	Personal*	Personal
16. Not enough time.	Management	Management*	Management
17. Conflicts between interests and responsibilities.	Management	Management*	Management
18. Inability to manage.	Management	Personal*	Personal/ Management

19. Time spent on non-essential tasks.	Management	Impact	Impact/ Management
20. Coordination of tasks and people.	Management	Management*	Management
21. Students'/families attitudes toward innovation.	Consequences	Impact	Impact
22. How it affects students/families.	Consequences	Impact	Impact
23. Evaluating impact on students/families	Consequences	Impact	Impact
24. Exciting students/families about their part.	Consequences	Impact	Impact
25. Use of feedback to change.	Consequences	Impact	Impact
26. Help others with innovation.	Collaboration	Collaboration*	Collaboration
27. Develop relationships with others.	Collaboration	Collaboration*	Collaboration
28. Share progress with others.	Collaboration	Collaboration*	Collaboration
29. Coordinate efforts with others.	Collaboration	Collaboration*	Collaboration
30. Know about others' work	Collaboration	Impact	Impact
31. Other approaches that are better.	Refocusing	Impact	N
32. Revising use.	Refocusing	Management*	Management
33. Revising the approach.	Refocusing	Impact	Impact
34. Modify based on use.	Refocusing	Impact	N
35. How to change.	Refocusing	Personal*	N
Key: N = Nil. Some items of SoCQ were removed in Shotsberger and Crawford's model.			
* Though the names of the stages were retained from the original CBAM, it should be noted that the identities of the stages were changed somewhat due to re-assignment of items.			

Table 2: Comparison of the three versions of SoCQ (adapted from Shotsberger and Crawford 1999: 6, 12)

By means of a questionnaire administered to different groups of teachers and subsequent statistical analysis, Bailey and Palsha (1992) and Shotsberger and Crawford (1999) made considerable modifications to the original SoCQ. For example, Bailey and Palsha removed the Information Stage and the Refocusing Stage. Meanwhile, the original Consequences Stage was renamed the 'Impact Stage' in their revised model. Shotsberger and Crawford aimed to produce a more consistent and meaningful instrument for describing teacher concerns and they claim that their 27-item SoCQ has a higher reliability and validity than the previous two models.

Applications of SoCQ

Following its development, SoCQ has been widely utilised as a framework to conceptualise stages of teacher concerns when teachers are expected to learn and implement an innovation related to their work. SoCQ has been applied in many areas of educational research such as curriculum reform efforts in science (Ellis and Kuerbis 1988; Sevilla and Marsh 1992; Zielinski and Bernardo 1989), reading and social studies (Mitchell 1988), and writing (Stroble and Bratcha 1990). Furthermore, studies in Australia, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and Canada have also

employed the SoCQ for accessing concerns about new innovations (Leary 1983; Noad 1995; van de Berg 1993; Vandenberghe 1983). As may be seen in the literature, this questionnaire has been regarded as a useful instrument for either diagnosis or evaluation during the change process.

Details of the study

Subjects

The data for this study were gathered from 41 English language teachers who have had experience in using both the old textbook and the NT in junior high schools in Taiwan. They are from three different junior high schools in the Great Taipei District – one in Taipei City, and a further two in Taipei County. Details of the subjects are indicated in the following tables:

Gender	Female	Male	Unknown
Number/Percentage	34 / 82.9%	6 / 14.6%	1 / 2.5%
Total	n = 41 (100%)		

Table 3: Gender of subjects

Year(s)	1–5	6–10	11–15	16–20	21–25	26–30	31–35	36–40	Unknown
Number/Percentage	5/ 12%	11/ 27%	5/ 12%	6/ 15%	3/ 7%	3/ 7%	4/ 10%	1/ 3%	3/ 7%
Total	n = 41 (100%)								

Table 4: Years of teaching experience of subjects

Year(s)	1 year	2 years	3 years	Unknown
Number/Percentage	8 / 20%	14 / 34%	18 / 44%	1 / 2%
Total	n = 41 (100%)			

Table 5: Years of experience in using the NT

Qualifications	BA / BSc	MA / MSc	Unknown
Number/Percentage	36 / 88%	4 / 10%	1 / 2%
Total	n = 41 (100%)		

Table 6: Subjects' qualifications

The data elicited from Section A of the questionnaire (Personal information) show that the 41 subjects are all well-qualified and experienced teachers. Concerning their experiences in implementing the NT, more than 40% of the subjects have used it for three years.

