Changes in the Intensive English Program
at the Lebanese American University
in Beirut, Lebanon

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Abstract

The Curriculum of the Intensive English Program (IEP) established in the mid- twentieth century at the Lebanese American University (LAU) has been reviewed several times. However, since the 1970s, the minor changes that have been implemented to the program structure and content needed to be reviewed in relation to students' changing needs in post-war Lebanon. The present study through action research is an attempt to identify relevant program weaknesses and propose solutions. This study overviews what the program used to be and focuses on the changes that occurred and were implemented in the past years and up to Summer 1999. The basis of the research undertaken at the university is the data collected through questionnaires, interviews, observation, document analysis, and discussion with staff and students. Thus, through triangulation, a multi-method approach, was achieved.

The findings show that throughout the various cycles of the action research (participatory and emancipatory), the program was slowly but surely modified. Innovations were implemented, evaluated, and changed; thus, from a skill-oriented syllabus to a task-based language approach with an emphasis on academic writing skills, a huge step far from the traditional approach in teaching has been reached. Learners' needs are prioritized, and integration of all language skills is adopted in the program. Collaboration among the students, IEP faculty, and the researcher has strengthened the team spirit established because of the action research. Not only did the changes trigger the motivation of the learners but it also allowed the IEP staff to become more innovative in their approach to language teaching.

However, and action research is a never-ending cycle; this research is far from being completed. The years to come should see new changes in order to continue what has already been achieved.

To My Mother

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AUB	American University of Beirut
CARN	Collaborative Action Research Network
CERD	Center for Educational Research Development
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EEE	English Entrance Exam
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
GCC	Grammar Communicative Competence
IE	Intensive English
IEP	Intensive English Program
KG	Kindergarten
LAU	Lebanese American University
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
L3	Third Language
NCERD	National Center for Educational Research Development
RCV	Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary
TESOL	Teaching of English for Speakers of Other Languages
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
WS	Writing Skills

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Chapter One
Research Context

1.1 Introduction

Innovative English language teaching and learning has long been on various academic institutions' agendas. Since the days of King Alfred in the ninth century (Graddol et al., 1996), books have been translated in English so that people would gain the knowledge and education they might lack. Nowadays, in a world that is constantly changing, it is crucial for researchers and language teachers to pursue their goals in finding relevant innovative methods to help the learners acquire the language. This is true of Lebanon, as it is elsewhere.

After sixteen years of civil war in Lebanon that stopped many innovative changes in language teaching, among other things, the country began to regain stability in its safety. The time for revising educational programs became a priority. This study is a result of an emergent need to review the approach, methods, and syllabuses used in a university language program.

The setting is the Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut, Lebanon. The program to be reviewed is the Intensive English Program at the university. The research conducted is an action research one which allows for study from various facets. The methods used are questionnaires, interviews, observations, the study of documents, needs analysis, and evaluation over a period of two years (with six different cohorts of students). The various steps of changes the program underwent are explained, interpreted, and evaluated.

LAU has a reputation of striving for excellence, to stay up to date with recent methods in education. The administration not only welcomes innovations, but also tries to implement them as efficiently as possible in order to maintain high international standards. This study, conducted in the second half of the nineties (1997-1999), is essential, for it examines critically the existing program and suggests changes that many teachers believe were due for long time.

Throughout its history, Lebanon has been known as the gateway to the West (Malik, 1970; Jamjoom, 1975) and bilingualism and multilingualism were/are still widespread; thus, languages, other than the native one, Arabic, have always been important. Bilingualism and multilingualism have a great impact on language

teaching and learning in Lebanon. Therefore, the language situation in the country is outlined.

The study is divided in seven chapters. Chapter one deals with the research context focusing on the language background in Lebanon and the LAU context. Chapter two emphasizes the past and present syllabuses followed in the Intensive English Program at the Lebanese American University. Third, action research with its characteristics and potential criticisms is discussed with the steps followed in needs analysis and evaluation. Chapter four outlines the research process and its application to the IEP at LAU. In chapter five, the various methods used to conduct the research are stated. In chapter six, the findings are analyzed, and the recommendations, limitations, and the steps suggested to be taken after this study are highlighted in chapter seven.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The Intensive English Program (IEP) has undergone 'limited' changes in the past few years. There is clear recognition that a review is needed in order to improve the IEP to prepare the students with their various linguistic backgrounds to cope better with their university coursework. This study has a practical significance as it shows how most IEP students and faculty members regard the program and examines their perceptions of the weak and strong points of the course. It questions the approach (comparable to IEP programs in the United States in the mid-fifties) followed so far at LAU. It argues that the feasibility and success of establishing the program in a different setting needs investigation.

Although half a century has passed without major, 'drastic' changes, this study is not only long overdue, but it is extremely urgent. In a multilingual context and with LAU learners coming from a variety of school systems and countries, the IEP cannot remain in its present form. New approaches have been widely adopted in the ELT world, and they should be studied, selectively adapted to, and implemented in the IEP situation in LAU. It is proposed that the key to success is to build on team teaching developments while keeping learners' demands in mind. Though this action research study can be 'labelled' a case study because of its specific setting in a particular program, and with its specific group of learners, the research findings can be applied first, in other LAU campuses (Byblos and Sidon), since the student body is similar, adopted in different universities in Lebanon, most of which have comparable IE programs, and finally it could be adapted in other multilingual countries such as Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Malaysia, Singapore, Malta where English preparation courses play a similar role.

This study shows how through action research (participatory and emancipatory) some innovations were implemented, evaluated, and changed. This might in turn lead to the more general use of a different approach to language teaching at the tertiary level. It is urgent that the material used for the teaching/learning process should become more meaningful and tangible to both teaching staff and students; also, the use of the new technologies and communication media should be updated and made relevant to graduates for future service and knowledge-based professions.

1.3 Lebanese Context

Lebanon's historical background has had various repercussions on the educational system in the country throughout the centuries. In a country where the majority of the inhabitants are bilingual, if not trilingual, overviewing the various stages of the Lebanese educational system is essential as this shows the impact of foreign language teaching in this country.

Lebanon is located on the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea. It is a country in the Middle East, with an area of 10,452 square kilometres. Its strategic location has long made it a cross-roads between the East and the West (Malik, 1970; Jamjoom, 1975). Lebanon is part of the Arab World culturally, economically, and geographically, yet multilingualism and multiculturalism have always been widespread in the country (Jarrar, et al., 1988). This is what gives the country its unique flavour. Throughout the centuries, the country has seen many invaders. The list notably includes the Phoenicians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Greeks among others. The country was ruled by the Romans for a while, and then from 1516 until World War I, Lebanon became part of the Ottoman Empire. Afterwards, the country was under the French mandate until 1943 when Lebanon achieved independence (Jalabert, 1970; Crawford, 1970; Jarrar et al., 1988). All these invasions had their repercussions on the local inhabitants, particularly minority groups, who sought the mountainous areas as a refuge. Throughout the years of successive occupations, the Lebanese, with their multilingual and multicultural traditions, were still able to keep some autonomy.

The distinctiveness of different groups has been partly maintained through education. Each religious group educated its youth according to its beliefs and traditions (Atiyeh, 1970; Kurani, 1971). Inati (1999) claims that all these groups created a huge social gap among the Lebanese because of the education methods that each followed. For instance, Protestant and Orthodox families sent their children to English medium schools; Catholics and Maronites to French medium schools; and Muslims to state schools where the teaching of the second language is not much emphasised (Abu Ghazaleh, 1990). Lebanese social groups achieved a multi-ethnic coexistence (Abou, 1970; Gordon, 1980). This led to conflicting notions of identity, loyalty, and nationalism among Lebanese people. In fact, some politicians, educators, and others believe that the open education system which

allowed missionaries to preach while teaching was a major factor behind the civil war that the country suffered from 1975 to 1990 (Inati, 1999).

1.3.1 Schools: The National Curriculum

In 1636, the French were the first to open their schools in Lebanon (Crawford, 1970; Shaaban and Ghaith, 1996); then, in the nineteenth century, many missionaries (American, French, German, British, and Italian among others) opened schools in the area to expose the Lebanese to their religion and modern teaching methods. As a result, Lebanon became a leader in education in the region (Kurani, 1971); Lebanese education was sought by non-Lebanese living in the surrounding countries, yet this intrusion affected Lebanon in more than one area, and especially in education (McDowell, 1984). In 1920, under the French Mandate, although the first Lebanese curriculum was prepared, it replicated the French one. French was recognised as the official language, and it became compulsory in schools (Atiyeh, 1970). Even many Anglo-Saxon schools shifted to a French program, but schools that were closely affiliated to a religious group refused to change. In 1920, the Lebanese government with the approval of the ruling authorities decided to

1. establish primary and middle schooling in major towns,
2. offer teacher training for primary teachers,
3. replicate the French educational system, but teach half the curriculum in Arabic and the other half in French,
4. use French as the primary first language and the official language in the country in addition to Arabic,
5. introduce official exams at the end of the primary, middle, and secondary sectors, and
6. allow students to sit for the French Baccalaureate instead of the Lebanese one granting full equivalence.

(Jarrar et al., 1988)

These six points supposedly controlled and unified the standards of education because all students studying in Lebanon, whether in public or private schools, have to sit for the same official exams. However, the government failed to consider that the questions for the exams would be prepared (and corrected later) by the teachers of the public sector. This created ill feeling: some of the official exam questions were emphasised more than others in those schools that were taught by the teachers who prepared the official questions. As a result, the percentage of the students who succeeded in the official exam was higher in the public schools than in the private sector. Of course, the statistical results regarding pass rates are biased;

they are neither valid nor reliable. Little if nothing was done to remedy this problem.

In 1943, when Lebanon became an independent state, the education system was slightly modified. Arabic was declared the only official language, and it became compulsory in schools; however, both English and French were considered primary foreign languages in public schools. Private schools followed the same trend while some used another prime language. For instance, Armenian schools, which are many in the area, used Armenian as the first language (Gordon, 1980). Others used different foreign languages; for example, the German school taught German. Public schools entered the field of secondary education in 1951. Schooling was offered to both boys and girls, but coeducational classes were avoided especially at the secondary level (Kurani, 1971). Private schools also shunned a coeducational system, though during the civil war years, many schools had to have mixed classes, but in the 1990s most schools shifted to mixed classes. However, there are still educational inequalities as public schools are labelled 'schools for the poor'. This attribution dragged the educational public sector down, and the gap between the different citizen classes became wider and deeper as those parents who could do so sent their children to private schools (Inati, 1999).

Then, in 1968 the curriculum was revised (Lebanese National Curriculum, 1968), and modifications were implemented in 1971. The primary official examinations were discontinued, and the Centre for Educational Research Development (CERD) was established. The Centre's responsibilities are to revise the national curriculum and conduct studies to ensure the development of education in the country (Kraidy, 1985).

However, in 1975 civil war broke out, and the development of educational programs ceased. Many educational buildings and schools were destroyed; schools were closed for months at a time. Whenever possible, huge numbers of students were gathered in the same classrooms in two different shifts: some students would attend in the early mornings and others early afternoons. The government had to take this measure as many schools were completely destroyed, and the remaining ones could not accommodate all the registered students. The Civil War ended in 1990; then in 1994, the CERD's name changed to the National Centre for Educational Research Development (NCERD) (Shaaban, 1997).

In 1995, a new framework for education was prepared, and the Lebanese national curriculum was revised (the framework for the new teaching curriculum in Lebanon, 1995). The government has not apparently tackled the long-standing basic problem of the national curriculum. Though one of the main issues was to stress the teaching and use of the national language, Arabic, up to 2000, nothing was done. The number of language class hours is exactly the same for Arabic as for foreign languages, (i.e., English or French), throughout the primary, middle, and secondary sectors (Inati, 1999). In fact, the state, aided by the NCERD, had devised a curriculum where English and French are supposedly no longer in competition but where Arabic is labelled the 'native language' (Lebanese National Curriculum, 1995).

The Arabic language, mainly the spoken form, is used in every day communication, as "the language of the emotion and instinct," (Malik, 1970, p.208). English is the 'language of business,' and French is the symbol of 'class' and 'culture' (Malik, 1970; Shaaban, 1997). The old programs were reshuffled, and new subjects were added. Some change was quite overdue as for the previous decades, the curriculum, which replicated the French one, had not changed at all while the French one itself had often been reviewed. Thus, in the revised Lebanese national curriculum, some subjects received more emphasis (e.g. technology, computers) while others were left untouched. In the area of foreign language teaching, a committee had to produce the curricula of three major streams: English/French as a second language, English/French as a third language, and English/French as a vocational subject (Shaaban, 1997). A theme-based curriculum was developed; the emphasis was on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as much as on the promotion of cultural understanding, the learning of cooperation among students, and the development of language proficiency (Shaaban and Ghaith, 1997). The key emphasis in all three streams is on communication, not only in the second language but for all content areas. These new ideas are still being implemented but as yet they have not been fully translated into reality. For example, the government decided to include a full technology part in the new curriculum, but many teachers are still not trained, and some schools can not cope with the expenses involved. The Ministry of Education has set the school curriculum which follows a spiral

approach: a topic is introduced in one cycle, is expanded in other classes, then branches out in higher levels. This continuum still needs to be implemented.

After 1971, the government chose to use textbooks produced locally by the NCERD as the main books for all public schools. In fact, a committee of subject specialists, mainly lecturers from various universities in the country, wrote these textbooks. Since 1995, the NCERD has tried to involve as many professionals as possible in this textbook writing process to avoid complaints and pressure from influential people. Unfortunately, the textbook writing was done over too short a period. In addition, there has not been enough piloting of the textbooks, and some of the 'specialists' are not experienced ELT material writers and/or practitioners. This lack of expertise in writing school textbooks, especially books for the early, primary, and middle levels has led to new textbooks being quite theoretical and lacking elements that would attract and motivate children to read and enjoy learning. In a few years (five years or so), Intensive English (IE) prospect students, attending the IEP, may be envisaged as a generation that used these new textbooks, with less need for improvement regarding language proficiency.

Private schools can at present choose any textbook as long as the course book follows the government syllabuses. The only exception is the civics book. All schools, whether public or private, have to use the civics textbook produced by the NCERD (Jarrar et al., 1988). With the reform and the 1995 modifications, the government decided that not only the civics book should be used in all schools but also the history one (Lebanese National Curriculum, 1995), given that the history of Lebanon has been written many times and from different perspectives. This policy attempts to narrow the existing gap between social and religious groups and introduce balanced views among the learners. On leaving schools, students in general have different options: to go to technical schools, work, or seek higher education. The Lebanese community as a whole encourages its youth to pursue their higher education as some assurance for employment and financial security. Thus, it is natural for the majority of high schoolers to apply to the various universities in the country.

1.3.2 The Universities

This section gives a brief social and historical background of the American University of Beirut and the Lebanese American University. These are English medium universities. The section briefly introduces nine other universities or colleges to sketch a background of language use in higher education in Lebanon.

In 1866, the first American University was founded; formerly the Syrian Protestant College, it is now known as the American University of Beirut (AUB). Its courses are taught in English. However, in its early years, the AUB used to teach all subject matter in Arabic, for the aim of the missionaries was religious. It was totally against their philosophy to promote and use languages other than the mother tongue in the country in which they were preaching (Gordon, 1980). However, they faced two problems:

- first, not many qualified teachers had mastered the Arabic language at that time, and
- second, scientific books written in Arabic were scarce. Translating the books was also considered to be out of the question because by the time the translation is finished, the information found in these books might be obsolete.

Thus, the shift from an Arabic medium to an English medium university was then necessary (Abu Ghazaleh, 1990).

AUB was solely for men until 1905 when a Nursing School was established, and women were allowed to join that school. In fact it was in 1921 that the first female student, heavily veiled, and accompanied by her husband, joined AUB (Jamjoom, 1975). However, mixed classes at the beginning of the century were also a problem in higher education. Since Lebanon is a multi-religious country in the Arab World, this issue was important. Moslem girls were not permitted to attend the same classes as men. As a solution, the American Mission in the United States added a two year program to the High School Curriculum at the American School of Girls, founded in 1835; it was the first school for girls in the Middle East (Malik, 1970). In 1924, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in New York decided to separate the two, so the Board established the American Junior College (The Freshman English Class, 1940). The name of the college has changed several times - now it is known as the Lebanese American University (LAU).

The program at the college was a two-year Liberal Arts course, and the aim of the founders was not only to develop religious education, but also to spread American education in the Middle East. Many girls enrolled. Among them were daughters of prominent Arab leaders, sheikhs, and ministers, who finally accepted the fact that education is as important to girls as it is to boys, so they sent their daughters to the university (The Freshman English Class, 1940). From 1924 up to the present, various changes have occurred. The two-year liberal arts college developed to a full four-year program; the women's college became coeducational; the liberal arts college evolved to a full-fledged university with professional schools and some postgraduate programs. LAU has thus undergone many changes in its organisation (Lebanese American University, 1999-2000). This university is currently based in three campuses, with an established site in Beirut, a newer expanding site at Byblos, and a smaller campus situated in Sidon (see Fig.1). LAU Beirut is the site of the present research.

Fig. 1: Map of Lebanon with Beirut, Byblos, and Sidon
(The three campuses of LAU are in Beirut, Byblos, and Sidon)

Alongside LAU and AUB, there are other universities in Lebanon, the most important of which is the *Lebanese University*. This state university was founded in 1952, nearly a century after AUB. It is directly supervised and financed by the government (Jarrar et al., 1988). Students pay nominal fees, and most instruction is free. It offers courses in French and English. Next, *Saint Joseph University*, founded by the French Jesuit Missionaries in 1875, uses French as the main language of instruction (Gordon, 1980). However, the administration has lately decided to use English for some courses. Then, the *Beirut Arab University*, founded in 1960 by the Muslim Philanthropic and Benevolent Society of Beirut and sponsored by Egypt, uses Arabic as the medium of instruction (Gordon, 1980); however, in some science courses, English may be used. Other universities are *Haigazian College* where at least 60% of the students are Armenian, but most courses are given in English. *Notre Dame University* is run by Catholic priests, and courses are taught in English. *Balamand University*, in the North of the country, has English and French streams and is run by the Orthodox Church. In the past few years, many other colleges and universities set roots in Lebanon such as *The Middle East College* set by the Adventist Church, the *Saint Esprit Kaslik University* which is under the auspices of the Maronites church, the *Antonine University* run by the Catholic priests, etc. Students report that the tuition is affordable, and the level of education is supposedly acceptable. So far, however, these institutions have not been completely evaluated by accreditation boards or other bodies. Few students have yet graduated from these establishments, but one should probably wait for the first few cohorts of learners not only to graduate from these new institutions but to establish themselves in society and show their expertise and ability before evaluating the programs and the teaching methods used.

AUB and LAU follow American type programs, and the language of instruction is English. However, at least at LAU, all students have to take some Arabic language courses - two at the freshman level and one at sophomore level. Since some students might not have studied Arabic in schools, substitute basic standard Arabic courses are offered. Though one might expect students who come from a French medium school to go automatically to the Lebanese University or to the French one, many decide to join either AUB or LAU. In fact, in 1995, from the top twenty feeder schools in Lebanon to LAU, thirteen follow an English medium

program and seven a French one for the Beirut campus, while the reverse proportion is true for the Byblos campus (LAU, 1994-1995). The Sidon campus was not included in this study because of the low student enrolment there. If students have financial problems, they might decide to go to *Notre Dame University* or *Haigazian College* as both follow an American program, but their tuition fees are less that half of LAU or AUB fees. However, financial problems may be solved at LAU because students in need can apply to work in return for financial aid at the university.

This general review of the educational historical background in Lebanon shows some existing conflict between different social and linguistic groups in the country. Throughout the years, the education gap between social classes has become quite noticeable. Many parents are becoming aware of the problem, and they believe the best way to overcome it is to invest in the education of their children. They tend not only to choose an American medium university, but also the best accredited ones, notably AUB or LAU, even if these two universities are the most expensive ones.

1.4 Bilingual and Multilingual Context

Lebanon is a country where bilingualism and multilingualism are widespread. Thus, any study related to ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) in Lebanon should take account of this especially since it is a controversial issue that has been widely investigated (see for example, Dulay et al, 1982; Lambert, 1990; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Hammerly, 1991; Romaine, 1995; Ellis, 1997a; Tucker, 1998).

Most IEP students come from a bilingual or multilingual background. This topic is essential to the study to shed light to many of the language problems these students are facing at tertiary levels.