The data collection process

In this study, the use of the NT was utilised as the example of innovation and the subjects detailed above answered a questionnaire mainly based on the framework suggested by the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ). The majority of the questions were based on the revised framework of SoCQ proposed by Bailey and Palsha (1992) as well as Shotsberger and Crawford (1999). It appeared to me that, notwithstanding their strengths, both models have a weakness due to the limited focus of the Impact Stage. Bailey and Palsha exclusively emphasise the impact on students' families while Shotsberger and Crawford highlight the impact on students only. As far as the ELT context in Taiwan is concerned, I considered that both students' and their families' reactions may be major concerns of teachers when adopting an innovation. Therefore, I attempted to combine the positions of the two models in the design of my questionnaire. In addition, the modified five Stages of Concern (Awareness, Personal, Management, Impact and Collaboration) will serve as the basis for analysing the data collected.

The questionnaire was divided into three major sections, as listed below, but in this article I will only be reporting on the results of Section C, the section of the questionnaire based on the Stages of Concern Model:

- Section A: Personal information
- Section B: Teachers' general beliefs and attitudes towards change and innovation (the Communicative Approach is used as the example of innovation)
- Section C: Teachers' responses to the use of the NT

Results and data analysis

Changes that teachers experience during the innovation

In Section C of the questionnaire, the subjects were asked about the changes they had made or been through since the introduction of the NT. The 22 questions were designed and analysed based on the framework suggested by the Stages of Concern Questionnaire. The subjects were also asked to reflect upon the changes they had experienced, by completing the following open-ended statement: *'Since the introduction of the NT, I think . . .'*

Personal Change

According to the responses (see Table 11), only 31.7% of the teachers think they have more right to make decisions than before. And less than 15% of the teachers consider their professional status has risen since the adoption of the NT. However, changes are reported by over 70% of the teachers with respect to their creativity in methodology, emphasis on learner autonomy, time for preparing lessons, frequency of reflection upon teaching and interaction with students (Changes 3, 4, 5, 11 and 12). Compared with these relatively common changes, fewer teachers have experienced changes in their use of authentic materials (58.5%), use of pair and group work (63.4%) or the use of English in teaching (65.9%). In addition, it is worth noting that only about half of the teachers (51.2%) spend less time explicitly explaining grammatical rules. It seems that some teachers may have adopted the traditional grammatical approach in interpreting the NT. Finally, we may find it discouraging to see that only 22% of the teachers attend more in-service training after the implementation of the NT. In principle, teachers need to attend many follow-up training programmes in order to update and upgrade their professional competence in implementing innovations. However, the current situation apparently demonstrates lack of support for the teachers on the part of the change agents. More encouragingly the data mentioned above show that the NT does seem to have achieved its goal in altering teachers' methodology, although without classroom observations it is difficult to be certain about this.

Changes	(Strongly) Disagree	Not Sure	(Strongly) Agree
1. My professional status has risen.	17/ 41.5%	18/ 43.9%	6/ 14.6%
2. I have more rights to make decisions.	12/ 29.3%	16/ 39.0%	13/ 31.7%
3. My teaching methods are more creative.	1/ 2.4%	10/ 24.4%	30/ 73.2%
4. My teaching is more student-centred.	2/ 4.8%	9/ 22.0%	30/ 73.2%
1. I focus more on students' learning processes than the language itself.	2/ 4.8%	10/ 24.4%	29/ 70.8%
6. I use more authentic materials.	9/ 22.0%	8/ 19.5%	24/ 58.5%
7. I use more pair work and group work.	9/ 22.0%	6/ 14.6%	26/ 63.4%
8. I use more English when I teach.	5/ 12.1%	9/ 22.0%	27/ 65.9%
9. I spend less time explicitly explaining grammatical rules.	13/ 31.7%	7/ 17.1%	21/ 51.2%

10. I attend more in-service training.	16/ 39.0%	16/ 39.0%	9/ 22.0%
11. I spend more time preparing lessons.	2/ 4.8%	10/ 24.4%	29/ 70.8%
12. I reflect upon my teaching more often.	2/ 4.8%	4/ 9.8%	35/ 85.4%
13. I have more interaction with students in class.	2/ 4.8%	5/ 12.1%	34/ 83.1%
Total	n = 41 (100%)		

Table 11: Personal change during innovation

Management Change

In answer to Question 14, over 60% of the teachers express that they still need to rush their teaching as before. Based on my own four-year teaching experience in junior high school, rushing the lessons to meet the demands of the prescribed syllabus is one of the major stresses for most teachers. Since the introduction of the NT, this situation does not seem to have changed a lot and thus the quality of communicative teaching may be impaired.

Change	(Strongly) Disagree	Not Sure	(Strongly) Agree
14. I do not need to rush my teaching as before.	26/ 63.4%	8/ 19.5%	7/ 17.1%
Total	n = 41 (100%)		

Table 12: Management Change

Impact change (on students and their families)

With regard to Change 15 (see Table 13), less than 30% of the teachers think parents' attitudes towards their teaching have become more favourable since the NT was implemented. Concerning the impact on students, more than 60% of the teacher agree that students use more English in class (Change 17) and interact more with each other (Change 20). However, less than half of the teachers consider students are more interested in learning English (43.9%) or that students' communicative competence has become better (46.4%). Only 14.6% of the teachers agree that students get higher marks in tests and exams. The reasons behind some of the less favourable outcomes will be explored later. Nevertheless, it may be encouraging to find that teachers use student feedback more extensively to change their teaching methods (78.1%).

Changes	(Strongly) Disagree	Not Sure	(Strongly) Agree
15. Parents take more favourable attitudes towards my teaching.	2/ 4.8%	28/ 68.3	11/ 26.9
16. Students are more interested in learning English.	6/ 14.6%	17/ 41.5%	18/ 43.9%
17. Students use more English in class.	5/ 12.1%	11/ 26.9%	25/ 61.0%
18. Students get higher marks in tests and exams	15/ 36.6%	20/ 48.8%	6/ 14.6%
19. Students' communicative competence is better	5/ 12.1%	17/ 41.5%	19/ 46.4%
20. Students have more interaction with each other in class.	4/ 9.8%	7/ 17.1%	30/ 73.1%
21. I use students' feedback more to change my teaching methods.	3/ 7.3%	6/ 14.6%	32/ 78.1%
Total	n = 41 (100%)		

Table 13: Impact on students and their families

Personal/Collaboration Change

In relation to Change 22, about half of the teachers agree they discuss teaching with their colleagues more often; with the other half disagreeing or being unsure. Therefore there is little hard evidence that the NT has encouraged a greater degree of cooperation among staff. More interesting data elicited from the open-ended questions will be presented below to cast further light on the reality of teachers' collaborative relationships with their colleagues.

Change	(Strongly) Disagree	Not Sure	(Strongly) Agree
22. I discuss teaching methods with my colleagues more often.	10/ 24.4%	9/ 22.0%	22/ 53.6%
Total	n = 41 (100%)		

Table 14: Personal/Collaboration Change

Teacher concerns during the innovation

As may be seen from the results presented above, teachers have indeed made or gone through a number of changes. However, a minority of teachers seem to have failed to make changes such as spending less time in explaining grammatical rules *explicitly* (Change 9) – a change which may be regarded as essential to the promotion of communicative language teaching. What are the possible reasons behind this? What concerns or difficulties have teachers experienced during the innovation? In the following section of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which a number of items listed are their major concerns when they use the NT.

Participants could select one of four numbers in response to each item: 0: Not a concern at all; 1: A slight concern; 2: A major concern, or 3: Absolutely a major concern.

Awareness Stage

At the Awareness Stage, the teacher has little knowledge about the innovation but is ideally interested in learning more. With regard to Concern b, more than 70% of the teachers claim that they were not ‘more interested in other things . . .’ (see Table 15). However, over 60% of the teachers claim they are very concerned about the insufficiency of the information provided about the NT. This seems to imply that most teachers are interested in the NT but have not obtained a satisfactory grasp of the theoretical basis and skills needed to adopt it, even though it has been implemented for three years. As discussed above, none of the processes in the Concerns-Based Adoption Model is a straight line and teachers may move backwards and forwards. However, it is surprising to find that even after three years, most teachers still have major concerns at the first stage, *awareness*, especially regarding insufficient information about the NT. This result may relate to a response already reported above in which only 22% of the teachers agreed that they have attended more in-service training since the introduction of the NT. If teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of an innovation, then implementation will be difficult, which in turn can affect teachers’ otherwise favourable attitudes, making them more likely to resist the change.