1.4.1 Bilingualism and Multilingualism in Lebanon

In Lebanon each language is used for a different purpose (Shaaban, 1997). Arabic is used for daily communication, English for business purposes, and French for culture with possibly other languages like Armenian being used at home or socially, as well. In Lebanon, the three main languages are not equal in status, but each one is used according to the immediate situation. Also, in the Lebanese context, there is much code-switching, code-mixing, and interference between languages. However, little research has been done regarding the interference of the third language (L3) in spoken language (see William and Hammarberg, 1998, Ellis, 1994). Cenoz and Genesee (1998) believe that multilingualism can be the result of many factors whether economic, political, or even historical. These might be due to colonialism, imperialism, or immigration. They define multilingual education as various educational programs that use languages other than the first language as media of instruction. These programs aim for communicative proficiency in more than the two languages. If one studies Lebanese history carefully, multilingualism in Lebanon seems a natural legacy of invaders who left part of their culture in the country, but multilingualism in Lebanon has also become common among native people because of the import/export business with other countries and the need to communicate with them.

1.4.2 Bilingual Education in Lebanon

In Lebanon, and according to the old national curriculum, most schools used to follow a bilingual program, except for the few that teach a language other than Arabic as the children's first language. Such exceptions include the Armenian

schools; after the Armenian Exodus in 1915, a vast majority of Armenian families escaping the massacre moved to Lebanon. To keep their language and culture intact they opened their own schools. In these schools, Armenian is considered the L1 of the students while English is the L2, and Arabic the foreign language. Thus, students are trilingual. However, in the past decade, these schools have tried to emphasise Arabic more, and the Armenian students are visibly becoming more proficient in Arabic.

Lately and with the revision and updating of the national curriculum, most schools have started introducing the third language at an early stage, as early as grade one. It seems that the government has finally realised the importance of Arabic as the national language, and thus has seen fit to revive the national language. For instance, and in the first time in years, the government has enforced the rule that specifies that all Lebanese and Arab passport holders have to fill all governmental paper work in Arabic and not in any other language. However, this action by no means diminishes the importance of the L2 or the L3 as in schools the L2 is used to teach all subject matter courses while the L1 (Arabic) and L3 are only taught as language courses (Lebanese National Curriculum, 1995)

1.4.3 Bilingualism and Multilingualism at LAU

At LAU, specifically the IEP, the fact that the students come from various backgrounds creates an interesting phenomenon. The classes tend to have multilingual participants; languages such as French, Arabic, Spanish, Armenian, and English are used by students. The vast majority of the students are trilingual. Unfortunately, in their language classes, students following the IEP in general tend to forget that the main purpose of the IEP is for them to communicate in English, and therefore, they are inclined to use all the other languages. The language used depends on the language their classmates are familiar with, and this is not necessarily English, the target language.

Many research studies and reviews of dual language programs in countries other than Lebanon showed positive results concerning the language proficiency of the students in both L1 and L2 (see Cummins, 1983; Swain and Lapkin, 1985; Willig, 1985; and Lindhom, 1990). However, these results depend on the realisation of several principles, the most important of which are the following. First, the duration of the instruction in both languages should be for at least six years. In

Lebanon, the second language and the native language go hand in hand throughout schooling, i.e. for fourteen years. This might not be the same with students who were educated outside Lebanon.

Second, the academic curriculum programs should focus on both subject matter and language development. In Lebanon, most subject content is taught in the second language. The Arabic language, civics, and history are the only subjects that have to be taught in Arabic. However, some IEP students come from Arab countries where all subject matter courses are taught in Arabic.

The third principle deals with the balance between the input and the output of the languages as both are important to the success of a dual language program. In Lebanon, this is done progressively.

Finally, another essential point is the separation between the two languages. Each class is conducted as a monolingual one to help students differentiate and separate the two languages.

Second or third language acquisition is what the IEP students face at LAU. Therefore, discussing bilingual and multilingual education in this study would give an overview of the background of these learners.

1.5 Lebanese American University

The Lebanese American University is a multi-campus university with a branch in the capital, Beirut, another one further north in Byblos, and a third campus in Sidon in the South of the country (see figure 1, map of Lebanon, p.10). However, this study involves the Beirut campus only because the majority of the students who join the IEP come to this campus. There may be five different sections of twenty-two students each in the IEP in the Beirut campus, but not more than one section in Sidon and Byblos with a maximum of ten or fifteen students in each campus. Also, it is more practical and less time consuming for the researcher to concentrate on one campus instead of three. Travelling between the Byblos and Sidon campuses would mean spending hours in heavy traffic to collect data from a limited number of students who come from similar backgrounds and sometimes from the same school systems as those who go to Beirut. The Sidon IEP follows the same syllabus as the Beirut campus does. As for the Byblos campus, though the textbooks used in classes might differ from the ones used in Beirut, close coordination is achieved between the two campuses. Thus, it was seen fit to conduct the study in Beirut. Moreover, students who come to the Beirut campus come from various backgrounds while those who join Sidon or Byblos are mostly from the area surrounding each campus. The Beirut IEP already represents the various multicultural groups, which need to be considered to conduct the research. Thus, the results can be generalised to all three campuses later on.

1.5.1 The Lebanese American University Intensive English Program

This section reviews the Intensive English Program at the Lebanese American University in the Beirut campus. This review establishes what has been achieved so far and what still needs to be done in order to improve the program. Thus, the launching of the program, its purpose, objectives, goals, and aims are reviewed and discussed. This is crucial background for the study, for it lays the ground for any discussion of innovative measures that would lead to improvement in classroom practices.

From 1924, the year LAU was established, until 1955, a special Intensive English Program (IEP) was available to students who were facing problems in

mastering the English language, needed for university purposes, but were otherwise eligible to join Freshman or Sophomore classes (Beirut University College, 1971). During these years, many students were unaware of the existence of the program because it was given on a tutorial basis. The number of students in the college at that time was minimal, and not all of them needed extra English language hours. In 1956-57, the program was formalised. Students had to take more course hours in English language. In 1957-58, the director could not cope alone with the increasing number of students and teaching hours, so an assistant was hired. In 1962 the program was named Intensive English (IE), and it became an independent program. It was divided into four different levels (Pre-Intensive, Intensive I, II, and III) catering for students who scored between 325 and 524 in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or between 300 to 499 in the English Entrance Exam (EEE) given at that time at the American University of Beirut (Beirut University College, 1971). Table 1 shows the allocation of class level according to students' test scores.

	TOEFL	EEE
PRE-INTENSIVE	325 - 274	300 - 349
INTENSIVE I	375 - 424	350 - 399
INTENSIVE II	425 - 474	400 - 449
INTENSIVE III	475 - 524	450 - 499

Table 1: Division of Intensive English levels according to scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the English Entrance Exam (EEE)

By 1964-1965, the number of students was fifty, taught by three full-time and three part-time instructors. In 1969-1970, the program had ninety-six students with four full-time and three part-time instructors. In 1970-1971, a language laboratory was established. Students were required to work individually on ready-purchased reading comprehension sheets or review various grammatical rules (Interview with faculty members who taught in the program during the seventies; field notes, October, 1997). The program ran smoothly until the mid-eighties; then, for administrative reasons, it was discontinued for a few years. In 1979, the program was re-evaluated. A subcommittee was asked to submit a report evaluating various points: objectives of each level, content, methodological suggestions, division of hours, recommended textbooks, and coordination with the language

laboratory (Nasr, 1979). At the end of 1989, the two highest levels of the IEP were offered again to students with very few modifications from the earlier syllabus. It was decided that the lowest two levels were too basic to be offered to students at the university level. Students who scored low in the entrance exams were advised to join the language programs available in many centres in the country.

Though students join the university after finishing their high school, and thus are expected to have an acceptable language proficiency base in English as a first or second/foreign language, IEP is still essential as a remedial English program. The major problem these students face is the difficulty in using English for academic, i.e., university purposes. However, learners do not only need English for studying purposes but also for their daily life on campus; the language for all activities (regular and extra-curricular ones) conducted on campus is expected to be in English. Thus, students have to be quite fluent in the language. Though many LAU students come from various countries such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Syria, Jordan, or Latin America, the majority is still Lebanese (76.2% Lebanese vs. 16.2% from different Arab countries, 5.8% from Latin America, and only 1.8% represent other nationalities). Although most Lebanese are bilingual or trilingual, students still make an exceptional variety of errors that stem from the diverse native language backgrounds (Nasr, 1980). This partly explains the need of the IEP as a remedial language course. The IEP is a corrective and accelerated program that balances the receptive and productive skills of the students (Beirut University College, July 1972).

A further factor still influencing the need for the IEP is found in students' approach to English from High School. In High School, and following the Lebanese national curriculum, English is treated as a content course; the emphasis is not on language but on literature. Students who come from schools where English is the second language are expected by the end of their school studies to sit for official written exams where they are tested in literature (Lebanese National Curriculum, 1995).

As for the students who come from French educated schools, they learn English as a third language, which means two to three hours of English per week in the intermediate and secondary classes, but in the Lebanese official exams, the third language is not tested (Lebanese National Curriculum, 1995). Thus, in many

institutions, and especially during the Civil War, the English language was not even taught. (field notes, 1998)

Lately, some of the schools in both the French and the English system have started offering one or two obligatory English language hours per week specifically to prepare the learners for English entrance exams (these courses are called TOEFL or EEE courses in most schools) (field notes, 1997-1999). These special classes are given in the last two years of high school as part of the school curriculum in some English medium schools, or as extra hours given after regular class hours, in most French medium schools. Yet at present, most French schools that are affiliated to religious entities discourage their students from joining an English medium university; they would rather advise their students to join St. Joseph University to continue their education in French. Implicit in such school/university links are a number of issues covering language maintenance and possible vested interest in French (or English) and in French cultures and connections. There may be a perception that English is overtaking French in education and in other spheres.

At LAU, the IEP is for students who have been accepted at the university but have not attained the required average in the English Entrance Exam (EEE) or in the TOEFL. Before 1994, students, applying to LAU, were required to sit for the EEE exam at the AUB, but since 1994, LAU has prepared and administered its own exam. Prior to 1995, the AUB EEE consisted of multiple choice questions divided into four parts, grammar, writing, vocabulary, and reading comprehension where many of the questions were based on American culture. The exam is similar to the TOEFL, and students have to choose the best or the correct answer for each question. In the 1990s, a listening component was added to the test with the rationale of testing all the skills or following the model of the TOEFL. Since 1998, the TOEFL test has been computerised, and the skills are tested differently.

In the AUB English exam, students are penalised if they choose the wrong answer. For each two wrong answers, they lose the credit for one correct answer (Office of Tests and Measurements, 1991). This may discourage risk-taking in the exam and, in a backwash effect, in any exam preparation activities. However, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) state that, in general, good language learners are risk-takers. Davies (1989) explains that learners, having succeeded in one challenging activity, tend to develop an 'appetite' for challenges. Success drives

them to become risk-takers, and thus motivates them. Students are willing to guess and use whatever knowledge they have to express themselves in the target language even if it means making mistakes. Yet, risk-taking in the AUB EEE might hinder students' entrance to the university. For fear of making mistakes and losing credits, students might not answer all exam questions.

The LAU English exam is broadly similar to that of AUB, but instead of the listening component, students are required to write a three hundred-word essay that counts as 30% of the final score (LAU, English booklet test sample, 1995). The percentage might change in years to come as the faculty is still complaining about students' writing in some courses. The administration of LAU is in the process of investigating whether to give 50% to the writing component and 50% to the multiple-choice questions (Field Notes, February, 2000), but this is undecided as yet. The LAU EEE, like the TOEFL, does not penalise students for wrong answers. Thus, students are encouraged to guess if they are not fully sure of an answer. However, the chance factor might play a key role there, for students might score high in the exam by sheer guessing.

Students, to be eligible to join the IEP, should score between 400 and 499 in the EEE or between 425 and 524 in the TOEFL, as the lower intensive English levels are currently frozen. Learners are required to spend a semester (fifteen weeks of classes) in the program and get a final passing grade of 70% or above. They can also sit again for the EEE or the TOEFL and get above 500 in the first or 525 in the second. Students are not allowed to spend more than three semesters in the program (Beirut University College: University Rules and Regulations, 1992). If they fail, they are suspended from the university and are advised to go to another university where proficiency in the English language is not a requirement.

However, the IEP does not simply train learners to pass such exams; its main objective has been to provide students with the skills needed regarding English for Academic Purposes (EAP) so that they can cope better with university academic studies. This includes an orientation to study skills, use of the library, acquiring language skills, and learning various rhetorical modes in writing (Beirut University College, April 1972). A complete framework regarding the objectives of the IEP was prepared in 1995, and faculty members are expected to meet these objectives in their classes (see Appendix A). The maximum number of students in each section is

twenty, with an official overload of two students, but the large numbers of students in a section has varied from twelve to twenty-six students. However, the large numbers of students in a section was not welcomed by the IEP faculty who believe that the number of students in language classes should not exceed fifteen (Discussion with IEP faculty members; field notes, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000). Students in the IEP are still required to attend fifteen class hours per week for a period of fifteen weeks.

Previously, more than six hours were dedicated solely to the grammar component, known as Grammar Communicative Competence (GCC) (Intensive English Syllabuses, 1980). The stress was on grammatical rules and exercises. However, the link with communicative competence is difficult to notice as it was only specified in the syllabus itself. The actual teaching was more of the traditional drill and practice exercises (field notes, 1997). Reading Comprehension Vocabulary (RCV) and Writing Skills (WS) were taught but were not emphasised. When computing the grades, the grammar component was given a percentage of sixty while writing and reading skills were given twenty each. In the 1970s the language laboratory was established, and students were expected to work individually for a period of three hours per week on either grammar exercises or reading comprehension passages.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the IEP staff introduced a new syllabus to develop students' "linguistic and communicative competence in a more effective manner" (Nasr, 1980, p.1). The class hours were divided as follows: five GCC, four RCV, and three WS. In Fall 1992, GCC hours were reduced to four, and the three WS hours were increased to four, the language lab emphasis changed from grammar and reading comprehension exercises to listening skills, but still each skill was taught separately by four different faculty members (Intensive English Syllabuses, 1992, 1993, 1994). At the end of the semester (fifteen weeks), each instructor was required to give a grade for the taught skill. Then, the grades were composed of a certain percentage for the different skills (40% for GCC, 30% for RCV, 20% for WS, and 10% for the language lab). A summary of the skill/hour distribution is given in table 2.

	Prior to the 1970s	The 1970s	The 1980s	Beginning of the 1990s
Grammar Communicative Competence	6 hours/week	6 hours/week	5 hours/week	4 hours/week
Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary	3 hours/week	3 hours/week	4 hours/week	4 hours/week
Writing Skills	3 hours/week	3 hours/week	3 hours/week	4 hours/week
Study Skills		1 hour/week		
Language Lab		3 hours/week	3 hours/week	3 hours/week
Percentage	60% GCC 20% RCV 20% WS	50% GCC 20% RCV 20% WS 10% Lab	40% GCC 30% RCV 20% WS 10% Lab	40% GCC 30% RCV 20% WS 10% Lab

Table 2: Summary of the various skill divisions in the IEP over the years with the different percentages given to each skill

Due to the increasing number of students, the full-time faculty members for the IEP rose to four, but staff-student ratio remains very high. Moreover, the faculty could not cope adequately with their increasing teaching load, and part-timers generally teach different language skills. Then, the emphasis on the grammar component had become less important through the years. In 1995-96, after many meetings and thorough discussions, the faculty agreed to put less weight on grammar and more on reading and writing, but students were still required to gain a final average of seventy or above to be promoted to regular university classes. A summary of the grade distribution is given in table 3.

	Division of Grades (percentages)	Total
Test 1 & Test 2	15% (each)	40% WS 35% RCV & 25% GCC
Final Exam	30%	40% WS 35% RCV & 25% GCC
Lab	10%	10%
Class Work	30% (10% reserved for each instructor)	30%

Table 3: IEP division of grades: students need an average of 70% or above to be promoted to regular university courses

Teaching methods, division of hours, integration of skills, and putting more emphasis on EAP have been on the IEP agenda. The faculty have been trying to implement changes in these areas, but doing so randomly is not enough, and a systematic study, with a full support from the administration, should be conducted to boost the program and ensure better results.

The IEP used to	The IEP now
Have more emphasis on grammar	Emphasizes the four skills (study skills)
Train students to sit for the language entrance exams	Trains students to cope with EAP
Have one teacher for each skill	Has four teachers for each class
Separate the language skills	Has integration of the language skills

Table 4: Comparing the IEP: how it used to be and how it is now

The above general review of the IEP shows the steps in program development from its early stages up to the present time. The change is noticeable; from a program that emphasised grammar, prepared students to pass English entrance exams, separated all skills, the IEP changed to a different program that deals with language as a whole and train students to cope with EAP. Still the English language attained by students is far from being compatible with the new role of English in the approaching new era of globalisation in the world. Therefore, this present study should add clear research proposals to the IEP, i.e., the missing elements it needs.

The present study can be seen as a very particular research specific to a particular context in Lebanon. Many universities, especially in English-speaking countries but also in Hong Kong, Singapore, Egypt, Jordan, or Turkey, for example, have language programs like the IEP. Often these are located in language centres. Most courses of this sort have to reconcile the tensions and competing demands of a diversity of first languages, different skills developed at school, the great range of language and study skill demands across university departments, shifting patterns of professional and academic uses of English around the world, and changing emphases within the language teaching profession. This study of the IEP at LAU is therefore relevant to the development of these other programs.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter is divided into three different sections: syllabus design, bilingualism and multilingualism, and motivation. As this study is an action research the purpose of which is to bring changes to the IEP, the researcher chose to discuss in depth the three major components that affect such changes. First, syllabus design is a major part of the program as it is through devising the syllabus that the basis of any program is set. Then, the mere fact that Lebanon is a multilingual country makes the bilingualism and multilingualism section another essential component to be discussed in this literature review. Motivation might seem out of place in this chapter, but this specific research deals with the problems faced by IEP staff members regarding learners' needs and the various strategies that one might use to motivate these students so that they become better language learners.

A. Types of Syllabuses in ELT

2.1 Syllabus Design

The syllabus of any course outlines the goals, aims, objectives, and the content of the course. In second language teaching, many syllabuses were designed and used in various situations claiming to be the best, but in fact researchers were trying to design the best syllabus that would work out for their particular situation at a certain particular time. In this section, the various syllabuses are briefly overviewed; these were either used in the IEP for a certain period of time or influenced the program at some point, or they might be adapted in the coming years.

However, before reviewing these syllabuses, it is important to define what a syllabus is. In many sources, (for example, Dubin and Olshtain; 1986, Yalden, 1987; Posner, 1995; Brown, 1995a; Van Lier, 1996) the two terms *syllabus* and *curriculum* are either used interchangeably or with various degrees of differences. The curriculum is a general concept that involves administrative, social, and philosophical factors that contribute to the planning of an educational program. The

goals, objectives, content, processes, resources, and means of evaluation of all the learning experiences planned for the students are included. Thus, educational life inside and outside the school is included through related programs and classroom instruction (Robertson, 1971; Allen, 1984).

The syllabus is the part of the curriculum concerned with the units to be taught (Robertson 1971; Allen, 1984). It is "a plan of what is to be achieved through teaching and learning" (Breen, 1987a, p.82). It is "the content or subject-matter of an individual subject" (White, 1988, p.4). Stern (1984) observes that though in Britain the term *syllabus* has been used widely, in North America and other parts of the world *curriculum, program, course study,* and *syllabus* have been used interchangeably to refer to objectives, content, and sequential arrangements of the course.

Dubin and Olshtain (1986) point out that the basic and most important role of the course designer is to be able to turn the abstract curriculum goals of a certain program into concrete objectives that can fit the syllabus. This leads to discussion of objectives. Genesee and Upshur (1996) discuss five characteristics of course objectives. They point out that the process of defining objectives should consider the following: first, they should be general (specific objectives would hinder the progress of the students and would limit the creativity needed for successful language teaching; then, one would have to follow a very traditional approach.) They should refer to a single domain of language performance and not overlap within the given language domain. Objectives should refer to student performance, and they should finally refer to products of learning and to processes associated with language performance.

The present focus is on syllabus design for an Intensive English course (EAP in orientation) at the Lebanese American University, Beirut campus, where the medium of instruction is English. This syllabus refers to the description, goals, objectives, content, and evaluation criteria related to the specific course.

When preparing a syllabus, there are some educational constraints, which confront the designer of any syllabus. Thus, the following six major requirements might influence the designer's decisions:

1. A framework of skills and knowledge for learners and teachers to work on should be available.

2. A syllabus should provide continuity for its users.
3. A syllabus should also give an account of what has been achieved.
4. A syllabus should provide colleagues, learners, and wider institutions with information about the content of the course.
5. Enough precision should be given so that the syllabus can be assessed through its implementation and appropriateness to its users.
6. The designer should be careful about the selection and choices of material in order to avoid sensitive issues.

<div align="right">(Breen, 1987a; Argondizzo, 1997).</div>

In other words, "syllabus planning and materials selection need to proceed within an appropriate curriculum framework" (Henderson et al., 1997, p.109). Jordan (1997) explains that the designer of the syllabus should carefully examine the needs, establish the goals, and decide on the selection, the grading, and the sequencing of the language and the content. Then, the course designer should divide the content of the course into manageable units. Unfortunately, not all teachers prepare their own class syllabus. In most cases, others in authority prepare it, and it is embodied in a textbook (Allwright and Bailey, 1991).

Therefore, when creating a syllabus or course of study, the following aspects are crucial:

1. The objectives to focus upon,
2. The selection of material,
3. The subdivision to be followed so that the material is manageable, and
4. Finally the sequence regarding the content and the development of the course.

In recent years, different kinds of syllabuses claiming to be innovative in language teaching have been proposed and used in many institutions. Many claim to be following a communicative approach in teaching language. The researcher chose from a long list of syllabuses the ones that have had an impact on second language learning or that have been followed or that might be adapted in the IEP in the near future. These syllabuses are outlined below:

2.1.1 The Formal Syllabus

The *formal* syllabus, known also as the *structural* or *grammatical* one, is the most traditional one (Yalden, 1983). It focuses on achieving learners' accuracy and correctness in the production of the language. The language is taught as separate chunks moving from the receptive to the productive skills. The rationale behind a formal syllabus is that it is a well-established one that has been proved useful for

many decades because it is systematic. Through analysis, learners with a limited amount of knowledge can get access to a great deal. Thus, a formal syllabus relies on the assumption that students can exploit their learning capacities by categorising and seeking regularities in order to learn the language more easily (Breen, 1987a).

However, in the 1970s, the formal syllabus underwent many criticisms. It was said to misrepresent the language because it focused only on one aspect: grammar (Nunan, 1988b). Within the grammar, meaning is held to be taught in isolation and not within stretches of discourse (Yalden, 1983). However, the structural syllabus should not be totally dismissed, for with considerable modifications, it might be the basis of second language acquisition (Ellis, 1993).

The IEP, in its early stages, followed the formal syllabus, and language teaching was divided into skills. Grammar teaching was the main component in the program, and students were able to solve many simple and complex grammatical exercises, but unfortunately their spoken and written production were far below expected levels; learners could not cope with other aspects of the language. Thus, researchers proposed various alternative syllabuses that would be more suitable to communicative English language learning.

2.1.2 The Functional Syllabus

The *functional* syllabus was developed in the mid-1970s from earlier work (Hornby, 1954). The syllabus focuses on the learners' knowledge of speech acts so that they become accurate in using the language and learn appropriate social language performance. As with the formal syllabus, the functional one targets the accuracy and appropriateness of learning the four skills. However, fluency is also important. Metacommunication is valued in this kind of syllabus, and socio-semantic categories represent the content and the objectives of language learning.

2.1.3 The Functional Notional Syllabus

Later, Wilkins (1976) added the term *notional*, and such a syllabus became a *functional notional* one (see Munby, 1978, Johnson, 1982). Its main innovation is that it is theoretically learner-centred and follows a communication-oriented approach to language learning (Markee, 1997). It is analytic rather than syntactic in its approach (Long and Robinson, 1998). Learners' social purposes are the basis for acquiring the target language. For Wilkins (1976) functional notional syllabus is

based on learners' analytical capabilities. However, some applied linguists rejected Wilkins' claim by referring to notions and functions as linguistic units of analysis.

This kind of syllabus has been used widely partly because it was well advertised by publishing companies who offer attractive packages to institutions and schools (Markee, 1997). However, because of the structure and the different tasks on which the notional-functional is based, it is said to be a disguise for or a continuation of the structural or formal syllabus (Markee, 1997). Willis (1990) argues that the methodology in the formal and the functional notional syllabus differs slightly.

Also, one of the major drawbacks is the difficulty of taking decisions regarding the items (functions) that should be included (Nunan, 1988b). Widdowson (1979) further criticised the functional notional syllabus, claiming that by dividing language into units, the designer misrepresents the communicative aspect of the language. The discourse level was totally misrepresented in this syllabus (Widdowson, 1978). It was essential to integrate accuracy with fluency and language at the discourse level (Argondizzo, 1997). Yet, the functional-notional syllabus is one of the most used syllabuses because the approach stresses the process of communication.

Accordingly, the IEP for a long period of time has followed this kind of syllabus. Faculty members became so entranced by it that it became rather difficult for them to change their approach to language teaching. Unfortunately, this problematic legacy of the functional notional syllabus still persists in the IEP. Faculty members are willing to change the textbooks used for the course but not the method they use in class (Syllabuses of Intensive English from 1989 to 1997).

2.1.4 The Process Syllabus

The *process* syllabus was used initially for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and developed in the 1980s (Candlin et al., 1981; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). The process syllabus is self-regulating. It is solely controlled by students' abilities to use the target language (Van Lier, 1996). Its main characteristic is the joint effort of both the teacher and the students to initiate and conduct various tasks. The inter-relationship of the why, how and what of learning is also directly addressed (Breen, 1984; Legutke and Thomas, 1991). The process syllabus focuses on communication, learning, and purposeful social activities. It links content and

methodology and makes the actual syllabus more accessible. The framework is a set plan, and teachers and learners find their way by creating and adapting their own syllabus. Thus, two things are provided: a bank of activities made up of sets of tasks and a plan related to the major decisions, such as procedure, participation, and subject matter needed for language learning. These three decisions complement each other and help generate the process syllabus. This process is unconventional, for the assumption is that learners' views vary, and the problems and difficulties one might face cannot be foreseen without knowing learners' views and needs. It is analytic because it does not select linguistic components, but instead it is based on problem solving tasks.

The justifications behind the process syllabus are the following. First, language learning represents three different types of syllabuses: the pre-planned, the learners', and the daily worked out one. Second, this kind of syllabus is designed to solve the problem of implementation and to cope with change in the classroom. Also, classroom decision-making is prioritised and is itself seen as a communicative activity (Breen, 1987b).

The boundaries of a course following the process syllabus, though not very clear to the outside viewer, should be very much fixed in the mind of the instructor whose job is to cater for the needs of that particular group of students. This is usually done by moving step-by-step through the various processes, methods, and activities needed to reach a better mastery of the language (Markee, 1997). However, there are many drawbacks related to this kind of syllabus. It is not easy to follow, and one cannot negotiate all tasks with all students, if an adequate bank of materials is not available. Also, whether the materials should be commercially purchased or prepared in-house is questionable because the materials should be compatible with the cultural values of the learners (Markee, 1997). Many institutions would not accept this "design less design" syllabus: it may be seen as ad hoc. Though its main attractiveness is that students would know what they are getting from the course, it is still quite a complex process, and if implemented in the classroom it might be changed to a weaker version to avoid the complexity of the process.

There are problems coordinating such a syllabus across many classes. In multi-section classes, and with many faculty members involved in the teaching

process, it would be impossible to implement the process syllabus in the IEP. Most teachers are part-timers who are already committed to other institutions and who might be unwilling to provide extra effort or prepare more for that one class they are teaching at LAU.

2.1.5 The Procedural Syllabus

The *procedural* or *communicational* syllabus was developed by Prabhu and his associates (Prabhu, 1984, 1987) from a project (The Bangalore Project) in India (1979 to 1984). The designers of the syllabus used tasks as the basis of language content. Students learned language by communicating and in principle by avoiding the use of form-focused activities. Through problem solving, students were able to acquire the basis of the language. A major pitfall of the procedural syllabus was that it was quite compatible with the instructors' cultural values but not with the learners'. Tickoo (1997) argued that although the project was run by Indians, it was culturally unacceptable. Also, the project was rather complex because language specialists were at a loss. The term *procedural* was unclear (Brumfit, 1984). Thus, the issue as in any regular syllabus was not related to the content to be learned, but to the way tasks were used in class. Teachers need to understand more about management and how one can implement such innovations successfully in order to cope with changes. Because of this division between management and language teachers, the project was a failure. Teachers, especially part-timers, were not aware of the overall program; thus, they resisted the changes implemented and were not able to apply them successfully in their classes.

The procedural syllabus, nevertheless, had a strong impact on discussions related to syllabus design (Long and Crookes 1992, 1993): language teachers who used the procedural syllabus were more favourable to the similar task-based syllabus (Markee, 1997). Researchers might consider the procedural syllabus as an earlier version of the task-based syllabus.

The procedural syllabus is not quite related to the IEP, but it is essential to mention it in this section because of its strong impact on decisions related to syllabus design. This syllabus is an earlier version of a task-based syllabus; thus, it should be discussed to clarify the link between the two.

2.1.6 The Lexical Syllabus

The *lexical* syllabus focuses on the commonest words and patterns in English, and it emphasises the use of natural language (Sinclair and Renouf, 1988; Willis, 1990). A lexical syllabus involves the following principles. First, all activities should involve real language use. Not only should learners be exposed to the language of authentic native speakers, but they should also be able to examine different learning tasks and learn from them. Moreover, they should be exposed to spontaneous language, in order to develop authentic rather than rehearsed language (Willis, 1990).

The lexical syllabus is held to offer learners a unique opportunity to build up their own language, to make productive generalisations by examining and using the language they have been exposed to. The original lexical syllabus was based on a corpus research project, which analysed twenty million words (see Sinclair, 1991). However, this kind of syllabus does not encourage students to acquire a large vocabulary; on the contrary, it makes full use of the lexical range the learner already has. Willis (1990) claims that by using the 'tiny but balanced' vocabulary, the learner will be able to generalise the concepts as a whole.

This syllabus might be acceptable if used with beginners because they need a basic level to start using the language. However, for upper levels, the lexical syllabus might hinder the progress of the learners if their lexis remains restricted. For university students who have to take major courses in English, this syllabus seems out of place. There is a need to encourage their lexical development in many areas, given the range of majors students study. For the upper levels, therefore, imposing lexical restrictions may hinder their progress in both content and language learning. Students need all the lexis they can assimilate to be able to express themselves adequately in English and cope better in their major courses. Thus, the lexical syllabus was not adopted in the IEP.

2.1.7 The Task-Based Syllabus

The *task-based* syllabus focuses on the communicative abilities and the learning capabilities. Metacommunicative and the communicative tasks are distinguished, but the two complement each other. A task-based syllabus stresses the use of communicative competence in preparing and adjusting learning tasks, the contribution learners bring to each task, and the emphasis on the learning process

during language learning (Breen, 1987b). It emphasises the use of language first to communicate then to learn. Nunan (1989, 1993), Markee (1997), and others claim that task-based research is an umbrella that caters for different syllabuses, such as the process and procedural ones and recent work regarding second language acquisition and the use of action research in language classrooms.

One of the main advantages of a task-based syllabus is that though it can be adapted to small and large classes, it can still remain learner-centred oriented (Markee, 1997). Thus, if the IEP classes range from twelve to twenty-six students, the task-based syllabus can still be adapted. In large classes, the stress would be on group work to give every student a chance to participate in tasks. The disadvantages related to this kind of syllabus concern the language teacher. If the instructor lacks teaching qualifications or a sound mastery of English, then this approach might prove difficult to follow. Willis (1990) argues that a task-based syllabus does not control the demands of language placed on the learners: it is assumed that learners would be able to encode meanings the way they see fit in order to produce outcomes. Thus, the language is seen as a system of meanings. Skehan (1996) believes that the task-based syllabus draws the learners away from form and more towards lexis. He adds that principled task sequencing can avoid such problems. Halliday (1976) contradicts Willis' point of view as he believes that learning by following a semantic system is the basis of learning any language. Argondizzo (1997) explains that through tasks, learners would do problem-solving activities. This will allow spontaneous answers. Learners would be aware of the importance of learning a language to achieve a purpose (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

One of the drawbacks of a task-based syllabus is the difficulty to specify the content of the syllabus; therefore, teachers might not know exactly what language elements the learners have acquired for each unit (Willis, 1990). Ideally, the content should be based on the various subjects and topics that students are required to take at a later stage at the university, i.e., their major. This would probably change the syllabus to a content-based syllabus (Brinton et al., 1989; Jordan, 1997). However, the task-based syllabus is embryonic, and many practitioners do not know much about it nor about its language learning implications. Designing and using the task-based syllabus requires care because if it is based on students' majors and topics they might be interested; it might be impossible to cater for all students. Their interests

and majors will certainly be different from each other. Thus, it may be better to await relevant evaluation on whether this innovative syllabus has achieved the intended goals and objectives.

2.1.8 The Content Based Syllabus

The final kind of syllabus is the *content-based* one. In the LAU setting, the English needed is English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which is a component of ESP (see Jordan, 1997). The content-based syllabus considers the eventual uses the students might make of the language, and then the syllabus is formulated accordingly. Various approaches regarding content based language instruction have been developed such as language across the curriculum (Griffin, 1985), immersion programs (Swain and Lapkin, 1985; Lindholm and Fairchild, 1990; Lindholm, 1990; Willetts and Christian, 1990), integration of subject-matter with language content.

Content-based language instruction has been used in various countries for tertiary studies (Snow and Brinton, 1988; Crandall and Tucker, 1990; Gaffield-Vile, 1996) as an "approach to second language instruction that involves the use of a second language to learn or practice content" (Met, 1998, p.35). The content is the material that is not traditionally included in language programs, i.e., not textbooks that deal with EAP. Thus, the focus is shifted from language as course content to language as medium of instruction.

The rationale behind content-based learning is that such a syllabus will first focus on language forms and functions. This is badly needed for language courses such as the IEP. Second, the use of informational content is assumed to increase motivation to language use for more effective learning. This is important because IEP students show more apathy than motivation towards the program. Third, such an approach is built on students' previous experiences or existing knowledge. Eventually, language should be taught through a focus on contextualised uses so that it makes sense to learners. Finally, learners must understand the input in the target language if they are to continue their studies in that language (Brinton et al., 1989).

Though many second language syllabuses have been based on content (whether grammatical, lexical, notional, etc.), in the past years, the content-based syllabus has come to refer to a particular academic discipline (Jordan, 1997). This syllabus focuses on the language, skills, and academic conventions that students

need for their specific major. Brinton et al. (1989) distinguish three different types of content-based language instruction:

The first type or the *theme based* or *topic based* language course instruction is intended to be one way to improve the use of the second language while using subject matter materials. In these courses, the syllabus consists of various topics or themes; each embodies different language skills. The themes for each course do not have to be related; they should be relevant and of interest to the students. Ideally, current events can be chosen as themes. Another option might be the choice of only one topic. All activities will evolve around that single theme, and students would become 'experts' in it. The rationale behind the topic-based approach is to provide students with a smooth transition from IE classes to subject matter classes by using 'logic development' thinking; helping learners improve their thinking skills (Allen and Howard, 1981; Bycina, 1986). This kind of syllabus was tried in the IEP for a year. Students were interested in the chosen topics.

The second type or the *sheltered-based* content instruction consists of content courses taught by a content area specialist to a group of students. These sheltered courses are a replication of the immersion education where native speakers are separated from second language learners. Thus, all second language students regardless of their linguistic level are put together in the same class. The sheltered course materials are usually carefully selected; texts or lectures are frequently modified to ensure more clarity and understanding from students. Activities in such courses are geared more towards the receptive skills rather than the productive ones. Gaffield-Vile (1996) conducted a sheltered content course at a university level in sociology. The findings at the end of the course were quite encouraging and positive. In general, once students reached a certain language level, they found that the course motivated them. They enjoyed the authentic content material used in the classes. In traditional classes, the material would be adapted for foreign learners while in the sheltered course, it was more authentic and appropriate. Students were able to become more critical in their studies; they learned to present their arguments with the proper evidence needed. The fact that a sheltered based approach was a continuation to the school program did not hinder students' progress.

The third type or the *adjunct* based content course instruction consists of enrolling in two courses, the language one where a sheltered approach is followed,

and a regular subject course (Snow and Brinton, 1990). In this adjunct approach the two courses complement each other, and special coordination takes place to ensure that students can cope with both courses. This approach is one that IEP students might be interested in. It would motivate them as they would feel that they are not 'losers' any more, for they are working on a subject-matter course. Current IEP students would welcome this kind of instruction as they would be able to start regular credited courses alongside the language one (Field notes, March 2000).

Christian et al. (1990) advocate mixing both language teaching and content areas so students can benefit more. This mixing will help students improve their language and cope better with the subject courses. The lexis needed for content courses will be dealt with in the language courses in addition to training students in various writing types, thinking skills, strategies for better reading comprehension, and providing many opportunities to practise their oral skills. Many researchers would claim that content-based instruction will improve intensive English language courses, for it would keep students motivated towards learning language and subject matter courses.

Breen (1987b) was one of the first researchers to point out that views regarding the nature of language, methodology, learners, and planning necessarily evolve. He claimed that different versions of innovations in syllabus design would be similar to the task-based syllabus. Teachers would use action research to initiate and develop their own process syllabuses which, in a way, might be considered as part of a task-based one which at the same time might be part of the content based syllabus. Also, the syllabus can be a mixture of two or more (Van Lier, 1996). Mixed and layered syllabuses would make up for any flaw in the regular syllabus used for the program. Accordingly, in this study, the researcher attempts to apply what Breen proclaimed more than a decade ago.

In this section various syllabuses related to the IEP and used in language teaching courses were discussed; also, the positive points and the drawbacks of each were mentioned.

Table 5: Syllabus Design Table

Summary of each type of syllabus with its key features and its relation to the IEP

TYPE	KEY FEATURE	RELATION TO IEP
Formal/Structural/ Grammatical	Traditional Focus on grammar Language is taught as separate chunks Systematic	Was used in the IEP at early stages Language was divided into skills Not suitable for communicative English language teaching
Functional	Learning the four skills Content and objectives and represented in socio-semantic categories	Was used briefly in the IEP
Functional Notional	Theoretically learner-centered Analytical approach Follows a communication oriented approach	Was used for a long time in the IEP IEP faculty prefer it to other syllabuses In danger of being a formal syllabus in disguise.
Process	More accessible Cater for particular classes Used for ESP A set plan for classwork Unconventional	Can be adapted Problem with material preparation Ideal for IEP but difficult to implement Might face coordination problems
Procedural/ Communicational	Based on tasks learned by communication Related to procedure instead of content	Not quite related to IEP but had a strong impact on decisions related to syllabus design Is considered an earlier version of task-based
Lexical	Based on real language use Stress is on authenticity and native speakers Does not enrich students' lexis but makes full use of the available vocabulary	Out of place in the university context Was quickly disregarded
Task-Based	Focuses on communicative abilities and learning capabilities tasks Is learner-centered Can be adapted to small and large classes	Ideally should be used in IEP and should be based on content-based learning So far task-based has not been applied in the IEP the way it might be.
Content-Based	Topic based Sheltered Adjunct	The topic based was used in the first cycle of the action research.

B. Bilingualism and Multilingualism

2.2 Bilingualism and Multilingualism

Bilingualism and multilingualism are an integral part of the Lebanese society. Rare are the Lebanese who are not fluent in at least two languages. It therefore seems problematic that students who have spent all their schooling years exposed to Arabic, as their mother tongue, and English as a second or third (foreign) language have difficulty coping with the English language in an English medium university. One factor is the role of English and how it is taught in the school systems these students come from (see chapter 1, section 1.3.1).

Aspects of bilingualism and multilingualism are discussed here with examples drawn from bilingual and multilingual countries; also, specific examples related to countries where Arabic, French, and English are used concurrently are given.

2.2.1 Definition of Bilingualism and Multilingualism

Researchers use various definitions regarding bilingualism. The most commonly used ones include the following elements: native-like proficiency in the two languages, the mother tongue and the second language (Bloomfield, 1933; Kaplan, 1991); the use of the two languages alternately (Weinrech, 1953); the production of meaningful sentences in the second language (Haugen, 1969); communicating in more than one language (Fishman, 1966). Mackey (1967) discusses four points regarding bilingualism:

1. The degree of proficiency of the speaker;
2. The function (i.e., the use and function) the speaker has for the two languages;
3. The alteration or the shift from one language to another; and
4. Finally the interference or the extent the speaker keeps the two languages fused or separate from each other.

Wray et al. (1998) explain that defining bilingualism is not an easy task because of the different linguistic situations involving bilingual use. Thus, it would be best to say that bilingualism means to understand and speak the two languages. This can be illustrated by the following: Kaplan (1991) defined bilingualism as near native proficiency in the second language where the second language is of equal status with the mother tongue in both attraction and power. Then in a later

publication, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) suggest that no two languages can be equal in status in the same country. One of them, usually the L1, will dominate the other, and the so-called bilingual person will sooner or later diverge from one language to another and thus use more the L1 than the L2. This illustrates well the case of the Lebanese people who tend to use one language (not necessary the L1 though) more frequently than the other. This is often seen at LAU. However, there are many factors that one has to be aware of when talking about bilingualism: age, attitude, sex, motivation, intelligence, memory, among others will probably influence the bilingual's aptitude in the two languages (Mackey, 1968).

Most textbooks on bilingualism cite UNESCO' s programmatic statement on the mother tongue as a medium in education:

> "... Pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of their mother tongue, because they understand it best, and because to begin their school life in the mother tongue will make the break between home and school as small as possible."
>
> (UNESCO, 1951, p.691
> Cited in Fishman 1968)

Cummins and Swain (1986) among others have supported this. Fasold (1992), Le Page (1992), and others have discussed the difficulties one might encounter when children start schooling in just the mother tongue.