Concerns	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Unanswered</i>
a. Not enough information about the adoption of the NT	4/ 9.8%	10/ 24.4%	16/ 39.0%	9/ 22.0%	2/ 4.8%
b. I was more interested in other things than in dealing with the NT	13/ 31.7%	17/ 41.5%	9/ 22.0%	1/ 2.4%	1/ 2.4%
Total	n = 41 (100%)				

Table 15: Teacher concerns at the Awareness Stage

Ajzen’s Model (1991) explains the role *attitudes* play in determining the teacher’s behaviour, but another significant element — *perceived behaviour control* — is also involved. For Ajzen, this refers to the individual’s perception of how much control they have over, for example, an innovation. It may refer to their perception of their own competency to perform, or it can refer to their perception of degree of

control of external factors, such as materials. In Taiwan, most of the information about an innovation is usually provided by the change agents via published booklets or in-service training programmes. Obviously teachers find the related information about the NT is not enough, and they have no control over it either (i.e. over the quantity and the quality of INSET and teachers' guides). This may explain why teachers' intentions to adopt the Communicative Approach tend to be weak, because they may perceive a lack of control on their part concerning the amount or clarity of information about the change to be implemented. In the following analyses, more factors concerning teachers' perceived behaviour control — the degree of control teachers believe they have over a changes in teaching practice — will be further specified.

Personal Stage

At the Personal Stage, teachers are concerned about the resources available and who will make the decisions. Over 80% of the teachers nominate 'not enough resources' as a major concern (see Table 16), and this perceived lack of necessary teaching aids may demotivate teachers in the implementation of the innovation and lead them to return to the traditional transmissive, teacher-centred type of teaching. According to my own experience in junior high school last year, there were 25 classes of first-year students in my institution but there were only two sets of ready-made flashcards, which had to be shared by eight teachers. Most of the time, it was very tiring to borrow the cards from other teachers so teachers either made their own flashcards or didn't bother to use them. This situation may reveal the practical aspect of implementing an innovation. Teachers may be concerned about their weak control over the resources available, which are mainly determined by either the institutions or the Ministry of Education (external factors). As a result, teachers' intentions to carry out the new methodology become weaker and the target innovation may fail to be successfully implemented.

Concerns	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Unanswered</i>
c. not enough resources (e.g. language labs, teaching aids, etc)	1/ 2.4%	5/ 12.2%	13/ 31.7%	21/ 51.3%	1/ 2.4%
d. not enough freedom to make a decision	9/ 22.0%	10/ 24.4%	14/ 34.1%	8/ 19.5%	0/ 0%
Total	n = 41 (100%)				

Table 16: Teacher concerns at the Personal Stage

Interestingly, the percentage of the subjects who think ‘not enough freedom to make a decision’ is a major concern (53.6%) is close to that of the subjects who are slightly concerned about it or not concerned at all (46.4%). It seems that not all of the teachers put a great premium on their freedom to make decisions. This may be attributed to the fact that in Taiwan educational policies have been long implemented at a national level in a top-down fashion (e.g. nationally prescribed textbooks, national entrance exams, etc). Therefore teachers do not usually have much freedom to make decisions and they may sometimes feel more secure not having to make decisions. Although it is widely accepted that ‘ownership’ plays a vital role in the success of an innovation, teachers in Taiwan do not seem to be very concerned about the notion that innovations must belong to them. Thus it may be difficult to conclude in this case that the lack of freedom to make a decision will lead to teachers’ weak intentions or ineffectiveness in adopting an innovation. Such culturally bound factors should be carefully taken into account.

Personal/Management Stage

The three concerns listed in Table 17 consist of features of both Personal and Management Stages. With particular respect to the Personal Stage, teachers are often concerned about personal adequacy in meeting new expectations. In this section, teachers demonstrate remarkable confidence in their professional abilities. For example, more than 65% of the teachers are not unduly concerned about their professional abilities to handle the NT. This may imply that teachers believe they have sufficient competence to cope with problems generated by new initiatives. However, as mentioned in teachers’ responses to Concern a, more than 60% of the teachers point out that they have not obtained enough information about the innovation. This apparent confidence in their competency, allied with the admission that they don’t know enough about the innovation, suggests that teachers may not actually be demonstrating the ‘professional abilities’ associated with the new communicative methodology. Similarly, over 65% of the subjects are not or are only slightly concerned about the influence of their personality as well as their previous teaching methods on the NT (Concerns f and g). This may again show teachers’ confidence in their own professional competence. However, if we look back on the results of the earlier section, only about 17% of the respondents think teachers at their

schools use the Communicative Approach very often. Thus we may question the 'quality' of teachers' practice of communicative language teaching.

Concerns	0	1	2	3	Un-answered
e. Not enough professional knowledge and skills to handle the NT	7/ 17.1%	20/ 48.8%	11/ 26.9%	2/ 4.8%	1/ 2.4%
f. I am more used to previous teaching methods	6/ 14.6%	22/ 53.7%	11/ 26.9%	2/ 4.8%	0/ 0%
g. My personality is not suitable for practising the Communicative Approach.	14/ 34.2%	16/ 39.0%	8/ 19.5%	3/ 7.3%	0/ 0%
Total	n = 41 (100%)				

Table 17: Teacher concerns at the Personal/Management Stage

Another point concerns the relationship between what teachers believe and what they really do. Do they 'practice what they preach'? As we have been implying, the answer may be a negative one. If teachers believe they are professional enough to deal with the innovation, what may be the factors affecting the quality of implementation? Further concerns relevant to this question will be specified in the next section.