2.2.2 Bilingual Education in the World

Bilingual education is widespread in the world (Lambert, 1990). In many countries, the national curriculum includes two languages, the native one and the main foreign one (for example, English, French, or German). However, changes in the political aspect of a country can affect the bilingual education. Some countries that were under a colonial regime would rather revive the national language for it can be seen as a regain of values and power. For instance, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia which were occupied by the French for some time decided following their independence to shift back to Arabic as the main language, but to keep French as a second language, (Abu Absi, 1997) particularly in the sciences (Ezzaki & Wagner, 1992). In Morocco, exposure to L2 and L3 are minimised for fear that the youth compare between the native and the foreign culture. They might be discontent with the Moroccan one (Adaskou et al., 1990). In Indonesia, for instance, it is quite

common for children to use several languages, a local language, Indonesian as the national language, English, and the Standard written Arabic which is used in the Koran (Reksotiputro and Tasmash, 1997) (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997). In the Philippines, the government has decided to revive the national language Filipino. Consequently, the native language is more emphasised than the English language (Fortez, 1997). Other countries such as Kenya (Bunyi, 1997) or Canada (Heimbecker, 1997) have seen a boom in immersion in education in the second language (Cummins and Swain, 1986; Allen et al., 1990).

2.2.3 Bilingualism and Multilingualism: Dilemmas

If one looks at the immersion programs in various countries, and the spread of bilingualism and multilingualism, it does not look as great as one would expect from some claims (e.g. Grosjean, 1982). Are there really fully bilingual or multilingual people who are competent and fluent in the two languages? If one language dominates the other, then why is there such a stress on bilingualism and multilingualism in so many countries? But then which language should be the more dominant, the mother tongue or the second language? An example is the conflict that happened a few years ago in the province of Brittany in France. Breton is a Celtic language while French is a Romance one, but still the people wanted to challenge the politics of the country and keep their own identity (Fromkin and Rodman, 1998); it was agreed to use 'Breton' as the main language in high school and not standard French. This is rather a complex issue, as bilingual people would most probably switch languages depending on the topic, context, or situation.

Also, if minorities use their own L1, then is it better to keep it alive by educating the children of these minorities or is it better to abandon it and immerse the families into the national language of the country? An example might be the United States where this issue is still a very sensitive one as there are many Spanish native speakers fighting to keep their language and culture intact in a country where English is dominant (Zentella, 1997). Maybe these families should send their children to regular American schools and forget about the native language. At least, the children would have the sense of belonging to the country where their parents decided to settle. The same example can apply to the Armenians in Lebanon.

As other examples in countries that have always used more than one language in their education system, the facts might differ, for politics plays an important role in such situation. If the country supports the revival of the mother tongue, then the second language should be dealt with carefully at schools, so that it does not surpass the native language. However, if the second language is essential and the politics or policy of the country in general is in favour of the first one, then schools will have to deal with the issue differently even if this means overstepping the mother tongue (Gupta, 1997). Some countries are not threatened by the second language, but on the contrary, knowing a second language gives the people more social respect (Lambert, 1990). This is in general true in countries such as South Africa where English and Afrikaans go hand in hand.

In the Lebanese context, the existence of second and third languages has a historical explanation (see chapter 1, section 1.3). The country was occupied by various invaders and was under the French mandate for some time. Thus, foreign cultures became embedded in the country before the Lebanese started even to think about a National Curriculum. Even after the recent reform of the curriculum (Lebanese National Curriculum, 1995), the Arabic language, civics, history, and geography are the only subjects taught in Arabic (see chapter 1, section 1.3.1). However, in many schools history and geography are also taught in the second language. The social studies subjects deal with different topics in each language; the history and the geography of the Middle East, the rise of Islam would most probably be taught in Arabic, while the French civil war, the history of Europe, and the discovery of America would be taught in the second language. In various religious French medium schools, the teaching of the second language surpasses by far the mother tongue.

2.2.4 Diglossia

It may be essential to use at least two languages as media of instruction in Lebanese schools because of the complex nature of the Arabic language, which is explained by the concept of diglossia that exists in the Arab world (Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ruzic, 1983; Ibrahim, 1983; Hudson, 2000). Ferguson (1959) explains that originally diglossia was used to refer to two or more varieties of the same language in use. In Lebanon and most Arab countries, these are spoken and

written classical Arabic. These modes virtually constitute two distinct languages, as diglossia is extreme in the Arab World (Hudson, 2000; Leith, 1997). First, Classical or Standard Arabic is taught in schools and used in written communication, and in prestigious domains such as religion or education (Leith, 1997). Then, spoken or colloquial varieties of Arabic, with many dialects and accents, are used as the first 'language' for daily conversation. Thus, being literate in Arabic already implies being 'bilingual' as standard and the Lebanese colloquial Arabic are quite different from each other, compared to parallel examples in spoken and written English. For example, a simple question such as *'What are you doing?'* would be translated as follows *'maza tafaal'* (Standard Arabic) and *'shu am taamil'* (colloquial Arabic)

2.2.5 Code-Switching

As is often the case when two languages come into contact, the bilingual population tends to code switch between the two. This conscious or unconscious shift or mix between the two languages depends on the addressee, topic, or location (Crystal, 1985, 1995; Arnberg, 1987). In Lebanon, code switching is so widespread that it can be considered part of the culture. However, the mere fact of switching languages (sometimes between three languages at the same time) might be seen as a threat to the development of L2 or L3 as one might not master one language fully (Zentella, 1997). Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) point out that so far code switching has been an uncontrollable research variable in language development, that language planners disregard, though details of it might add valuable information about the research context. It is uncontrollable, for to limit code switching in any language is inappropriate legislatively although code mixing blurs the boundaries set between the languages. Many researchers suggest that code switching among bilingual people is at the same time predictable and creative as it usually follows a certain pattern that leads to special communication functions (Jacobson and Faltis, 1990; Ovando and Collier, 1998). However, the purists believe that code switching is considered a threat to the integrity of the standard language. The speaker would not be able to use solely one language, thus, he/she would have no full mastery of the language (Romaine, 1995).

To conclude this section, though some researchers consider the teaching/learning of two or three languages to be problematic, Van Lier (1996) explains that in a learner's mind two languages cannot compete with one another.

Romaine (1995) agrees, and strongly recommends that bilingualism be seen as a resource to be cultivated and not a problem for schools to overcome. Thus, one might conclude that bilingualism and multilingualism should be encouraged in countries similar to Lebanon, but careful planning and implementation should be followed in order to explore this thought further. Therefore, schools would look at second language teaching differently, and universities would try to follow a different approach in language teaching classes.

C. Motivation

2.3 Motivation

No matter how well researched and prepared a syllabus is or how competent the teachers are, if students do not have the will to learn, then no one can force them to do it. Various experts have been researching the issue of motivation in second language learning (see Gardner and Lambert, 1959, 1972; Carroll, 1993; Chamber, 1999; Dornyei and Otto, 1998; Kalaja and Leppanen, 1998; Dornyei, 1999; and Spolsky, 2000) because of its crucial role in any task or activity. One of the main problems that the IEP teachers and other English language teachers at LAU (as elsewhere at other institutions) are facing is how to motivate learners in the English language class (field notes and discussion with ELT instructors at LAU, 1997-2000). This section reviews the various factors that might motivate language learners to study the target language.

In general, people are motivated differently - in ways and degrees of intensity (Van Lier, 1996). Van Lier (1996) regards motivation from two views, intrinsic and extrinsic with the former being innate and the latter environmental. A balance between both views would ensure a suitable environment for learning. He, then, discusses three concepts that might trigger the motivation of learners, intentionality or choice (see Dennett, 1991), experiences of emotions (see Dennett, 1991, Humphrey, 1992) and effort (see Sullivan and Conway, 1989). In this study, learners' motivation is viewed and discussed in relation to the IEP, i.e., classroom and individual motivation towards second language learning.

Students who study English because it is on their timetable might be more motivated if English is related to their work or their specific major (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). Stipex (1998) believes that the role of the educators is to provide a variety of learning contexts that would motivate students. Then, the learners would engage productively and actively in the learning activities (Allwright and Bailey, 1991). Moreover, Jordan (1997) explains that, in general, full time courses have various problems with sustaining motivation and interest over a long period of time (this is the case of the IEP). Jordan suggests dividing courses into blocks with specific goals and aims for each block. For instance, one way to sustain interest is having fewer contact hours and more time for independent self-access study. However, this might be hindered by institutional constraints. Self-access

would not in itself be a panacea: it needs systematic provision of ample resources and a supportive framework with advisors available to monitor student use and assist progress - staff need to be present to give advice.

Another option to motivate learners is to change the purpose of the course. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) argue that ESP is more motivating than general English. In general, learners are hungry for advice and for various materials that will help them with their specific major and/or with particular skills related to their course of studies. They tend to work harder if they perceive that the language of the English course is related to their majors.

Teachers should provide learners with the appropriate materials. However, developed material and activities that are sufficiently motivating and challenging to students are rather difficult to find. Thus, it is essential to consider learners' wants in needs analysis studies even if it is difficult to decide what students' real needs are. In general, the latter are in the area of study skills. Learners have to adjust to the idea that language learning at the university level is different from the school. The language is a means to learn subject content and acculturate to academia and a future profession. This is typical of many countries (Singapore, Philippines, etc.) where English is used throughout the educational system. Though learners' English language level may be quite high, they still need to adjust to the demands made of them when they begin tertiary studies in an English medium university. In schools, the stress on language teaching and learning was on General English or on the literary aspects of English. It was not on specific tasks that would have prepared learners for academic English needed in the work place.

Mparutsa et al. (1991) advocate another option. They noticed that introducing content area topics to first year economics students simultaneously motivated students and improved their performance. Also, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) state that team-taught courses, i.e. where the language teacher works together with the subject lecturer to help international students understand actual lectures, appear to be highly motivated. (see earlier section: sheltered content based syllabus design, Snow and Brinton, 1990). Learners might prefer this option, for it gives them a taste of the major courses they have to take at the university level. This option might seem ideal, but when it comes to practice, it is difficult to apply. Institutional rules and time constraints rarely allow both the subject matter

instructors and the language teacher to work together, especially given that each student might have a different language problem than the others.

However, opinions vary. For example, in British universities, academic writing courses that give specific guidance about the writing of essays and dissertations are extremely popular. On the other hand, in Nigeria and Kenya, for instance, courses were developed with an emphasis on reading and writing skills for EAP students from various disciplines (Monsi et al., 1995; Obah, 1993). Also, in other Lebanese institutions, the English remedial course is based on reading, writing, and grammar, or on test taking techniques that teach learners to pass the TOEFL exam (field notes 1996-1997). In the academic year 2000 - 2001, many institutions decided to use computers, CDs, and the Internet as a base for teaching English (minutes of the Intensive English, Fall 2000).

Motivation is an essential factor in the classroom. If students are not intrinsically and extrinsically motivated, then no matter how much effort and careful preparation are given to prepare the syllabus, not much will be achieved. In this section, motivation was discussed at length as it is a major factor for the success of any program. The IEP students lack motivation because of the nature of the program they are forced to follow; thus, part of the study is to motivate the learners.

Chapter Three

Action Research

3.1 Origin and Development

While *action research* is reasonably well established as an approach to educational research, it is relatively rare to apply this model of research outside the countries in which it originally developed (UK, Australia) (Adelman, 1993). It is a relatively recent model for research in the Teaching of English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (Crookes, 1993), and it is quite unusual to apply it in reconstructing countries such as Lebanon. However, the best approach to review the IEP is the Action Research Project where the program is studied from all facets, and the implementation of the changes is often re-evaluated. This section traces the development of this research and examines its applications in TESOL.

Researchers' views differ regarding the origin of action research. Though most tend to agree that Kurt Lewin developed the concept in 1946, Wallace (1987) and Cohen and Manion (1994) state that *action research* originated in 1920 in the United States. According to them, it started as an experimental intervention in which scientific methods were applied to the study of group dynamics and education and social problems. Wallace (1987) adds that Collier (1945) coined the two terms, *action* and *research*, when he used collaborative research to improve Indian farming practices. Then, Lewin developed the concept further. Forward (1989), Adelman (1993), Robson (1993), among others credit Lewin, who was a German social psychologist working in the United States, with joining the two concepts (Lewin, 1946). His formulation rotated around a spiral of cycles starting with planning, executing, then observing and reflecting (Robson, 1993) which became the basis of any action research project (Lewin, 1948). Lewin saw action research as the proper tool that would bring democracy after World War One by raising the self-esteem of minorities through their involvement. Through action research, these groups would seek equality, independence, and co-operation (Adelman, 1993).

Action Research is believed to be a very complex and broad field (McDonough and McDonough, 1997). Lately, language teachers have felt the need to conduct research in their own classroom using action research (e.g. Nunan, 1990, Crookes, 1993). In fact, there are two different orientations of action research. One focuses on a group and is often called action enquiry or action learning, and the

second focuses on an individual. However, both aim to bring improvement in practice, the first in a form of rigorous self-evaluation of group practice while the second often expects individuals to reflect on their educational and personal values, as well as their practice when bringing about small-scale change (see for example, Van Lier, 1988; McKernan, 1991). In this study, action research is discussed in terms of educational setting in general and TESOL in particular.

Originally, *action research* referred to research dealing with experiments regarding changes in communities and institutions (Forward, 1989), but then it evolved. Educational action research took a huge step with Lawrence Stenhouse's (1975) project that involved a critical reflective attitude from teachers towards what was happening in their classes. This was done through critical self-study, study of other teachers, and the assessment used for classroom research. It influenced research projects of the late 1970s, which concerned new teaching methods for primary levels. This finally led to the formation of networks for classroom action research, *CARN*: in Cambridge under the auspices of Elliott and Adelman, *the South West Action Research Network* led by Whitehead in Bath, and a third influential group with Kemmis and his colleagues in Australia (Forward, 1989). For many of these researchers, action research necessarily involved changing and developing the professional learning of the teachers, which might influence policy (Elliott, 1991). For later researchers, including TESOL practitioners, action research consciously involves teachers and even learner participation, and is therefore, 'participatory' (Auerback, 1994).

There are several contradictory definitions of action research. McNiff et al. (1996) explain contradictions with reference to the context of the background, country, and purpose of conducting research. Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) point out that by linking the two terms, *action* and *research*, the essential features of the method are highlighted: ideas are tried as a means for increasing knowledge and for improvement. They stress the importance of the action as the motivating force of the research. Another definition is Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988):

> Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out... The approach is only action research when it

is collaborative, though it is important to realise that the action research of the group is achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members.

(Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988, pp.5-6)

Elliott defines action research as "the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it" (Elliott, 1991, p. 69, cited also in Elliott, 1981, McNiff et al., 1996, among others) Elliot's definition distinguishes between producing knowledge and improving practice while Kemmis and McTaggart's stresses the ways of increasing knowledge. McKernan's (1991) definition deals with the need for systematic and rigorous inquiry by using scientific procedures and the critical-reflective ownership by participants of both process and results. This definition highlights one of the essential characteristics of action research.

Process and product go hand by hand, and one cannot discuss one without talking about the other. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) define action research as a systematic collection of information designed to bring social change. Crookes (1993) distinguishes between three trends; the first, technical action research, deals with researchers working on questions derived from previous research. Such research follows the norms and maintains the standards and values of traditional research. The second type is research done by a teacher. Hopkins (1985) refers to it as teacher research while Carr and Kemmis (1986) prefer to use the term practical action research. A third, more progressive trend is critical education practice that deals with emancipatory research. Emancipatory research means that the teacher's role is not only to understand problems and come up with solutions, but also to examine the social causes of problems and decide on what needs to be done (Ellis, 1997b). Thus, the limitations of traditional research are overcome, for the results of the action research are relevant to the needs of both learners and teachers (Crookes, 1993). Atweh et al. (1998) point out that the concern of action research is not abstract but in/for the actual processes. It involves real, particular, and concrete practices about certain groups at specific times and places. If action research is cyclical, then it includes practicality.

Although all these different definitions of researchers and action research practitioners have different emphases, the process is basically the same. It is linked

to the purpose of a particular research project at a particular time in a particular place with a particular group, and the inquiry is guided by facts and evidence and not by wishful thinking (Roberts, 1998).

Lewin and co-workers discerned four considerations for conducting action research. The first is diagnostic or the need to have a plan of action. The second is participants, to decide who is going to be involved in the research. The third is empirical, and it involves record keeping of day-to-day experiences and observations. The last is experimental; that is, a controlled study of the effectiveness of different techniques in more or less the same social situations to solve different social problems.

In the 1960s when action research became a format for curriculum changes and development, teachers were dissatisfied with the traditional curriculum of the time, so they questioned some of the objectives stated and initiated changes in their classes. Then, academics, such as Stenhouse and Elliott, tried to discern, discuss, and explain the logic that lay behind this method. In Britain, it was not until 1978 (Elliott, 1978) that action research became an established, acceptable, and successful research method used for educational research purposes (Carr, 1989), and a way for teachers to conduct research in their own classrooms (Allwright and Bailey, 1991; McNiff, 1993; and Altrichter et al., 1993). Though action research aimed at educational changes, it was used to seek solutions for other issues: it was used to reveal the depth of despair and poverty in the thirties, it dealt with issues such as industrial problems in the 60s, and with environmental, medical, and social issues in the 80s and 90s (Scott and Usher, 1996).

3.1.1 Action Research Characteristics

The characteristics of action research differ from one project to another depending on the purpose, its study, and its implementation. For this present study, the characteristics of *action research* are grouped in the following framework:

1. Action Research seeks **improvement by practice**

Action research uses strategic and vigorous actions to probe understanding and *improvement* in order to find solutions for various educational problems. However, these solutions are not considered terminal ones; their aim is to improve educational *practices* (Forward, 1989; McDonough and McDonough, 1997; Cohen

and Manion, 1994; McNiff et al, 1992; McNiff, 1993; Robinson, 1993). This is, of course, a continual process.

2. Action Research is **responsive, flexible, and adaptable**

Action research is a method that aims to solve an educational problem. It is *responsive* because it reacts to feedback in each of the research steps. Kemmis (1997) argues that responsiveness strengthens the research because it deals with the emerging practitioners' needs (Forward, 1989; McKernan, 1988). This responsiveness means that most action research is not likely to be definitively designed at the outset since feedback cannot usually be known in advance. *Flexibility* and *adaptability* pertain throughout the action itself. Changes may occur during the implementation stage. Thus, one has to adapt to these changes and be flexible so that the transition is smooth (Cohen and Manion, 1994; McKernan, 1988; Scott and Usher, 1999).

3. Action Research is a **disciplined enquiry**

Action research is part of the qualitative/interpretative paradigm though some researchers are in favour of statistical methods. McNiff et al. (1996) explain the misconception that statistics cannot be used in action research. Whatever technique/s the researcher chooses to follow should be followed according to the guidelines set for that technique. Action research relies on behavioural data and observation (Forward, 1989; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Macintyre, 2000). Cohen and Manion argue that because of its nature, i.e., collecting information for the project, sharing, discussing, somehow recording, evaluating, and acting upon the outcomes, action research is superior to other research methods. However, many researchers believe that nothing new is contributed through educational action research (Travers, 1972). Lomax (1986) explains that it is difficult to follow a systematic and controlled process other than the action research cycle because of the research/practice situation which action research is embedded in. The context in which questions and answers occur is complex, which makes the process difficult to explain. Clearly these arguments depend on definitions of research, and results and expectations of the nature of research contributions.

4. Action research requires **validation**

Validation is essential. By using various validating methods and more detailed research methodology, one can have more convincing outcomes and

reliability. In order to achieve this, triangulation may be used (Forward, 1989; Somekh, 1995). In this study, triangulation refers to a multi-method approach rather than the three-method typical to triangulation (see chapter 5, section 5.1.5, p. 94). In later stages, the research outcomes can be given to other practitioners for comparison purposes, to seek better validation (Whitehead, 1989). The precise nature of the triangulation is open to a range of choices, which do not need to be theoretically specified without considering the particular nature of the action research in hand.

5. Action research is **emancipatory**

Under the term *emancipatory*, other characteristics can be included such as *collaborative* (Carr and Kemmis, 1993; Nodie Oja & Smulyan, 1989; Kemmis and Wilkinson, 1998; Burns, 1999; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000; Rainey, 2000) and *critical* (Altrichter et al, 1993; McNiff, 1993; Robinson, 1993; Ellis, 1997b). Practitioners use self-critical inquiry to address issues of power and control that concern both teachers and students. The process is said to emancipate them. They strive to solve a problem through teams following the action research cyclical process (see Figure 2, p. 57). Projects should be relevant to the immediate short and long-term needs of all participants (Zuber Skerritt, 1996). This links both practice and reflection, and researchers and research participants (McKernan, 1988; Kemmis, 1993; Scott and Usher, 1999).

6. Action research is **holistic** and **cyclic** in nature

Action research is *cyclic* because it is a never-ending process. It starts with needs analysis, planning, then implementation and evaluation (see figure 2, p. 57). The outcome is again studied, and more changes are implemented, evaluated, etc. (Elliott, 1991; Wallace, 1998; Burns, 1999). This implies that timing, precise outcome, and design cannot necessarily be decided in advance since pragmatic rather than theoretical requirements may lead to relevant decisions on these aspects.

7.Action Research is **participatory**

McNiff et al. (1996) explain that when others, co-researchers and/or learners are involved in the research, the monitoring process becomes stronger, and thus participatory action research gives more validity to the results. It is participatory because teachers, co-researchers, and perhaps learners are involved in identifying the research focus or specific problems and solutions. It is action oriented because

the findings are used to make changes in either a program or in the participants' lives. All those involved in the project are part of a research team (McTaggart, 1996; Auerback, 1994, 2000; Greenwood and Levin, 1998; Oldfather et al., 1999; Kemmis and Wilkinson, 1998; Davis and Cooke, 1998; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000)

All these characteristics are interrelated. They sometimes overlap, but they still complement each other.

Table 6: Action Research Characteristics - A Summary

Improvement by practice	Continual process Finds solutions and improve educational practices
Responsive, flexible, adaptable	Reacts to feedback Is not rigid Accepts, encourages, and adapts easily to changes
Disciplined enquiry	Relies mainly on observation and behavioral data All research techniques can be used
Validation	Uses triangulation (multi-method approach)
Emancipatory	Uses self-critical enquiry to address issues of power and control for teachers and students
Holistic and cyclic	Never ending-process Keeps on improving
Participatory	Teachers, co-researchers, and learners are involved

3.1.2 Potential Criticisms

Many researchers have criticised action research. Cohen and Manion (1994) cite several disadvantages of action research. The findings are restricted to a particular environment in which research is carried out. This means that the sample is unrepresentative because of the specific group involved. Moreover, there is no control over any independent variable. Wallace (1998) argues that if one thinks of action research as a particular case study; then, the drawbacks of action research can be seen as a positive advantage (assuming that case study research is accepted as valid and that its own disadvantages are acceptable). Because of the essential features of case study, one can use a mixture of methods to collect data, so action research data can be in the form of questionnaires, interviews, observations, minutes

taken from meetings, diaries, and proposals. Thus, this mixture of methods used gives the research validity and reliability through triangulation.

CRITICISM/PROBLEM   *COMMENT/SOLUTION*

Particular environment; specific group	Case studies approach

Action research does not fit easily in either of the two major research paradigms, quantitative and qualitative. It is distinguished from other research methods through first a scrutiny of values involved in practices, hence emancipatory, then a thorough examination of the 'objects' of action research which are the educational practices or 'praxis' as labelled by action researchers (Kemmis, 1993). It is the specific focus of case study that makes data collection for action research more accessible and successful. McNiff et al. (1996) explain that this feature of action research is not a limitation of such research. It concerns practical rather than abstract practice, and it always deals with questions of local importance (Scott and Usher, 1996) about changing practitioners' particular practices than about general issues (Atweh et al., 1998).

CRITICISM/PROBLEM   *COMMENT/SOLUTION*

Non traditional	Practical Changes practices

On one hand, Adelman (1989) mentions that much educational action research might be viewed as poor quality, for it might mean that the practitioner's research might only be geared towards his/her own personal practice and not toward academic research. Crookes (1993) adds that action research might lead to work that is undesirable. A possible answer is that the practitioner researcher's aim is to consciously improve the quality of the teaching process in the classroom.

CRITICISM/PROBLEM   *COMMENT/SOLUTION*

Bad quality	Consciously improve quality

Beretta (1990) and Hammersley (1992) claim that the products of action research lack validity and reliability. The solution is for action researchers to be indirect and draw general relevance instead of being over specific in problem solving.

CRITICISM/PROBLEM   *COMMENT/SOLUTION*

Lacks validity and reliability	Get into issues of generalisability

Action research has become a prime way for teachers to research their own classrooms. Elliott (1991) discusses some of the concerns that a teacher/researcher might face when conducting action research in his/her own surroundings. First, there is the ethical protocol. A 'teacher' and a 'researcher' are two roles of a single person where teaching is a form of research, and research is a form of teaching in a reflective culture. However, this does not give the teacher researcher the right to report information without asking for students' consent. Considerations of fairness, accuracy, and comprehensiveness should be established before starting the investigation. Thus, a solution to this issue is to use a critical colleague or friend who analyses the situation from a more objective view (Altrichter et al., 1993; McNiff, 1993; and Allwright and Bailey, 1991).

CRITICISM/PROBLEM	*COMMENT/SOLUTION*
Teacher as researcher	Use of critical colleague

The collaboration of such a colleague, if he or she is also a teacher, may of course raise further issues and dilemmas of collegiality or friendship versus objectivity. A solution might be to involve co-researchers - learners and/or other teachers. However, some colleagues might feel uneasy about the process. Collaborating with or observing each other might prove difficult (Ellis, 1997b; O'Brien et al., 2000).

CRITICISM/PROBLEM	*COMMENT/SOLUTION*
Use of critical colleague	Participatory action research

Another dilemma that faces the action researcher is the choice of methods for data collection. Many researchers opt for quantitative methods of data collection rather than qualitative ones in order to avoid being involved in 'personalised' situations (Robson, 1993). Oppenheim (1992) argues that teachers use questionnaires to distance themselves from the effects that observing and interviewing may have on personal relationships in the same institution. Also, teachers may be reluctant to research case studies. They assume that case studies cannot be generalised and are of little interest to teachers or researchers involved elsewhere. The best solution is triangulation, but if the researcher wants to follow a

specific technique then following the guidelines set for that technique should achieve the goals for that specific research (McNiff et al., 1996).

CRITICISM/PROBLEM	COMMENT/SOLUTION
Use of quantitative research	Follow the guidelines of that technique

Another problem is time: the researcher faces the continual dilemma of priorities and loyalties of teaching versus research. There is no simple solution for this, but by combining both research and teaching, one might be able to do both without neglecting one in favour of the other. After all quality teaching needs to be well informed and reflective of ways that work in classrooms, and in order to teach effectively, the teacher uses research. Through action research teachers can combine their own research findings with teaching (Bearne and Cliff Hodges, 2000).

CRITICISM/PROBLEM	COMMENT/SOLUTION
Time (teaching vs. research)	Combining both research and teaching

Gathering data is not easy. The researcher might have to face the organisational administration that tends to be stricter with insiders than outsiders. Colleagues might not be cooperative, but the researcher has to keep them informed. The teacher/researcher has to be very careful to keep things going harmoniously and smoothly with students, colleagues, and administration while conducting a study that would lead to better classroom practices and if possible be innovative in research. The researcher should be aware that excessive self-criticism or optimism may lead to unmanageable proposals or make specific research questions difficult to identify. However, since action research is participatory; the researcher can involve the colleagues, the learners, and the administration in the research itself. This may lessen administrative and collegiality problems and motivate learners. Bearne and Cliff Hodges (2000) agree that undertaking action research might be a daunting prospect, but they add that help comes from all those involved in the research as it is not outside agencies, but the readers that give the responses to the research.

CRITICISM/PROBLEM	COMMENT/SOLUTION
Administration, colleagues, and learners are not cooperative	Participatory action research

In action research, it is quite common to have a practitioner researcher. This means conducting a 'systematic enquiry' related to the job on top of the work itself (Robson, 1993). Though this kind of research might be heavily criticised (especially by professional researchers), it has various complementing advantages. The practitioner researcher has the unique opportunity to know about the particular research situation and the people involved; also, the teacher researcher will have fewer problems than an outsider to design, analyse, and implement the changes if needed (see later section).

CRITICISM/PROBLEM	COMMENT/SOLUTION
Practitioner/Researcher	The insider is more involved than the outsider

With these dilemmas in mind, the present researcher tried to minimise these problems by involving 'a critical colleague', and other colleagues, the administration, and the students, informed about the project and its outcomes, etc. This has proven to be more difficult than was expected and anticipated at the beginning of this study.

Figure 2 illustrates the action research project used in this study. After the evaluation (1), arrow plan (2) is parallel to the line of plan (1), though it is a different plan because it is based on the previous cycle used; it deals with some different faculty members involved in the IEP and a different group of students. This action research cannot be considered as a non-stop continuation of the process because new factors (variables) have been added or changed: teachers might need training to understand what is really happening in the program; a new group of students might differ from the previous group in their basic knowledge of English, their expectations from the course, on their will to improve and learn from the program.

Figure 2: Action Research Cycle used in this study

1. Problem

2. Needs Analysis

3. Plan

4. Action

5. Evaluation

6. Plan

7. Action
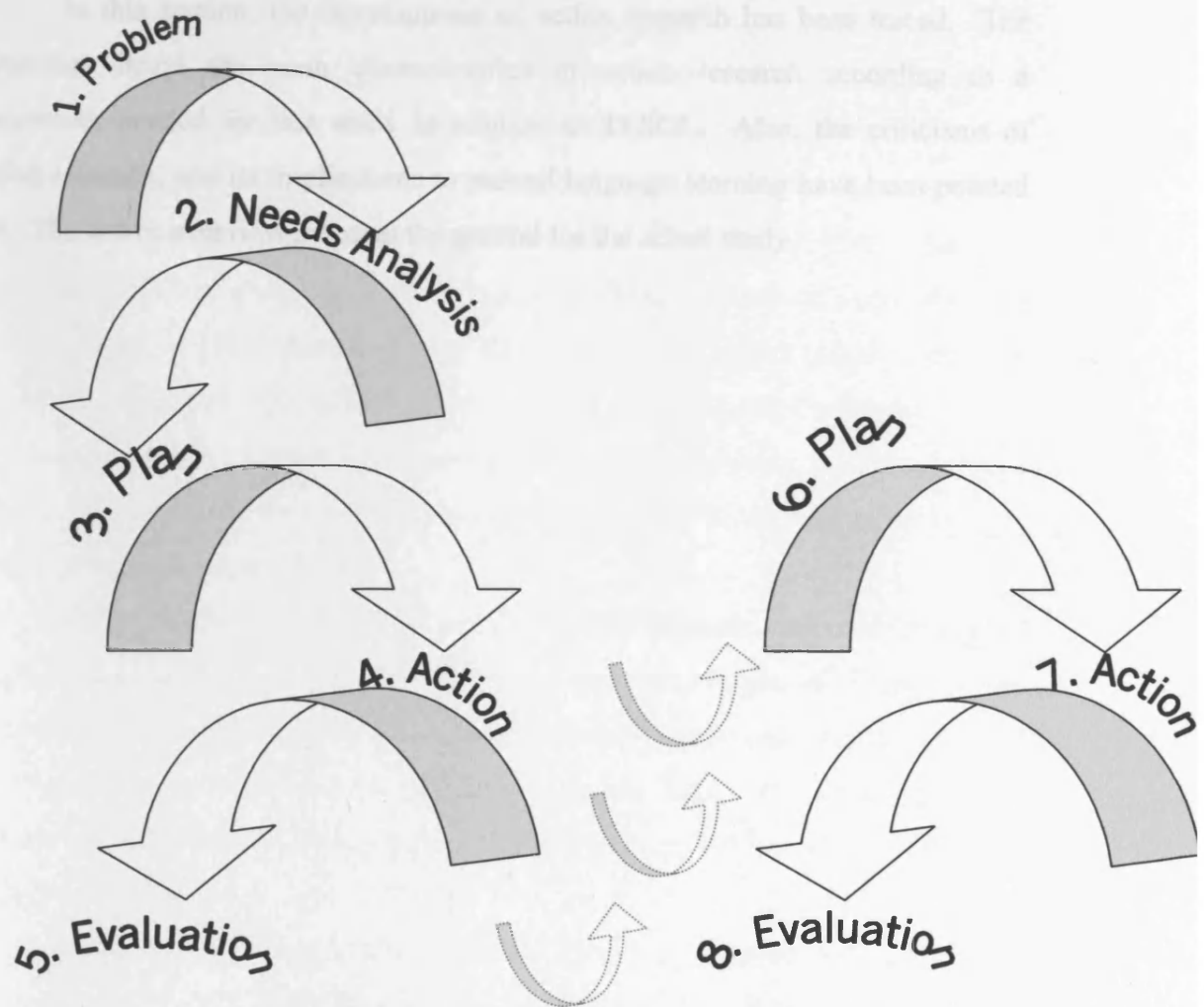
8. Evaluation

Action Research Cycle

1. Identify the Problem
2. Conduct Needs Analysis
3. Plan Changes
4. Implement Changes
5. Evaluate
6. Plan (2)
7. Re-implement
8. Re-evaluate
9. Move to Plan (3)

In this section, the development of action research has been traced. The researcher listed the main characteristics of action research according to a framework needed for this study in relation to TESOL. Also, the criticisms of action research, and its implications to second language learning have been pointed out. The above overview prepares the ground for the actual study.

3.2 Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is a difficult process, but it may be considered far more difficult in developing countries such as Lebanon, where political stability is still fragile. One risk is that outsiders might control the show (Shaw, 1997). Tollefson (1991), Paulston (1983), and Pennycook (1989) among others warn language teachers about conducting needs analysis randomly and without careful preparation, as there is a rather strong connection between language planning and policy and political power. Thus, one has to be careful when conducting needs analysis to mediate between outside influences and the needs of the language program. As the first step in action research is diagnostic, (i.e., needs analysis), in this section, a general literature review of needs analysis is pursued, and its importance to improve language programs is underlined.

West (1994) explains that the phrase 'analysis of needs' appeared for the first time in the 1920s in India. In the 1960s when *'English for Specific Purposes'* was first introduced, needs analysis or needs assessment became an essential feature in the evaluation process, and in language program design (McDonough, 1984; Ashworth, 1985; Yalden, 1987; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, Richards, 1990; see also, Riddell, 1990).

Dubin and Olshtain (1986) advocate surveying existing programs before developing new ones. Each program should be examined with five components in mind: the existing syllabus or curriculum, the material in use, the teachers, the learners, and the resources. In EAP and ESP the developments of new programs are usually guided by learners' needs, which implies the analysis or assessment of those needs. This includes surveying the backgrounds and goals of students, consulting and interviewing faculty members, observing students, and classifying assignments among other aspects. The rationale behind such a process is to enable teachers to prepare appropriate materials and provide learners with the language they need to improve and succeed in their courses (Benesch, 1996). Thus, needs analysis refers to the activities used to gather the basic information needed to develop a curriculum that will meet the needs of a particular group of students. It is the process to find out about students' needs so that the course they are taking can bridge the gap between what students already know and what they need to know (Brown, 1995a;

Graves, 1996; Pratt, 1994; Robson, 1993, p.184; and Dudly-Evans and St. John, 1998).

Hawkey (1983) warns of the dangers of conducting needs analysis, especially if the analyst is an outsider, for it might become an end in itself. He claims that conducting a needs analysis is "a procedure gone through once, producing, perhaps, an interesting and elegant profile, but not in fact, having much long-term influence in the teaching-learning process" (p.69). How can an outsider know more than the insider and assess the needs of a particular group or course if s/he is not involved in it? But an outsider might look at the program from a broader approach and give a more objective opinion than the participating insider. The outsider might provide fresh ideas and viewpoints about issues, but s/he may miss or misinterpret some data because of unfamiliarity with the observed situation (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). Monsi et al. (1995) argue against the use of external evaluators who might misrepresent facts to produce the reports the funding agencies are expecting. In fact, researchers have repeatedly pointed out the value of insiders' perspectives and the inadequacy of outsiders' intuitions in conducting not only needs analysis but also designing materials for language teaching. These researchers have also stressed the use of multiple sources and methods in conducting such a study (see Ramani et al., 1988; L. West 1984; R. West, 1994; Jasso-Aguilar, 1999). However, the needs analysis is often in the hand of administrators who want things to run smoothly and who want to be at the same time in good terms with those outsiders who might be powerbrokers. Again, this is a political issue.

Though many institutions favour the help of an outside expert to assess programs, the success of such a project is still questionable. Maybe the best solution would be to involve both insiders who focus on development and outsiders who are responsible for end products (Weir and Roberts, 1994). However, if more than one insider is involved in the program, the dilemma the administration might face is which insider to include: one who has been with the institution for a longer period of time, one with the highest degree, or a new comer with fresh ideas? The decision is a difficult and a very sensitive one. These are also stakeholders' issues (Robson, 2000). The insiders are part of the game; thus, all of them should be involved. Moreover, they should all get something out of the process (hopefully a

better program, self-appraisal, professional development, or financial reward). From one side, this can be a positive step that the administration would welcome. It would appear on the records of the involved faculty (for more credibility). On the other hand, the faculty can take the project further and publish the results (for professional development).

Benesch (1996) talks about two different types of needs analysis, the *descriptive* approach which has various limitations and the *critical* one, which aims to be 'transformative' (Pennycook, 1994). In *critical* research, one looks at questions of inequality, whether cultural or social, and aims at changing such inequalities while in *descriptive* research, one tends to describe what is happening without looking for solutions (Pennycook, 1994). However, action research is emancipatory, and affective needs analysis should go beyond the descriptive research and investigate thoroughly the critical approach. Thus, in order to find solutions to any problems, one should question all issues, analyse, criticise, review, and come up with innovations that would make a positive difference.

Berwick's (1989) definition of needs is rather unusual. He says, "the definition of needs is the basis of any needs assessment" (p.52). He explains that the elements to be assessed are different in each case as they depend on the values of the evaluator and the components of the educational system for each particular evaluation. He devised four different forms of analysis: first, *discrepancy analysis* deals with the missing elements between what people know and what they should know. Second, *democratic analysis* is based on the views of a reference group, so if the majority wishes a change in a certain practice, then needs analysis is expected. Third, the *analytical view* relies on experts' opinions. Finally, the *diagnostic analysis'* main source is the social services.

Berwick's analysis is an essential approach because it acts as a situation saviour. Thus, the content of the syllabus or the course is altered because of this need. Three out of the four forms of analysis are redundant. Whether discrepancy, diagnostic, or analytical analysis is followed, it is still the expert (the researcher, or the classroom teacher) whose job is to point out any existing gap and find solutions to narrow it. The fourth type, democratic analysis, depends more on the learners themselves. In the 'democratic' analysis, Berwick refers to a reference group, i.e., a group whose comments are collected after students finish the course. Whether these

four forms of analysis are adequate or not is still debatable as one cannot be sure if teachers and students will provide honest and serious answers because, first, teachers might not want to collaborate, and, second, students might not care about the study. The majority wants to get a passing grade and finish the course.

Berwick (1989) distinguishes between two types of needs, the 'felt' ones that learners have and the 'perceived' ones that experts believe are needed because of certain educational gaps noticed (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). This points to an important paradox: in many cases, the 'felt' needs of students are, by definition, inexact and inherently limited by the fact that those engaged in a course cannot accurately assess it until they have completed it or had sufficient experience to recognise its effect on their needs. Yet, the 'perceived' needs of experts, say teachers, while they may be based on a longer-term, more precise assessment are, by definition, necessarily more distant than learners. Clearly 'felt' and 'perceived' needs are complementary, and, in the present study, both are vital elements, which are both to be taken in account without supposing that either is inherently superior. The paradox is, perhaps, that both, singly, are inherently inadequate.

In ELT circles, there has been a disagreement over the meaning of needs analysis and what it involves. This has resulted in two different orientations. The narrow interpretation is solely related to the learners' needs regarding a certain situation. The second broader interpretation considers affective and cognitive variables. This includes learners' motivation, attitudes, expectation, learning styles, (Brindley, 1989). However, needs analysis and its applicability to second language teaching have been widely criticised (Nunan, 1988a; West, 1994).

In this sense, then, needs analysis involves the reconciliation of ascertaining of the needs of those who do not necessarily know what they want and who have not necessarily developed sufficient criteria themselves to judge with attempting to avoid imposition of outside authoritative judgements (which may yet be wrong) or inside knowledgeable opinion (which may yet be overly subjective or under-informed by current expertise). Attempting to reconcile such dilemmas includes consulting the learners, the teachers, and applying current frameworks of needs analysis to enquire about pedagogic situation and (multilingual) language uses within it. This implies using more than one approach to collect information or

opinion. Thus, triangulation, the use of multiple of methods to collect data should be used in the kind of context of the present project.

3.3 Evaluation

The last step in action research is evaluation. It completes the action research cycle, and thus prepares the ground for discussing and analysing results in order to plan the next phase of the research. Murphy (1995) defines educational evaluation as "the process of gathering information on any aspect of the operation of a curriculum, to see how this is working and how worthwhile it is; the information may be used in making decisions about change" (p. 11). In this section, second language evaluation is reviewed, and its implications for this present study are discussed.