Management Stage

At the Management Stage, teachers' concerns focus on the implementation of the intervention, and issues like time management and organisation come to the fore. According to the results in Table 18, teachers do not express much concern over the influence of personal affairs or other workload upon their teaching and reflection (Concerns h, i and j). However, a much stronger concern is indicated in relation to the NT itself. More than 70% of the respondents express concern that the content of the NT (e.g. its difficulty, the workload involved, the insufficiently communicative nature of the activities, etc.) affects their teaching. Furthermore, an even higher percentage (over 80%) of the subjects stress their concerns over such issues as the rushing of the lessons, class size, mixed ability classes and the focus of exams. These unfavourable circumstances concerning the teaching environment are elements that teachers have little, if any, control over. Hence it stands to reason that teachers will not have strong intentions to adopt the innovation if these uncontrollable and negative factors are not removed from the context. As a result, it is romantic or naïve for curriculum designers / change agents to say that with determination and enthusiasm teachers should be able to overcome the difficulties generated from the innovation. Instead, the change agents

must create a favourable environment in which teachers do not need to implement the change against all odds.

Concerns	0	1	2	3	Un-answered
h. Not enough time and energy to prepare lessons due to personal affairs (e.g. family, children, etc)	17/ 41.4%	13/ 31.7%	11/ 26.9%	0/ 0%	0/ 0%
i. Not enough time and energy to prepare lessons due to other workload (tutoring, administrative work, etc.)	13/ 31.7%	13/ 31.7%	11/ 26.9%	4/ 9.7%	0/ 0%
j. Not enough time to reflect upon my teaching methods	8/ 19.5%	17/ 41.4%	12/ 29.3%	3/ 7.4%	1/ 2.4%
k. The NT itself (e.g. too difficult, too much workload, the activities are not 'communicative' enough)	2/ 4.8%	9/ 22.0	19/ 46.3%	11/ 26.9%	0/ 0%
l. The stress of rushing the lessons in order to finish the syllabus	2/ 4.8%	3/ 7.4%	14/ 34.1%	22/ 53.7%	0/ 0%
m. Class size	3/ 7.3%	4/ 9.8%	6/ 14.6%	28/ 68.3%	0/ 0%
n. Mixed ability class	0/ 0%	5/ 12.2%	5/ 12.2%	31/ 75.6%	0/ 0%
o. The focus of the exams does not change a lot (e.g. still very grammar-based)	3/ 7.3%	4/ 9.8%	14/ 34.1%	20/ 48.8%	0/ 0%
Total	n = 41 (100%)				

Table 18: Teacher concerns at the Management Stage

Impact and Collaboration Stages

Aside from the Management Stage, teachers may also show their concern regarding the impact on the students and their families as well as their collaboration with colleagues and institutions.

Concerns	0	1	2	3	Un-answered
p. Parents' attitudes	20/ 48.8%	15/ 36.6%	5/ 12.2%	1/ 2.4%	0/ 0%
q. Students attitudes	11/ 26.9%	20/ 48.8%	8/ 19.5%	2/ 4.8%	0/ 0%
r. students' marks in exams	7/ 17.1%	13/ 31.7%	13/ 31.7%	8/ 19.5%	0/ 0%
Total	n = 41 (100%)				

Table 19: Teacher concerns at the Impact Stage

At the Impact Stage, teachers may begin to consider the effects of the innovation on the students and their families. Meanwhile, the feedback gained may be used by

teachers to improve their implementation. From the results, it is surprising to find that less than a quarter of the subjects are concerned about parents' and students' attitudes (Concern p.: 14.6%; Concern q.: 24.3%). However, students' marks in the exams are emphasised more — over 50% of the respondents are concerned about students' performance in the exams. This implies teachers may use students' marks rather than their students' attitudes to modify their teaching towards the innovation. Obviously, the tradition of exam-oriented English language teaching in Taiwan continues to play an influential part in teacher concerns even though the Communicative Approach has been implemented for three years.

At the Collaboration Stage, teachers focus on working with others to implement the innovation. From the results in Table 20, teachers are surprisingly unaffected by attitudes of their colleagues or the administrative system, indicating that perhaps these teachers are more professionally independent than might be expected. However, the data elicited in the open-ended question regarding collaboration needs to be taken into account, and will be considered below.

Concerns	0	1	2	3	Un-answered
s. Colleagues' attitudes	16/ 39.0%	13/ 31.7%	9/ 22.0%	3/ 7.3%	0/ 0%
t. The pressure from the administrative system at school	18/ 43.9%	13/ 31.7%	7/ 17.2%	2/ 4.8%	1/ 2.4%
Total	n = 41 (100%)				

Table 20: Teacher concerns at the Collaboration Stage

Behaviour theories concerned with the development of attitudes and beliefs stress the importance of *subjective norms* in determining one's behaviour. In other words, what the individual believes *others* think about the target behaviour is as influential in determining our behaviour as our personal beliefs. It is widely accepted that colleagues, administrative staff, students and their parents are the 'significant others' for teachers. Nevertheless, according to our results, teachers in Taiwan seem to be much more concerned about and affected by the whole 'external system' (e.g. syllabus, textbooks, class size, exams, etc.) than the 'significant others' around them (although 'people' and the 'system' are closely associated with each other in the network of education). Indeed, for policy makers, the change of the 'system' seems to be more attainable and more effective during the implementation of an innovation.

Open-ended questions

Two open-ended questions were asked to elicit richer data from teachers, in further exploration of their change process and their collaboration with colleagues.

The change process

In the first open-ended question (with two parts), teachers were asked to reflect upon the changes they had been through recently: *(1) In the last month, have you done anything differently in class? Please describe it briefly.* 11 teachers answered this question and their responses were as follows:

1. Using <i>My Numbers</i> (published by DK) to teach the sentence pattern 'How many . . . are there?'
2. More group work is used.
3. Using more real objects as teaching aids. More group discussion and role play.
4. I spend less time giving lectures but more time allowing students to teach students. And I am just like a helper or facilitator.
5. After the role play games, I give students tests immediately. I do this to prevent the situation that they may just want to have fun and ignore the grammatical rules.
6. I have students discuss the questions of the exam in groups. If they can not work out themselves, I will offer my help.
7. I put more emphasis on listening and speaking skills.
8. I have students prepare the related materials by themselves.
9. In order to finish the syllabus, I need to rush the lessons so my teaching tends to be more grammar-based because I have no time to carry out communicative activities.
10. I use more visual aids.
11. Students are asked to complete some mini-projects in which they may learn English through authentic materials like recipes and advertisements.

Table 21: Teachers' change in the last month (1)

Seven of these respondents replied to the follow-up question, *Will you do it again? Why? Why not?*, and these responses are presented below (not matched with the above initial responses):

1. If necessary, I will.
2. Yes, but it depends on students' academic performance.
3. Yes, it really helps those who are very shy.
4. If I need to rush the lessons, I will turn to the traditional grammar-based approach.
5. Yes. Students' positive feedback is motivating to me.
6. Yes, but it depends on the time available.
7. Yes, because students become more involved in class.

Table 22: Teachers' change in the last month (2)

When teachers are asked to reflect upon their teaching carried out recently, they may describe change they have experienced more accurately. As may be seen in Table 21,

teachers indeed appear to have made some changes due to the NT. For example, they utilise more group work, visual aids and authentic materials. However, we can still sense the influence of the traditional teacher-centred approach — for example, giving tests to make students ‘calm down’ right after the role-play games (Response 5) — in order to control students as much as possible. In addition, ‘rushing the lessons to finish the syllabus’ seems to be a major concern/stress expressed by teachers repeatedly (in Table 22). It is clear that teachers may choose to interpret the communicative textbook with a grammatical approach if they are not allowed to take their time presenting the materials. When asked whether they will make the changes again, teachers’ concerns are mostly based on students’ feedback and time available, which conforms to two stages of concerns in SoCQ — the Impact Stage and the Personal Stage.

Collaboration with colleagues

The second open-ended question aimed to reveal the realistic situation at school with regard to the way teachers collaborate with each other. The data were analysed on a school basis. It is very interesting to find that teachers from the same school hold extremely diverse views on ‘collaboration’. The three schools are termed Schools A, B and C below. Two separate boxes indicate different standpoints expressed by teachers in the same school in answer to the request to ‘Please describe briefly how the English language teachers in your school collaborate with one another. (For example, do you have a supportive team spirit or do teachers work mostly on their own?)’.

School A:

1. Good atmosphere. We discuss problems with each other.
2. Generally, we get along very well. Teachers have sufficient professional competence. We cooperate when we need to design the exam questions together.
3. If there is something uncertain in teaching or tests, we usually exchange our opinions about it.
4. We have seminars once a semester, but teachers usually take it as a routine and we hardly exchange opinions about teaching.
5. We seldom collaborate.
6. We do not have any fixed patterns of collaboration.
7. The team spirit is nearly zero. Teachers usually work on their own.