Evaluation in general can be defined as the systematic attempt to collect information in order to assist in making decisions and judgements (Brown, 1989; Lynch, 1996; Gredler, 1996). Therefore, when evaluating a program, different kinds of information should be viewed: first, students' achievement, behaviour, attitude towards the course, work habits, and learning styles and strategies should be studied; second, the physical conditions and students' needs for professional qualifications should be evaluated.

Moreover, teachers' language proficiency and qualifications, instructional preferences and attitudes should be considered. It is not always easy for an insider to ascertain colleagues' qualifications and language proficiency. This by itself is a problematic issue because it can be quite difficult to expect the former to change their views and approaches towards language teaching. They might not see the purpose or even the need for various innovative approaches to ensure better language learning for their students. Finally, because of the new demands of the use of technology in language classes, the teaching methods, resources, and instructional technology available for the course should be evaluated.

Thus, evaluation is a complicated but essential process. Many experts such as Genesee and Upshur (1996), Wolf (1990), Weir and Roberts (1994), Stern (1998), and Kiely (1998) have prepared frameworks as the basis for conducting a successful program evaluation, but most still need validation.

Evaluation means "the systematic collection and analysis of information necessary to improve a curriculum, assess its effectiveness and efficiency, and determine participants' attitudes within the context of particular institutions" (Brown,

1995b, p.227). Brown's study lists the decisions that evaluators have to make and the problems they face. He warns researchers about the various decisions to take.

The first is whether the evaluation should be summative or formative (see also Wortheu, 1990; Weir and Roberts, 1994; Hargreaves, 1989; and Breen, 1989). The former takes place at the end of the program and determines the degree of its success while the latter occurs during the course development, and its purpose is to improve the program. Weir and Roberts (1994) confirm that a good program evaluation should entail both; the formative would be fore grounded by the teaching staff as they are more involved in the implementation, while the summative would be more of concern to program administrators.

The second decision is the type of expertise needed for the evaluation. Is there a need for an outsider or is an insider better? The insider-outsider evaluation is a current issue in educational evaluation. Insiders are trusted; they know their students, colleagues, organisations and administrators. They know their programs intimately, and thus their evaluation is most likely to be used; evaluation for course development should be "guided by the intrinsic concerns of the insiders" (Weir and Roberts, 1994, p.7). Still, one has to be cautious because some insiders might be content with the way the course is currently being conducted, and thus ignore evaluation, as they do not see the need to change what they have been doing for some time. Also, if an insider is conducting the research, other faculty members might not cooperate. They would rather investigate the matter themselves or claim they are satisfied with the program and, thus, resist change. They might also fear that the outcome of the evaluation might have a negative effect on their teaching methods. Outsiders will look at the program from a different perspective. As outsiders are not involved in the day-to-day interaction with the students, i.e., the actual teaching, they can reflect and evaluate the course more objectively than the insiders; they may be less biased than insiders (see Alderson and Beretta, 1992). Is there really a need for an outsider? Alderson and Scott (1992) opt for the insiders' evaluation but with advice from the outsider. Murphy (1995) warns that although evaluation in general should lead to innovations and thus be effective, it is often perceived as inquisitional and threatening. Alderson and Scott (1992) add that a participatory evaluation makes the teachers themselves less anxious and ready to do the course evaluation, themselves.

The third point is the kind of research to be conducted. Is it going to be field or laboratory research? Field research refers to a long-term classroom-based research while the laboratory one is a short-term study that deals with testing certain components in a theory.

The fourth important decision is when to evaluate. Should it be during or after the course? Brown (1995b) believes that during, after, and an immediate follow up would be ideal; however, one should be cautious about finance and the practicality of the study.

The next decision deals with the type of educational research. Should the researcher follow a quantitative or a qualitative approach? Lynch (1990, 1992), Beretta (1992) and other researchers advocate the use of a mixture of approaches if this helps with the collection of the data: triangulation (multi-method approach) is used in this study to ensure better results, validity, and reliability.

Finally, the last point is the process vs. the product evaluation. Long (1984) and Johnson (1989) argue that one cannot work without the other. For program evaluation to be successful, the researcher should combine both in order to determine if the program really works, or if it has worked better, and why or why not. Monsi et al. (1995) state that educational evaluation involves initiation, implementation, and the revision of the already established innovations.

3.3.1 Validity and Sampling

Brown (1995b) discusses the problems that program evaluators might encounter while conducting their research. The first one is the 'sampling'. Brown discusses three issues, how to select subjects, how many to use, and how to assign them to groups for comparison purposes. He suggests random sampling if the population is from various places, but if the researcher is dealing with a group in a single institution, then focusing on the whole group is acceptable; however, Brown warns the researcher about problems related to the generalisation of results.

The second issue is the sampling size. The only way to tackle this issue is by taking into consideration three factors: the homogeneity of the group, the enthusiasm and ability of teachers, and the need for subgroups within the samples.

The third issue is related to group comparison. Snow and Brinton (1988), Coleman (1992), Rollman (1994) and others advocate the use of intact groups. Because differences can be controlled statistically, there is no need for a comparison group because most often in this kind of research, the researcher uses a qualitative approach.

Another main problem is the teacher effect. If two groups are used in the research, and different teachers are teaching each group, the teacher variables might be difficult to control. Palmer (1992) argues that these variables might be more important than the methods used. A good solution might be rotating teachers around (Brown and Hilferty, 1986), but this raises the question of whether research and evaluation procedures are governing pedagogy. Beretta (1992) offers various solutions such as assigning teachers randomly, having the same teacher teaching the two groups, standardising teaching, etc. However the teacher effect might be more problematic if the researcher is at the same time the teacher as is common in action research.

The next problem that Brown (1995b) raises is reliability. He points out that reporting reliability estimates for quantitative research would improve both validity and reliability. To ensure the latter, Lynch (1992) and Alderson and Scott (1992) advocate the use of multiple sources for data collection (triangulation).

A main problem with evaluation (Wilcox, 1992) is that evaluation raises more questions than it gives answers, and then these answers raise further questions. Time is never enough for a complete and thorough evaluation. He adds that attempts to improve education have usually little success and rarely produce expected or desired results. In action research, the evaluation stage is the step that puts the research back in perspective. The researcher has to overview the results reached so far before planning another cycle of action research.

Chapter Four

Research Process

4.1 Action Research Application

Evans and Abbot (1998) claim that most innovative ideas related to higher education have not been researched properly; rather they reflect more the needs of a special pedagogy that is based on changes. Teachers' needs are rarely considered in such innovations, and this remains a major flaw in research. For instance, in the United Kingdom, many lecturers are requested to review their approach to language teaching regularly to ensure more student participation and motivation towards language learning. These tutors have been required to provide high quality teaching that is cost-effective and time saving. It seems that the rationale behind any related innovative changes is viewed differently by the administration (which often prioritizes financial considerations over pedagogic innovation), the tutors (who need to please both the administration and students while retaining their own professional integrity), and the learners (whose main concern is to complete courses, sometimes with minimal effort). This action research study was conducted with such points in mind.

4.1.1 Identifying the Problem

In the ELT context, new developments are continually being researched and implemented. This section discusses the needs and the rationale to conduct this present study in the IEP context, which is a particular ELT situation. The researcher was encouraged to investigate the problems that students faced in the IEP, for IEP students in general come with a very negative attitude to the program. They believe they are failures and losers. Therefore, it is essential to the researcher to come up with innovative solutions that would hopefully encourage and motivate students to acquire sufficient English to cope with EAP, and, at the same time, enjoy the compulsory English course.

In the past eight years, many Lebanese and non-Lebanese students living abroad have joined LAU in order to continue their university studies. During the seventeen years of civil war in the country and prior to 1991, the students enrolled at LAU were almost exclusively from Lebanon. Now, in a more stable national situation, students from different backgrounds, countries, and cultures are joining

the university. Currently, there are students who come from different Arab countries such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf area, Syria, and Jordan while others come from Latin America. Most of these students are from families of Lebanese origin. They have lived most of their lives in other countries, and their parents decided to send them back to Lebanon to complete their tertiary studies. For instance out of the 277 students in the present study, 65.3% (more than half the students) had attended their elementary classes in Lebanon while 24.5% came for Arab countries, 4.7% from Latin American, and 5.4% from other countries. For the intermediate classes, the percentages differ a little: 71.8% had studied in Lebanon, 21.7% in different Arab countries, 2.5% in Latin America and 4% in other countries. Moreover, one sees another rise for the secondary classes. By the time these students reached secondary levels, the civil war in Lebanon had ended, and many families returned to the country or decided to send their children back to Lebanon to continue their studies. Thus, 77.6 % had studied in Lebanon, 18.4% in Arab countries, 2.5% in Latin America and 1.4% in other countries.

	Elementary	Intermediate	Secondary
Lebanon	65.3%	71.8%	77.6%
Arab Countries	24.5%	21.7%	18.4%
Latin America	4.7%	2.5%	2.5%
Others	5.4%	4%	1.4%

Table 7: IEP students' enrollment at the elementary, intermediate, and secondary levels in schools in different countries

This change in the students' background, though not very drastic, was one of the essential elements that triggered this research. Having lived abroad for sometime or having spent most of their school years threatened by the civil war, the IEP students need time to adjust, first to a more stable situation in the country, then to the Lebanese culture, and finally to university life. Some of the students come from very strict school systems; they have never been in mixed classes before (field notes, 1997-1999). Their ideas about schooling and attending classes are different from what they face when they join LAU. Also, some of the students have to live alone for the first time in their lives. This, by itself, puts a lot of pressure on students, as many have never been fully in charge of daily chores. Most students are used to having maids serving them in their parental houses. Now they have a budget

that constrains their spending; they are responsible to attend classes, get passing grades and cope with daily problems (field notes, 1997-1999). On the other hand, and from an academic view, new developments regarding ELT are being researched and implemented in various countries; thus, it is urgent to alter the syllabus of the IEP so that it is more appropriate to the needs of the students.

From the end of the eighties after the IEP was offered again to students up to few years ago, there were many negative comments about the program as a whole. Administration, faculty members, staff, and other students did not know what the program was all about. They labelled it 'the easy way in to the university'. Some of them felt that it was a way for students who had failed all language entrance exams nevertheless to join the university; they had quite a negative attitude towards the program. Some still have this attitude. Moreover, LAU faculty of other disciplines (such as business, computer studies, or political science) complained about students' poor command of English. Many of them blamed their students' academic failings or failure (in some cases) on learners' inability to express themselves in proper English; their poor performance in classes was attributed to the lack of appropriate English needed for university level classes. A number of faculty members complained that students were not trained to cope with academic English; students were apparently not able to comprehend a simple psychology chapter or solve an elementary accounting problem. However, none of these faculty members was willing to help find a solution for the problem. At the same time, some students were showing signs of boredom and unhappiness in more advanced language classes because they could not achieve their aims and get high grades in their major courses. This was due to the problems they faced in using the language. Many students excel in their major courses yet fail to graduate from LAU because of some major lacuna in their use of English.

The need to evaluate the program and possibly implement changes was highlighted by two factors: the decline in student proficiency in English as observed by teachers, and the apparent low motivation of students in the IEP and in other advanced English courses. It seems that the problem is a recurrent one. The majority of the students who have to join the IEP have very low self-esteem. Further, spending a semester in the IEP has always been frustrating to students (Beirut University College, 1971, April 1972, July, 1972; Nasr, 1980). In order to

find a solution to this issue, one should first keep in mind the general framework of the program (see section one: IEP) and the type of students who enrol in this course and their language level. With these two points in mind, the researcher intends to investigate the problem thoroughly and come up with innovative ideas to help the learners overcome these problems and get the best they can from the program.

4.1.2 Conducting Needs Analysis

Step two in action research is to conduct needs analysis. In the academic year 1996-1997, the IEP faculty staff, with the approval of the administration, decided to review the existing IEP at LAU (Beirut campus). The syllabus that had seemed acceptable in the seventies needed to be updated and reformed. However, this does not necessarily mean that the objectives of the course stated in the seventies are obsolete. The basic aim remains the same: to teach (remedial) English language to first-year university students to enable them to study through English, but the methods instituted more than twenty years ago should be reviewed. Curricular innovations should be implemented so that the course motivates learners more to study the English language and prepares students for academic and professional needs of the new century.

For several years before the academic year 1996-1997, the pressing needs to improve the IEP program had been recognised; unfortunately, nothing tangible had been done to implement changes in the program for various reasons. In general, many teachers fear changes that might take them away from their routine. They may be reluctant to take risks or be unable to cope with new innovations. They feel trapped in a dilemma, a vicious circle. On the other hand, since LAU, as an institution, wants to establish an outstanding reputation for quality teaching, the teachers have to keep on searching for effective new pedagogies and implement them. Moreover, it is not reasonable to prepare, plan, and implement a completely different kind of syllabus and approach to language teaching, without conducting a comprehensive study to ascertain its feasibility. Yalden (1983) explains that changing an existing program does not usually entail a start from scratch especially when a new approach to second language teaching is concerned. One should modify the program by examining current syllabuses in order to alter it and give it a different focus. Thus, through research, one can evaluate the existing program, and on this basis, plan and implement innovative changes to update the course.

The first step the IEP faculty followed was to discuss the goals and aims of the IEP course. One way of doing this is following Genesee and Upshur's (1996) outline of instructional plans that are needed (see figure 3). They say that, first, the content or the objectives of the course should be stated clearly. Then, they point out that the organisation of the program should be thought about carefully. This organisation at LAU includes the number of hours required for the course, the number of students in each section, the prerequisites of the course, the division of class hours per week, and the textbooks that should be used. Also, a review of audio-visual materials and media such as videos, overhead projectors, and computers should be included. Finally, the syllabus should be prepared. Van Lier (1996) warns language teachers about being too rigid while designing a syllabus. He believes that both planning and stability, yet improvisation and variety, should be taken into consideration to allow the class teacher to be creative and not fall into the trap of adhering too closely to tradition. Genesee and Upshur's (1996) concept of instructional plans has been followed and applied to the IEP.

Genesee & Upshur's Instructional Plans	*IEP Application*
Content Objectives	see Appendix A

Organization
      Number of hours
 	
      Number of students
      Prerequisites
      Textbooks
      Audio-Visual Material
	15 contact hours per week
	    Division of class hours
	        3 hours listening lab +
	        4 hours language teaching per instructor
	20 students per class (LAU adds 10%)
	TOEFL (425 to 524) or EEE (400 to 449)
	One main reading book + a set of handouts
	Video + tapes + computer CDs + others

Syllabus	Structural Notional Functional Content-based (thematic) Task-based Mixed and/or Layered Process Etc.

Figure 3: Genesee and Upshur's (1996) instructional plans and their application to the IEP

Thus, in 1996-1997, the general goals of the IEP were reviewed, and the objectives of the major skills taught in the program were revised (see Appendix A).

In order to understand better the purpose of the IEP and the launching of the program in the fifties, the researcher tried to get hold of the pioneer of the IEP at LAU. He was in charge of the program until the early eighties when the program was discontinued. Unfortunately, a research interview with that person regarding the IEP could not take place. Since the eighties, after leaving LAU (Beirut University College at that time) he has lived in the United States. Also, it was not appropriate to ask him to fill a regular formal questionnaire. Thus, the quickest available contact was via email. The interview was a hands off type (Block, 1997), i.e., if the informant chooses to say very little, the researcher does nothing to get him/her to open up. The purpose was to find out about the IEP.

The researcher was able to get hold of various documents regarding the program (documents such as proposals, minutes, syllabuses of the IEP throughout the years) (see Beirut University College, 1971, April 1972, July 1972; Nasr, 1979, 1980; Harb, 1990; syllabuses of the IEP 1971, 1972, 1980, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995). The documents helped the researcher follow the stages of the expansion of the program until the early nineties. This proved to be a suitable method to understand the rationale of the IEP.

Then, a preparatory study to find out about students' needs appeared necessary. This was done by using various methods to collect data (questionnaires, interviews, analysing documents, and observations). A pilot questionnaire was distributed to students before the actual process was set. But, the problem was that the majority of the students are young, in their late teens or early twenties, and their evaluation might be biased or based on limited knowledge. In this study, needs analysis refers to a broader interpretation which considers both affective and cognitive variables, for a major issue in this paper deals with students' attitudes, motivation, and expectations towards the IEP. Also, this study originated in the 'perceived' needs felt by the researcher and various meetings that took place at the university. The broad interpretation appears to be appropriate here, but what is needed is a broad interpretation of both 'felt' (learners) and 'perceived' (researcher and IEP staff) needs.

Another dilemma was that the needs analyst was at the same time the researcher and one of the teachers in the program. To overcome some difficulties it was seen fit to involve other colleagues (participatory action research) and report bimonthly to the administration about the progress of the program and the various problems encountered during the semester. This should ensure a smooth coordination with all the instructors in addition to a more successful analysis of both the 'perceived' and 'felt' needs.

4.1.3 Planning and Implementing Changes

The next step was to plan and implement these changes. The characteristics of any action research usually differ from one project to another. For this specific study, the researcher grouped these characteristics into seven main ones:

Table 8: Action research characteristics with reference to the IEP

Action Research	IEP
Seeks *improvement by practice*	The program is evaluated and altered accordingly every semester
Is *responsive, flexible*, and *adaptable*	Frequent meetings of IEP staff allowed flexibility.
Is *disciplined enquiry*	Collection of data relied on the two paradigms (positivist and interpretive); the research was conducted according to the action research cycle.
Requires *validation*	Multi-method approach is used for data collection
Is *emancipatory*	The IEP staff worked as a team to implement new changes, disregarded traditional approaches to language teaching, and looked at the program from a critical perspective.
Is holistic and *cyclic*	At the end of each cycle, outcomes are analyzed, positive and negative points are discussed, and the next step is decided.
Is *participatory*	The researcher, co-teachers, and learners are involved in the process.

However, many criticisms and problems have been raised regarding action research. These problems with the various comments and solutions were discussed thoroughly in chapter three. In table 9, these potential criticisms and solutions are summarised with reference to the IEP research.

Table 9: Summary of potential criticisms/problems and comments/solutions regarding action research

Criticisms/Problems	Comments/Possible Solutions	The IEP Research
Particular environment Unrepresentative sample Specific group involved	Same as case studies Same elements can be generalized	The study is conducted at LAU Beirut campus; it can be generalized and used in other campuses, colleges, and universities in Lebanon and other countries that follow more or less the same system
Non traditional	Practical practices that lead to changes	Practical research with planning, implementation, evaluation, and re-planning is the practice followed in the IEP
Democratic/bad quality	The practitioner researcher's aim is to consciously improve the quality of the teaching process	The action research project is emancipatory, and it allowed the faculty involved in the IEP to do research and implement changes
Lack validity and reliability	Indirect General relevance	Use of triangulation enhanced the validity and reliability of the research
Teacher is at the same time the researcher	A critical friend would look at the situation objectively	A critical colleague was involved in the study to add objectivity to the research
Use of a critical friend	Participatory action research (involve colleagues and learners	Researcher, colleagues, and students were/are involved in all the steps of the action research
Use of quantitative research to avoid personalized situations	Follow the guidelines set for that technique	Triangulation is used to cover all the aspects of the research
Time: prioritize teaching or research	Combine both to reach quality teaching	Research and teaching were/are strongly linked together
Practitioner researcher	As an insider, the researcher knows what the problem is	The researcher sought the help of a critical friend, colleagues, and students to study the problems faced in the program at length and implement changes accordingly

The study started in Fall 1996, at the beginning of a new academic year (the pilot study stage). In the first IEP meeting, it was decided that all the IEP staff involved in the teaching during that semester, i.e. Fall 96, would meet regularly. The meetings would be based on teachers' reports regarding daily happenings in the IEP classes (based on participant-observations and students' work) (participatory and collaborative action research).

Block (1997) advises language teachers to spend time listening to their students. He adds that a good researcher would learn a lot by listening to language learners via interviews, discussions with students, and reading learners' journals. Thus, in this study interviewing learners and reading faculty's reports would give insight into improving the regular practice followed in the program.

Pennington (1989) believes that the ultimate success of failure of any language program resides on the initial decisions of hiring instructors and the structuring of the faculty body as a whole. However, hiring instructors for the IEP was not within the researcher's remit who is (for the time being) the coordinator of the IEP. While each IEP instructor has a master's degree in English (language or literature) or in Education, many of them teach in more than one institution: the benefits of holding advanced degrees may be outweighed by teachers' commitments.

Moreover, Pennington (1989) adds that later on the success of a program is linked with the continuous development of the faculty members in order to provide improvement and innovative change and growth. The administration is then able to consider all approved changes and innovations as evolution of the organization, thus, earning more credibility for the institution, while the faculty consider it as professional growth. Therefore, it was imperative for the IEP staff to be involved in the evaluation of the program since this would implicitly involve them in staff development.

Blue and Grundy (1996) argue that a productive and effective way for instructors to acknowledge their responsibility for the quality of the courses they are teaching is through team teaching. In the IEP context actual team teaching is currently not feasible because of timetable constraints. However, meeting regularly would keep the IEP team involved in the research process (team planning and participatory and collaborative action research). This would allow them to suggest changes and to feel some ownership of the changing process (emancipatory action

research). Moreover, this involvement would help to build up the team, and, provided group agreement is reached, it may well diminish individual resistance to change. This is assuming that the IEP faculty remains the same every semester. Unfortunately throughout the semesters there have been many changes in the teaching body.

During meetings, classroom observation (mostly participant observation) would be reported and minuted. Comments of students and instructors during classes would be discussed. Any problems faced in the IEP would therefore be more tangible and identifiable in terms of observed classroom practices or noted student comment, and hopefully easier to tackle within the team.

4.1.4 Evaluation

The last step in an action research is evaluation. The evaluation of the IEP was based on Brown's (1995b) list of decisions that evaluators have to make. In this study, the emphasis is on second language teaching and evaluation. In reference to the IEP, formative evaluation is more likely needed, but at the same time, summative evaluation should not be ignored. It is best to use both kinds of evaluation, for what is the use of planning changes and implementing innovations while using formative evaluation if the end results are not successful?

Again, the issue of an outsider vs. an insider evaluator is raised. This is a sensitive issue in Lebanon, for outsiders might be seen as a threat to the local staff members. In general, Lebanese people are not very keen on hearing and accepting others' comments. If an outsider should participate in a course evaluation, then s/he has to be diplomatic and cautious about any suggestions and comments. Otherwise, serious clashes between insiders and the outsider might occur. In this study, the evaluation was conducted by the researcher (an insider), and a critical friend and colleagues were involved in the action research project. Also, the evaluation of the program was conducted continuously, and both process and product was taken into consideration. Finance and practicality were not key issues here because the researcher is also the co-ordinator of the program, and thus all administrative procedures were smoothly overcome.

Table 10: Brown's (1995b) list of decisions that evaluators have to make and the application in the IEP

Decisions	Applications in the IEP
Summative vs. Formative	Mainly formative (without ignoring summative)
Outsider vs. Insider	Insider + critical friend + colleagues
Field vs. Laboratory Research	Action research
When to Evaluate	During and after
Quantitative vs. Qualitative	Triangulation
Process vs. Product Evaluation	Both process and product

4.1.4.1 Validity and Sampling

The various problems and issues in program evaluation raised earlier (see chapter 3, section 3.3) were studied carefully in reference to the IEP, and many solutions and considerations were regarded. The first issue is generalisation of the results. Though the study is conducted on one campus, the Beirut one, the results could be shared and implemented in the other two campuses. Also, the other universities and institutions in Lebanon offering similar Intensive English courses might benefit enormously from this study.

Another main point is that education in Lebanon is bilingual/multilingual, which is the case in a majority of countries such as Philippines (Fortez, 1997), Cambodia (Chamnan and Cornish, 1997), Hong Kong (Wright and Kelly-Holmes, 1996), Jordan, Tunisia, and Morocco (Abu-Absi, 1997) among others. Thus, this present study can be useful to similar situations in bilingual/multilingual countries.

All the students in the IEP in Beirut campus were included in the study as their number was manageable. It was important to get feedback from all of them to ensure a variety of responses and give a chance to each student to express his/her own point of view. Brown (1995b) suggests that it would be better to include all the students in the study if they come from the same institution; in the present case all come from the same program and the same branch of the institution. However, no comparison group was used, as the only comparable groups are the ones in the other two LAU campuses, Byblos and Sidon. IEP students in Beirut campus are of a substantial number if compared to the other two campuses, and already represent various multicultural backgrounds (field notes, 1997-1999). The number of students in the IEP in both Byblos and Sidon is minimal, and the students' needs in those two

campuses might be different from the ones who join Beirut. Moreover, most faculty members involved in the program are teaching more than one section, and all students are in fact exposed to four different instructors. Finally, a multi-method approach is used to improve the reliability and the validity of the results.

Table 11: Problems and issues in program evaluation with diverse solutions and/or considerations in evaluating the IEP

Problems/Issues in Program Evaluation	Solutions and/or considerations in evaluating the IEP
Sampling	The whole group
Generalizing results	Various institutions that give IE courses; bilingual/multilingual countries that are similar to Lebanon
Group comparison	Use intact group (all IEP students)
Teachers' effect	Integration of all the skills and close coordination among all instructors (four teachers for each class and each teacher teaching more than one group)
Reliability	Use of triangulation and questionnaires should improve both reliability and validity
Evaluation raises more questions than gives answers	The mere fact of doing action research explains the need to raise questions

Although the various problems and issues in program evaluation were taken in consideration when applied to the IEP, some problems may remain unsolved. They would be mentioned as limitations of the research (see chapter seven, section 7.3).

4.1.5 Gaining Access and Ethics

The ethical issues in educational research are referred to many times in this study. Thus, a brief discussion about the code of ethics seems necessary. While conducting a research project, the researcher should be aware of the following ethical points:

1. The participants or the stakeholders (privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, etc.)
2. Credibility of Evaluation (trustworthy and competent researcher; complete and fair assessment)
3. Practicality, Viability, and Cost Effectiveness of Research
   (Robson, 2000; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000)

The only administrative procedure needed was to get the permission of the chairperson and the dean of the school to conduct such a study, (for ethical considerations), and this was easily forthcoming. Bell (1993) warns researchers about assuming that things would be fine. She warns them about the need to negotiate access and clear official channels before conducting any study. In this case, the administration not only welcomed the idea but also was also eager to help, for the results of the study would potentially improve the program, thus, giving more credibility to the university. Further, this study might encourage other faculty members to conduct similar studies regarding the courses they are teaching and/or coordinating. The administration encourages such research.

Involving colleagues in the study would minimise any tension of staff who felt alienated or threatened by the changes this research might bring. Moreover, it was made clear to all students that research data would be kept confidential, and the anonymity of research participants would be protected at all time (for ethical considerations) (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992). The above points were stressed so learners would feel more confident and freer in answering all questions.

4.1.6 Pilot Study

In Fall 1996, a pilot study was conducted. Some students were interviewed, and at the same time a pilot questionnaire regarding students' attitudes and perceptions about the IEP was distributed to students who were attending the IEP (Questionnaire A) and students who had been enrolled at one time or another in the program from Fall 1993 up to Fall 1997 (Questionnaire B). Fifty questionnaires from each group were chosen at random for preliminary analysis. Students' answers were analysed to check whether or not the questions were clear. Then, questionnaire A was revised because it was one of the components needed for the focus of the main investigation. Also, these students' comments regarding the various language problems they faced in their regular courses were taken in consideration while reviewing the existing IEP. Some questions in questionnaire A were altered or removed because they were misleading, ambiguous, or confusing to the students; others were added to fit the purpose of the study. A preliminary analysis showed that some students enrolled in the program were unhappy about the length of the course. They do not want to 'lose' a semester to improve their English without getting credits for the time spent in the program.

Questionnaire B was disregarded because the purpose of this study is to deal with the currently enrolled students in the IEP and not ex students. However, some of the feedback collected from questionnaire B showed that past IEP students had a smooth transition from the program to regular classes. The answers of questionnaire B shed light on students' needs in regular courses, i.e. courses students have to take after passing the IEP. It was essential to investigate whether learners felt they were well prepared for the upper language classes, whether the information was redundant, and/or whether they had problems coping with regular university courses (language wise). Though most students confessed that the IEP helped them improve their English language skills, they still felt that they lacked the ability to write academically and speak fluently. They were doing fine, but there was still few missing elements that they believed would have helped them cope better with more advanced language and subject matter courses. Students who filled Questionnaire A reported that the program was a repetition of what they took in other language classes. It is similar to language entrance exam preparatory classes at schools or in the various specialized centers available nationwide. Most of them wrote that they were fed up with using the same material (mostly the same textbook) and the same approach used in other language programs. The majority complained about studying again grammar rules as 'these rules can be learned while writing, reading, and speaking.' They bemoaned about the use of memorising and knowing grammar rules when one cannot apply them, i.e., use them correctly in written and spoken language. They confirmed the view that there was definitely a problem in the IEP and wanted measures to be taken to solve this problem. Therefore, it was imperative to go back to the beginning and think about the broad objectives of the course. Should they be kept the same as the ones written in the seventies? Should the IEP program still be divided into skills?

To consult about this, all English language instructors at LAU, whether involved in the IEP or not, were urged to attend a general meeting to discuss the objectives of the Intensive English Program. Finally, after a careful examination of what had been done and what it was proposed should be done in the program, a set of general goals and specific objectives were prepared and handed it to all IEP staff. It looked ideal on paper, but that was not enough, for the program needed to be

revised accordingly and the objectives to be implemented. (see chapter 4, section 4.1.2).

The next step was to examine the way the course hours should be divided. Unfortunately, the general framework set by the administration cannot be changed. Therefore, IEP students should register for thirteen credit hours per semester. These credits are equivalent to twelve regular class hours (50 minutes each) and three language lab hours per week during a period of fifteen weeks. The same number of hours should be given intensively during the summer session of eight weeks.

In this chapter, the researcher highlighted the various steps followed to conduct this study successfully. One of the cycles of the action research illustrated on page 57 was used to outline the different stages the study went through.

Chapter Five

Research Methodology

English Language Teaching (ELT) programs have experienced tremendous changes in the past years in response to the evolving needs of the students, teachers, and the programs themselves. However, changes do not always lead to improvement. They may simply mean the use of different methods or ways in teaching the same material, or using new material with the same methods, but without clearly improving the program. Other changes and innovations in ELT are desirable as they end up in improved programs that motivate learners better (Stoller, 1994). The IEP offered to students at the LAU in Beirut is a program that needs to be upgraded so that it is more up to date with current developments in ELT. The program needs to take more account of:

1. Students' needs (even now, following substantial changes in the program, many questions are still raised regarding the existing syllabus, materials used, teachers, students, and available resources needed for the course).

2. Use of new technology (computers, the Internet)

3. Students' (likely) future professions

4. Preparation for study of students' majors

So much is changing and much of what was previously acceptable is becoming obsolete. However, as a prudent preliminary to change, one should investigate the different methods used in practice, review good points and drawbacks, then devise new proposals to cater for the language needs of the upcoming generation.

5.1 Methodology

Ultimately, and initially, education focuses on people. Therefore, when one conducts research, one has to ask the participants something about themselves. To do so, different techniques such as observation, interviews, questionnaires and a variety of scales and tests might be used. In this section, the various methods used in this study are discussed and their importance explained. However, prior to the distribution of the questionnaires and the discussion of the IEP with concerned

faculty members, the researcher had already investigated the matter thoroughly. Thus, all available documents related to the IEP were analysed thoroughly. These included old syllabuses, the stated goals, aims, and the set objectives for the program, proposals written to launch the original the program or change some of its content.

In this study, triangulation (multi-method approach) is used. Thus, the two paradigms, the quantitative and the qualitative are interrelated to collect all data. While quantitative deals with numbers, qualitative works with words. In order to do so, observation 'watching', interviews 'asking', and documents 'examining' should be used (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Wolcott, 1992). The use of a variety of methods in an action research project strengthens the study, then no doubt the researcher uses various research methods to conduct the study successfully as the methods used complement (with some overlapping though) each other.

Methodology for the IEP

1. Observation

2. Pre Questionnaire

3. Document Analysis

4. Meetings

5. Interviews

6. Discussion

7. Minutes

8. Post Questionnaire

9. Multi Method Approach

Triangulation –

Figure 4: The various methods used for data collection in this study

The various methods used for the research design are 'somehow' arranged chronologically to show the approximate order of procedures. Some of these steps are parallel, intermittent, or simultaneous because the nature of this research does not lead to following a systematic approach (use of one method, then the other) to collect data. All the methods are interrelated, and each one was used whenever it seemed appropriate.

The first approach used was *observation*. It made the researcher aware of the existing problem. Second, the *pre-questionnaire* was used at the beginning of each semester and the *post-questionnaire* at the end of each semester. The *interviews* first with former and current IEP faculty members were conducted whenever contact was made; second, *interviews* with the students (10 students each semester whenever applicable) were informal and took place in the middle of each semester. Meanwhile the studying of *documents, learners' journals, discussion,* and *meetings* with IEP staff were done simultaneously. This multimethod approach or triangulation was followed to ensure more reliability and validity to the study. These procedures were followed to build a basis for the outcome prospects: to review the IEP program and prepare a new version that is more learner centered that teachers' and that takes into considerations the objectives and goals of the course, the administration constraints, and learners' needs. This should lead to a stronger and more consistent program that would (hopefully) make the IEP learners become more motivated and able to cope better with EAP.

5.1.1 Observation

In this study the first tool used to collect data is observation, which has the advantage of directness, for the researcher observes without asking people questions (Robson, 1993). The observer has firsthand experience; s/he can record information, and impressions can be recorded immediately. Unusual events might occur during classroom observation that would be referred to in interviews. On the other hand, successful observation demands specific skills, the observer might not have good observation skills; also, s/he might be unwise to report some information considered 'private' (Creswell, 1994). In systematic non-participant observation, the observer sits at the back of the class and codes the actions that are happening in front of him/her every certain number of minutes or seconds (Cohen and Manion 1994). Galton (1997) argues that a structured classroom observation is an objective

technique by itself even though the criteria might be highly subjective. If the system is correctly used, the results will be quite reliable, valid, and less biased. Non-participant observation is unlikely to be used in the IEP for reasons outlined below.

Though the number of students in each section is manageable (regarding coordination, preparation for each IEP level and class, and grading papers), the workload of faculty members is rather heavy. Full-timers are not exclusively teaching in the IEP; they have other courses to prepare for, meetings to go to, and papers to grade. On the other hand, part-timers, in general, do not have the time or the will to prepare extra materials for their classes; they only follow the syllabus of the course. The researcher judgement was that neither group would welcome being observed, as they might be prone to criticism.

In a university context, such as LAU, it is quite unlikely for colleagues (full timers or part-timers) to accept willingly that others (insiders or outsiders) attend their classes even if it is only to observe students. Many teachers fear the criticisms, positive or negative, from the observer even if s/he is quite confident about his/her teaching. Many Lebanese teachers fear this, as a cultural perception, even when it is unjustified. Perhaps they also fear that even an observer who is emotionally detached from whatever is happening might misinterpret some events or be bewildered by them. The situation of being observed is new and unfamiliar to Lebanese teachers. The insider, on the other hand, who is also a teacher of a similar class, may face difficulties in being just an observer and might not easily get detached from the familiar (Wragg, 1999). Therefore, in this study, the non-participant observation was disregarded.

The second type is the participant observation where the observer is part of the group. S/He participates in every activity. The observer records an "impressionistic" account by talking to pupils and teachers and by participating in classroom activity. Robson (1993) points out that in case studies, participant observation is likely to be used. An action research project is considered as a case study approach to research (Cohen and Manion, 1994). However, one cannot easily separate data collection from analysis in this kind of observation. They are both done simultaneously, but the former helps shape the development of the latter. Ball (1997) refers to the participant observer as a "research opportunist." He explains that data collected by the opportunist researcher can be of four types. First,

observation data are collected and recorded personally. Second, *respondent* data are gathered from diaries and interviews. Then, *enumeration* data deal with numbers, categories, types, and events. Finally *documentary* data deal with the use of fields and records (Ball 1997). These four types of observation overlap. They also relate to other kinds of research methods such as the documentary analysis, and a mixture of qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (numbers and questionnaires) methods. Thus, unconsciously, the opportunist researcher is using triangulation.

In this study, the data collected from observation is of two types:

- Data collected by observing IEP faculty

- Data collected by observing students

The researcher acted as an opportunist researcher. She did not follow any systematic observation schedule but instead kept record of everything that occurred in front of her whether in her own classes, in meetings, or in various situations where IEP learners and faculty were involved.

To ensure that such observations were ethically acceptable, the researcher made clear announcements to all IEP staff and learners at the beginning of each semester about the need to record such information and got their approval.

5.1.2 Questionnaires

A common and widely used method to collect data is using questionnaires (the 'enumeration' data type collected by the opportunist researcher). However, many researchers state that the return rate for postal questionnaire is low (see Robson, 1993; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Oppenheim, 1992). Still, questionnaires are an important tool for data collection. For this project, questionnaires are used to collect students' comments and opinions about the IEP at LAU (Beirut). A well prepared, designed, and analysed questionnaire can be of great significance (Tuckman, 1988); however, in designing it, one has to be aware of several drawbacks. For instance, Pratt (1994) warns against writing questions that might be unconsciously biased or that the language of the questions might be misunderstood by respondents, for either could affect the results of the questionnaires. According to Robson (1993), answers related to facts and behaviour are easy to obtain and code whereas others are more difficult to get since they tend to be subject to other factors such as the wording and sequencing of the questions. Usually the use of scale questions can help in remedying this problem (Robson, 1993), but in the case of this study, scale questions

were not included in order to cater for those students whose proficiency in the English language is still limited. A translation of the questionnaire in Arabic might have overcome this problem (however, not all IEP students are Arabic literate). Importantly, using an Arabic questionnaire in the English program would constitute an irony that students would no doubt broadcast, and this would affect the IEP reputation.

Though many researchers such as Oppenheim (1992) and Tuckman (1988) advocate the use of anonymous questionnaires that do not include any form of background information, for this research it was essential to obtain such information. Knowing the background most students come from allows the researcher and the instructors of the IEP to cater for known special needs. Also, people in general like to talk about themselves, so starting with personal information in the questionnaire might interest the students. They know the answers, and these students are usually ready to write about themselves. However, participants were asked not to write their names on the questionnaires (for ethical considerations).

For this research, questionnaires were distributed to students, collected, coded, and fed into the computer to tally the results. One of the difficulties faced while coding the questionnaire concerned the questions to which students could choose more than one answer (see Appendix B, Part three in the pre-questionnaire; Part two in the post-questionnaire). Each statement in each question was dealt with as if it was a separate item, and was coded as a regular yes/no question. For instance, question one in part C deals with the different objectives related to Intensive English that students consider the most appropriate to meet their needs. There are seven different alternatives from which students can choose either one or more. Each answer was dealt with as a separate item, so (A) understanding spoken language, was changed to a yes/no questions, and so on so forth. Although this item was divided into seven sub questions, still when using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), one can analyse all the answers of each question in combination or deal with them separately depending on the kind of results one is seeking.

Robson (1993) suggests that the analysis can be done manually if a small amount of data is being used, but he still believes that the use of the new technology will help to avoid calculation errors. Thus, the SPSS was used to calculate all results

(Norusis, 1993; Cohen and Holliday, 1996; Bryman and Cramer, 1997; Eispruch, 1998; and Kranzler and Morsund, 1999).

5.1.2.1 Questionnaire Design

The construction of the questionnaire for that project was not an easy task. It was prepared after a pilot study (see chapter 4, section 4.1.7). Some of the questions are adapted from the questionnaire used by Alderson and Beretta (1992), others from the one used by Wen-Ling Tsai (1997), Yalden (1983), and Weir and Roberts (1994) while the remaining ones were prepared by the researcher as fit for the study. In the latter the language used in formatting the questions was designed to be easy and simple for students to understand. Careful attention was given to the wording of the questions: many phrases and words were changed after the pilot study because students were confused by some items. Even then, the questionnaire was piloted again with former IEP students. After a satisfactory input from these former students, the questionnaire was ready. A lengthy questionnaire risks readers becoming bored or not taking items seriously (Oppeinheim, 1992); the present questionnaire of eight pages was considered to be of acceptable length. It was essential for this study to include different types of questions related to the same topic to check whether students are being serious about answering and that their answers are honest. Even with this reliability check, honesty and seriousness regarding the responses of the learners is still questionable (Robson, 1993). Very few open-ended questions were used in both the pre and post questionnaire because the closed questions are usually more recommended and are easier to code and analyse (Robson, 1993). Also, most questions were straightforward and specific since they are better than general questions (Robson, 1993), and therefore it would be easier to standardise the results.

Questionnaires in general include three main types. The first has to do with facts, that is, what the people know while the second deals with their behaviour; as for the last type, it involves attitudes and people's beliefs. In this questionnaire, a mixture of these different types of questions was used. Learners, in general, tend to be quickly bored if they have to do the same thing for a long period of time. As explained earlier, The IEP students already have a very negative attitude when they join the program (Beirut University College, 1971, April 1972, July, 1972; Nasr, 1979, 1980). They believe that they are failures because they failed to get the

required TOEFL or the EEE scores to join the regular classes at LAU. On the other hand, many students who have studied English for many years feel that they are more fluent than their EEE or the TOEFL scores indicate and resent having to 'waste' a semester or even a year in studying English extensively. Therefore, a number of students in every class lack the motivation to work energetically in order to reach their goal in the shortest possible time. The teacher faces the constant problem of holding their attention and stimulating their interest (Nasr, 1980).

In order to secure correct answers in the questionnaire, the questions were mixed in a varied way to keep the students wanting to read, and wondering what the next part is going to be. Therefore, Yes/No questions, multiple choice with one and more alternatives, tables to check, scales to complete, short answers, and comments are all types of questions found in the questionnaire.