School B:

- | |
|--|
| 1. We share the visual aids and ideas about teaching with each other. We get along very well. |
| 2. We discuss problems about teaching. |
| 3. The team spirit is good. We exchange ideas about the materials or tests. |
| 4. There are no English teachers in my office, so I hardly cooperate with others except for the discussion about the controversial answers of the exams. |
| 5. It is far away from office to office, so the team spirit is just ok. |

School C:

- | |
|--|
| 1. We discuss with each other when we have problems. |
| 2. Harmonious atmosphere. |
| 3. The team spirit is generally good. |
| 4. We work together in helping students prepare for the exams. |
| 5. We are nice to each other. |
| 6. Not much interaction/collaboration. We only talk over the problems generated from the exams. As for the methods of teaching, we mostly work on our own. |
| 7. There is no systemic collaboration. There is only consultation between good friends. |

It is perhaps to be expected that teachers will take different stances on a certain issue. However, teachers' diverse attitudes towards collaboration may reveal some realities in school. First of all, most teachers seem to define the term 'collaboration' at a very superficial level — exchanging ideas when controversies about the exam occur or when they have questions about the textbooks. Higher-level collaboration such as discussing the nature of the language teaching process, discussing lesson content and methodology, setting up teaching goals or co-teaching appear to be seldom realised at school. Moreover, some teachers think 'getting along very well' represents 'good collaboration'. Secondly, a systematic pattern of quality collaboration at school has not really been developed. In Taiwan, there are usually seminars for teachers at school once to three times every semester. The aim of these seminars is to act as a channel for teachers to communicate about teaching methodology and approach in order to upgrade teachers' professional competence. However, according to the research results and my personal experience, 'seminars' do not contain any research/academic elements and they are merely regarded as routine 'meetings'. Teachers perhaps chat about students' marks in the exams and decide on which workbook should be used for students' homework during the holiday. In addition, the administrative staff make announcements about the current policies in the seminars.

In other words, seminars do not function to develop collaboration amongst staff and they are usually carried out at a very superficial level.

Concerning the implementation of the NT, regular seminars at school are valuable if they can provide opportunities for visiting speakers to present the Communicative Approach and for teachers to exchange ideas and doubts. Thus, teachers may be more likely to relate the theory to practice and do not need to work in isolation. In relation to Ajzen's (1991) claims that *subjective norms*, that is our perceptions of what those around us think about a particular behaviour, are one of the important components determining an individual's behaviour, if there is a positive collaborative spirit in school, teachers may *believe* their colleagues will work together on implementing an innovation. As a result, some frustration expressed by teachers may decrease and the innovation may be more effectively adopted. Nevertheless, we cannot just sit there waiting for a 'good team spirit' to develop in a school. As suggested above, setting up a 'system' may be more easily achieved than starting with changing teachers' 'beliefs and attitudes'. This 'collaborative system', in my opinion, may be more effective if it is conducted through power-coercive strategies and monitored continuously by the change agents. In Taiwan, I suspect this may be culturally appropriate and hence the innovation can be more efficiently implemented.

Free Comments

In the final part of the questionnaire, the subjects were given space to add their comments. These were as follows:

1. If possible, we should often invite some experts to demonstrate the teaching skills to all the teachers at school.
2. Native English language teachers can be invited to give presentations.
3. There should be sufficient language labs and computers at school to assist ELT.
4. Students do not have enough time to practice in class because of: not enough sessions; large class size; unclear explanation and instructions given by the NT. So it is not easy for the NT to be successfully implemented.
5. Hours of sessions each week should be increased.
6. Seminars in each semester tend to be regarded as routines and teachers cannot actually benefit from them. The longer you teach, the more easily you 'get stuck'. So 'change' can provide an opportunity for teachers to reconsider the values and directions of ELT.
7. The principles underlying the NT are beneficial but the intensive syllabus and timetable frustrate the low-achieving students.
8. Sometimes teachers may compromise in certain issues (not to express the actual feeling) to maintain the good relationship with each other.

Judging by these comments, teachers seem to hold positive attitudes towards the NT, but some unfavourable external factors are seen to affect the success of the implementation. Several concerns discussed earlier are repeated and stressed here. These include quality of seminars, availability of resources, timetable and syllabus, class size and collaboration in school. Such comments reflect teachers' actual 'voices', which are worth probing and should be heard by the change agents.

Conclusion

In terms of stages of concerns, we can see that for most teachers involved with implementation of the NT, concerns remain strong at all the stages. There is little indication of teachers moving through the stages in a linear fashion: particularly alarming is the fact that even after three years, teachers remain very concerned about their own grasp of the innovation itself although they seem to believe they are professionally competent enough to deal with it. Concerns over a very dense syllabus and the consequent problems in 'rushing' through the material remain very real, as do concerns connected to implementing a communicative approach with mixed ability classes. However, it needs to be stressed here that all the research results are based on the subjects' self-reports — and so, they may not always be accurate. And this also demonstrates the elusive nature of measuring teacher change.

In business, if a new product does not sell, it is not usually the customers who blamed. The 'product' itself will be examined carefully in order to find out what leads to its failure in the market. However, in education there is rather less evaluation of the innovation itself and how the process of innovation is carried out. Ironically but commonly, teachers are regarded as responsible for many failures in innovation. As may be seen from our results and discussion above, factors other than teachers alone may influence the effects of the innovation strongly. In education, a successful innovation must be implemented through systemic change and if the Communicative Approach in ELT is the objective of the innovation, the alteration of textbooks (a single part of the system) will be insufficient on its own to bring about a long-term change in methodology.

A carefully planned strategy involving the whole educational context should be included in the innovation. In addition, this may be more effective if conducted by the change agents (e.g. the Ministry of Education) in a top-down manner. My stress on

the power-coercive strategy is not an attempt to downgrade the professional awareness of teachers in Taiwan, but I think it may be more culturally/contextually appropriate since teachers in Taiwan have played a relatively passive role in educational change for decades. They may be more accustomed to expecting changes to be imposed from external forces rather than initiating the changes from within. This does not deny the need to provide user-centred INSET but such INSET will only be effective if the unfavourable external factors are also addressed. Ensuring that sufficient necessary materials are available for teachers is one concern expressed by a large majority of teachers. In Taiwan, junior high school teachers usually have a heavy workload other than teaching; and will have little time or incentive to produce their own teaching aids. Similar external issues such as large classes sizes, mixed ability classes and the focus on entrance examinations make implementation of any new approach difficult but not impossible. But this would demand a greater understanding of the new approach than is possible without greatly increased investment in appropriate INSET.

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Appendix 1 Features pertaining to use of textbooks before the NT

1. Learners attend to structure and form of language more than meaning.
2. Learners need to memorise structure-based dialogues.
3. Language items are not necessarily contextualised.
4. Mastery of language rather than effective communication is sought.
5. Native-speaker-like rather than comprehensible pronunciation is sought.
6. Detailed and explicit grammatical explanation.
7. Teacher-centred (e.g. long teacher talking time)
8. Errors must be prevented at all costs.
9. Learners are expected to interact with the language system embodied in machines or controlled materials rather than other people.
10. Varieties of language are recognised but not emphasised.

(adapted from Finocchiaro and Brumfit 1983: 91–3)

Appendix 2 The NT: Aims, features, contents and principles for teaching

Aims:

- (1) To develop learners' basic English listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills;
- (2) To develop learners' interest in learning English and effective study attitudes and strategies; *and*
- (3) To increase learners' understanding of domestic and international society and culture.

Features:

- (1) The NT adopts the Communicative Approach. The major organising principle is based on 'functions' and 'topics', while 'structures' are included as a supplementary component.
- (2) The presentation of structures is contextualised and conforms to the principles of pragmatics.
- (3) The four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are equally emphasised.

Contents:

The contents include 'Dialogue', 'Reading', 'Practice', 'Structure' and 'Activity'.

Principles for Teaching:

- (1) Language System
 - a. Pronunciation:
'Phonics' is introduced prior to 'Phonetic Symbols'. Learners are made familiar with principles for pronunciation through oral practice instead of memorising rules.
 - b. Vocabulary:
Vocabulary should be presented in context and teachers do not need to supplement with irrelevant vocabulary.
 - c. Grammar:
Learners should develop the ability of 'using' grammar in English instead of 'explaining and analysing' grammatical rules.
- (2) Language skills
 - a. Listening:
This can be integrated with speaking, reading and writing skills. Teachers should use English to teach in the classroom to enhance learners' listening ability.
 - b. Speaking:
This should be integrated with listening skills. Effective communication (or fluency) rather than accuracy should be encouraged. Avoid overt error correction.
 - c. Reading:
Focus should be placed on comprehension rather than over-analysis of grammatical structures.
 - d. Writing:
Activities should follow a gradual procedure (from short sentences to longer sentences, from simple dialogues to longer passages).