5.1.2.1.1 The Pre-Questionnaire

The pre questionnaire is divided in six different parts (see Appendix B). The first part is the simpler and easier to fill in, for it is related to students' own personal life and thus would involve the learners and encourage them to complete all questions (see Robson, 1993). In general students like to talk about themselves, what they would like to major in, where they studied, the various languages they speak at home, etc. This makes them feel important; therefore, they are willing to tell about all the facts. The middle parts include the more complex questions, which are essential to the study. They deal with students' attitudes and expectations towards the program while the next bit gives room for students to express various ideas that might be included in the program at a later stage. The concluding part encourages students to think about topics that most learners, have rarely discussed or even thought about.

5.1.2.1.2 The Post Questionnaire

The post questionnaire is divided into three main parts (see Appendix B, part two). The first one gives general information about the IEP and the student; for instance, students are asked whether or not they enjoyed the classes, if they think they have learned something from the course, and if they have done their best. This part gives some input on students' evaluation to the course. The learners seem honest in their responses in the post questionnaire. They take it seriously as they know that their answers might make a difference in the way the course is given.

Part two is related to specific information about the IEP. Students in this part are asked if the objectives of the program have met their needs, if they think that their way of looking at the language and using it has changed or not, and whether or not they thought that the materials used in class were interesting. As stressed earlier, students' views to the IEP are rather negative at the beginning of the course. One should check whether this negative attitude changed to a more positive one at the end of the semester.

Part three is a summary and a conclusion of the first two parts. It gives students the opportunity to sum up the work they have done during the whole semester. Also, there is a special section for students to give further comment about the program and add their own opinion.

5.1.3 Interviews

Another widely used method to collect data is the use of interviews (the 'respondent' data type collected by the opportunist researcher). In this research, unstructured (informal) hands-off (Block, 1997) interviews are used with a random sample of Intensive English Instructors. Interviewing colleagues and former IEP instructors about the IEP is a difficult task. Because of the collegiality factor, the interview was more a chat between the interviewer and the interviewee. Many of them resisted the idea of a formal interview. They were willing to talk, discuss, and criticise the program informally but not to be questioned about it. A possible reason for this reluctance is the fear of being quoted though the researcher assured them anonymity and of generalising the results (for ethical reasons). They may believe that the administration is over-sensitive to criticism (even if it is constructive), and these instructors (the majority are part timers) may fear that they will not be offered further employment. Also, former instructors of the IEP were difficult to locate as many had left the country. However, the researcher was able to collect much of the sought information by contacting some ex-faculty via email.

For this specific research few students were interviewed. The researcher wanted to avoid "the perils of easy access" (Seidman, 1991, p.31), but at the same time she needed first hand information from the learners. Interviewing a few students (10 per semester whenever applicable) was done in the middle of each semester immediately after the midterm exam. This timing was chosen to conduct interviews for various reasons: by week eight of the semester, the learners should be

able to provide their own informed comments on the course. The beginning of the semester would be too early, for learners would not know about the course while the end of the semester would be too late, for learners might feel that it is of no concern to them what happens with the program (see Sharp, 1990). The grades of the interviewees fluctuated from failing, to average, to excellent. The researcher did not only want to interview good, average, or below average IEP students as the purpose is to involve all types of students. This would give a larger range of answers. The questions were very general (see Appendix C) so that students could answer them freely. However, in most interviews this was not the case. The interviewer is the coordinator of the program and the teacher of some of the students. Thus, most answers were biased towards presenting an acceptable version to the teacher/researcher. Students wanted to please their teacher and avoid any form of perceived retaliation if they give an unexpected one (Sharp, 1990). It was decided to interpret the results collected to check whether learners' answers match the data collected from the other sources.

The learners chosen to be interviewed were ten every semester. These ten students were chosen at random after the midterm examination. Three scored above 80% in the exam, four scored between 70 and 79%, and three scored 69% and below.

5.1.4 Documents

Other data the researcher used include what Bodgan and Biklen (1992) refer to as 'personal documents' (the 'documentary' data type collected by the opportunist researcher). These can be diaries, memos, minutes from meetings, proposals, and letters. These can be from either teacher or learner - and students' journals (Genesee and Upshur, 1996). These are distinct from official ones (e.g. memos, minutes, meetings, and proposals), which might reveal internal regulations and rules among other things. Researchers might encounter difficulties analysing data collected as personal documents, but the information gathered using these techniques might be useful to the research.

Creswell (1994) claims that there are various advantages related to the use of documents as data collection. First, documents give the researcher access to well-thought out and researched information, as the words and the language of the

informant are most likely written carefully. A researcher can study these documents at leisure.

However, some of the limitations one might face are the following. The documents might be private and not accessible to public use. Also, some documents might not be accurate, authentic, or easily interpreted. Looking for them might be time-consuming as not all documents are easy to find.

In reference to the IEP, this study uses official documents that record the preliminary steps used to launch the program, giving the rationale behind such a program outlining a historical overview of the IEP, and documenting the changes that have occurred throughout the years. Also, different memos, proposals (e.g. to reinstate the IEP after it was stopped for a few years), and minutes (e.g. related to problems the faculty encountered with students, and the needs to implement new changes) used during the past few years will be discussed and analysed (Beirut University College, 1971, April 1972, July, 1972; Nasr, 1979, 1980; Harb, 1990). Students' journals, related to the IEP, are also used as a means to investigate the various problems these IEP students are facing in the program.

5.1.5 Triangulation (multi-method approach)

In order to evaluate a program, implement new methods, re-evaluate, and ensure validity, one has to decide which approach towards evaluation to follow (Brown, 1995b). The main two paradigms in educational research are the positivist and the interpretive ones. Tuckman (1988) explains the difference between the two by stating that the quantitative approach deals with numerical data in order to test a hypothesis while the qualitative one deals with the collection of narrative data to gain insight or generate a hypothesis. According to Brown (1995b), quantitative data constitute information that can be changed into numbers and figures. Statistical data include the number of students in a program, their grades, etc. However, some educators place great emphasis on the use of qualitative measures, which are more interpretative and ethnographic (Robson, 1993). Though Ross (1992) suggests that using both qualitative and quantitative research "may provide alternative views of the same classroom phenomena," Rodgers (1986) sees that there is value in using qualitative techniques such as the use of observation records and interview transcripts. On the other hand, Lynch (1992) points out the weaknesses of

qualitative methods claiming that they are more time-consuming in terms of collecting analysed data. Such considerations about the two paradigms arguably show that they are complementary and that in many contexts both will be necessary.

To ensure more credibility and balance in the approach of the present study, it seems better to use a methodological triangulation (Cohen and Manion, 1994). In this study, triangulation refers to a multi-method approach.

Initially, the term triangulation was used for navigation; Denzin (1997) explains that the concept can be traced back to Greek origins of maths, but he (Denzin, 1978) was the first to use it in the social sciences for research purposes (Creswell, 1994) to refer to combining methodologies in order to research and study the same issue.

Jick (1979) argues that by using triangulation the researcher is able to neutralise bias, for the main advantage of multiple methods is the "reduction of inappropriate certainty" (Robson, 1993, p. 290). In order to avoid confusion while using several methods, Robson (1993) suggests that triangulation might be used for complementary purposes within a study advocating the use of different methods for various tasks. Goetz and LeCompte (1984), Johnson (1992) and Richardson (1996) stress that triangulation will enhance validity, for by using different sources of information and/or methods, the result would be more likely accurate, thus more reliable and valid. Jasso-Aguilar (1999) argues that there are very few studies that utilise triangulation though she convincingly advocates the use of various methods and sources in needs analysis.

Auerback (1995) states that needs analysis is an on going process, but Long (in press) questions the reliability or validity of a study where the only source of information is the students. Chambers (1980) similarly believes that students who are linguistically naïve cannot and should not be expected to make clear and sound decisions concerning their language needs. However, this does not mean that triangulation is without criticisms. For instance, Silverman (1985) argues that an action cannot be duplicated and observed again and again. Patton (1980) believes that it is rare to get exactly the same input from different data sources. In fact, the use of different methods for data collection should strengthen the research as more information is collected. Even so, one should interpret all these sources with care. Strangely enough, Cohen and Manion (1994) warn the researcher about the

problems he/she might face regarding validity while using triangulation. This statement contradicts Goetz and LeCompte (1984), Johnson (1992) and Richardson (1996) who state that triangulation enhances both validity and reliability. However, Cohen and Manion explain that the case applies when only qualitative data are used in the research.

In this present study, it is necessary to use triangulation because not all the data can be collected by following one paradigm and one method; thus, various documents are analysed, participant observation is carried out, interviews are conducted, and questionnaires are distributed and analysed. All these various methods are used to ensure that all the aspects of the IEP have been investigated thoroughly and to ensure the validity and reliability of the study.

To sum up, the objectives were written and the general framework set. The pre and post questionnaires were ready, enough information was collected through class observations and discussions, students' comments and learners' journals were studied, interview questions were prepared, a thorough literature review of the IEP was done, and endless discussions among fellow instructors took place. It was time to plan the next step or the application.

Table 12: Methods used for Data Collection

Methods Used for Data Collection	Research Participants	Time of collection
Document Analysis	N/A	Weeks before the study started and during the two years of the study
Pre-Questionnaires	IEP students during the six semesters the research took place	First week of classes each semester (6 times)
Post-Questionnaires	IEP students during the six semesters the research took place	Week fourteen in each semester (6 times)
Learners' Interviews	Ten students chosen at random each semester	Week eight of classes, after midterm
Staff Interviews	Former and present IEP staff	At the end of each semester. (Hands-off interviews)
Observations	Students and IEP staff	Participant observations took place during the semesters. The researcher recorded the various interesting instances that occurred when she was around.
Meetings	IEP Staff teaching during the six semesters of the research	Every other week during the semester
Discussions	IEP staff and other faculty members involved in the teaching of English at LAU	Mainly in meetings (every other week during the semester)
Minutes	N/A	All minutes recorded during the six semesters of the study (a set of minutes every other week)

Chapter Six

Findings

In this section, the various steps followed in the IEP since Fall 1996-1997 (the pilot study stage) until the end of Summer 1999 (when the action research project for this specific study was concluded) are reported. The first part presents and discusses the general findings gathered from both the pre- and the post-questionnaire separately; then, the data are compared. Then, each semester is discussed separately to guide the reader through the various cycles of the action research followed. Later, the results of the six cycles are compared to check the changes in students' attitudes towards the IEP and whether throughout the semesters included in the study these learners' views changed significantly or not.

6.1 Preliminary findings

In this section, the results of both pre- and post- questionnaires are reported and discussed. Separately, a chronological survey of the various semesters included in the study (six groups) is presented based on document analysis and the achievements of each semester are contrasted. Then, the results of both the pre- and the post-questionnaires are compared.

6.1.1 The Sample

To appreciate the nature of the practical situation of data collection, it is important to note the fluctuating initial numbers of students in each semester. The circumstances are that students admitted in the IEP at the LAU usually register for the course the day before the classes begin. Then, they have two weeks to pay their tuition fees and finalise the registration procedure (LAU, Academic Rules and Regulations). The number of students might differ slightly from the first day of classes and the last as many learners register in the first two days of classes but do not pay their tuition, so they are out of the program. Others decide to join the program on the last day of the late registration period. Also, during the semester, some students may drop out: go to another university, travel, or pass the TOEFL or the EEE exam. Others may have been too lazy to attend particular classes, or they might just have been absent the day the questionnaire was distributed.

These circumstances mean that if one examines the number of returned questionnaires in the present study, the number of students differ from those who were accepted in the course, those who completed the pre questionnaire and those who answered the questions in the post questionnaire. This is shown in table 13.

Semester	Number of IEP Students	Pre-Questionnaire	Post-Questionnaire
Fall 1997	76	63	70
Spring 1998	39	33	35
Summer 1998	8	7	7
Fall 1998	122	115	103
Spring 1999	54	59	49
Summer 1999	10	10	9
Total	*309*	*277*	*273*

Table 13: Summary showing the number of registered students, the number of students who filled the pre questionnaire and the number of students who filled the post questionnaire during the semesters the action research project was conducted

Table 13 shows the number of students involved over the years of data gathering, and it is apparent how these numbers fluctuate over each semester and over pre- and post- data gathering. Overall, from the 309 students who registered in the IEP during the six sessions, 277 responded to the pre and 273 to the post questionnaires.

6.2 Findings from the Pre-Questionnaire

The pre questionnaire was distributed and collected on the first day of classes before students were given the class syllabus, so learners did not have details about the content of the course before completing it. Their expectations about course content were based on information from former students or what they thought the program would be all about. Asking students to complete the questionnaires at the beginning of a class session would improve the response rate of the learners; in general, they tend to have a better concentration span at the beginning of a class session than at the end. Thus, they would spend more time reading the questions carefully and not thinking about leaving the classroom because the class hour was over.

6.2.1 Pre-Questionnaire: Part I

The pre-questionnaire is divided into five main parts. Part one deals with information about students' background. Questions about learners' age, major, languages spoken at home, and school medium registered in are included in this part.

Most IEP students are fresh school graduates. This is obvious as in the questionnaire learners' ages fluctuate as follows: 31% are seventeen or eighteen, 53.8% are nineteen or twenty, 13% are twenty-one or twenty-two, 14% are twenty-three or twenty-four, and only 0.7% are above twenty-five. In general, High school students in Lebanon graduate from schools at the age of eighteen or nineteen. Some of the IEP students had to enrol in an English language institution before joining LAU as their English language background was not up to the level needed for IEP (field notes, 1996-1999).

More than half of the IEP students are male (64.3% male and 35.7% female) while according to the admission office records, the ratio of male/female accepted at LAU, as a whole in the past two years is 51% vs. 49%. This confirms the local stereotype that boys are more science oriented and girls more literature, arts, and language oriented. In Lebanese society, in general, it is true that girls are believed to be quieter and to spend more time reading than boys usually do, and this might explain the differences in the enrolment in the IEP between males and females. Extensive and/or intensive reading are widely held to improve general language skills.

The majority of the Intensive English students are majoring in Business (156 out of 277 with 37 in Interior Design, 31 in Computer, 16 in Engineering, 11 in Communication Arts, 9 in Education, 3 in International Affairs, and 1 in Theology). According to learners, a B.Sc. in Business will help them obtain a honourable and socially acceptable job after graduation. Graph 1 shows the various majors IEP students chose to study at LAU. The students might change majors in the first two years at LAU. This shift from one major to another is possible because of the Liberal Arts system at LAU.

theology
int'l affairs
interior design
communication arts
education
pharmacy
engineering
computer
business
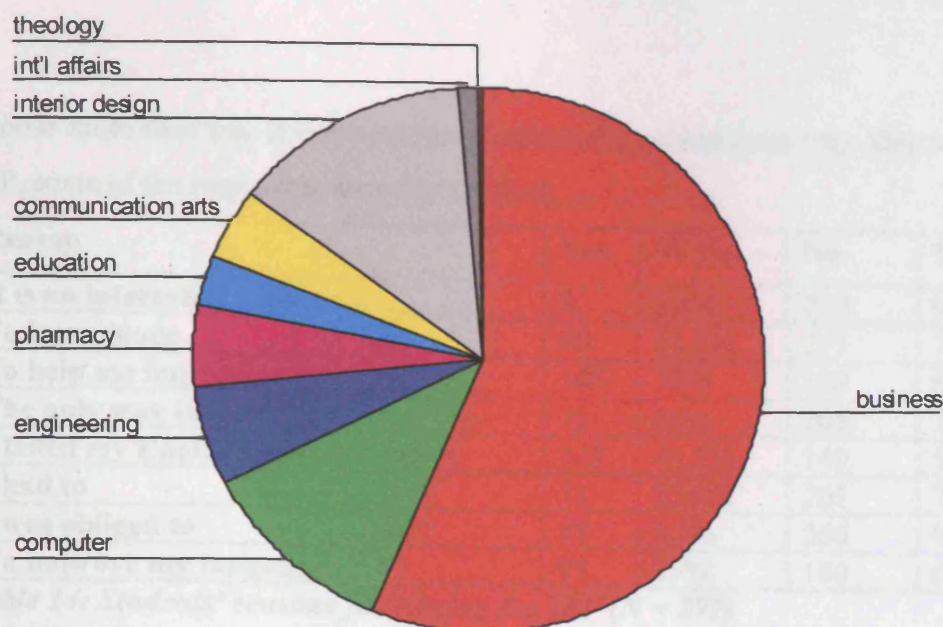
Graph 1: Pie Graph showing the majors IEP students chose to study at LAU

Notably, none of the IEP students is monolingual. 43.7% of IEP learners went to an English medium school, 37.2% to a French one, 1.8% to others (mainly Latin American schools), and 17.4 % to Arabic medium schools. However, even in Arabic medium schools, another language (usually English) is taught as a foreign language). As for the students who studied in English or French medium schools, they can be considered as (at least) trilingual students, for the third language - French or English - is compulsory in Lebanese schools (Lebanese National Curriculum, 1995), and the vast majority speak Arabic as a first language. A large percentage of IEP learners come from English medium schools. This is alarming because if students spent 14 years studying in English and yet failed to pass the English Entrance Exam, this means that there is definitely a need to investigate the English medium school curriculum.

6.2.2 Pre-Questionnaire: Part II

Part two tackles a sensitive issue for IEP learners, which is why they joined the program and what their expectations about the IEP are. This section shows students' feelings and attitudes towards the IEP.

All students join the IEP because they fail to get the passing grade in the English entrance exam (EEE or TOEFL). However, when students were asked to

choose more than one answer in the questionnaire asking them why they joined the IEP, some of the responses were unexpected.

Reason	Yes	% Yes	No	% No
It is an interesting Course	8	2.1%	269	97.1%
To learn more	60	21.7%	217	78.3%
To help me improve my language	108	39%	169	61%
The only way to join LAU	72	26%	205	74%
I failed my English entrance exam	128	46.2%	149	53.8%
I had to	71	25.6%	201	74.4%
I was obliged to	17	6.1%	260	93.9%
To improve my language	97	35%	180	65%

Table 14: Students' reasons for joining the IEP (N = 277)

Interestingly enough, only 128 (46.2%) out of the 277 students admitted that they joined the IEP program because they failed the English Entrance Exams (EEE or TOEFL) while more than half of them (149 (53.8%) students) did not choose that statement as an option. In fact, all IEP students did not score high enough in the EEE and/or TOEFL and thus had to enrol in the IEP. The choices they had were either go to a language centre other than LAU (LAU' s continuing education program) or restudy for the exams. A few (97 (35%) students) answered that they had joined the program to improve their language. They probably wanted to impress the researcher or maybe they thought that giving positive answers is expected from them. Though there is not much difference in this questionnaire between the following two options, *The IEP helps me improve my language* or *I joined the IEP to improve my language*, students' reply for these two answers were different as for the first one (108 (39%) vs. 169 (69%) students agreed) while for the latter one the numbers changed to 97 (35%) vs. 180 (65%). The same comment could be used for the two options *'I had to'* and *'I was obliged to'* to join the program. Students' answers differ significantly between these two options; for instance, for the first one 71 (25.6%) students admitted that they had to be in the program while for the second option just 17 (6.1%) students confessed to this. This might indicate the need to question the reliability and validity of the questionnaire as a tool to collect data. Indeed, Long (in press) and Chambers (1980) are against using such students as the sole source for data collection as these students are still in their first year at university, and they cannot assess what they really need from the course. They are there because this was their best option to join the university

(except if they wanted to stay home for a semester, study for their language entrance exams TOEFL or EEE on their own, and then try to get a passing grade). Some students do try the latter option, and a few succeed in passing these entrance exams, but unfortunately, many do not pass and thus have to join the IEP in later semesters or go to another university.

Thus, the 'felt' needs of the students are perhaps inaccurate and inexact, for those engaged in a course, especially if it is a prerequisite for all other courses. They themselves cannot accurately assess what their needs are until they have completed the course successfully. However, this should not mean abandoning any investigation of students' felt needs, and just rely on what the experts, i.e. teachers, believe are the 'perceived' needs. Instructors and learners have different views towards second language learning (Block, 1997) and one should not ignore either view. Both of them are vital elements in this present study.

To change the focus of the language teaching approach followed at the IEP, the IEP faculty decided to emphasise cooperative learning (Slavin, 1990), hence the question about group work. It was found out that though students in class enjoy group work (177 students like it, 92 do not mind it, and 8 do not like it), and oral presentations, they were bored in most sessions based on a traditional approach of lecturing or reviewing various grammar points. However, at the beginning of each semester, students are reluctant to try a non-traditional approach to language teaching (field notes; participant observation: 1996-1999). Most of them believed that studying grammar rules was an important objective in IEP. This appeared more than once in the questionnaire. Table 14 shows that 65.3% agree that they should study grammar in the IEP; 52.8% believe that one of the objectives of the IEP is to improve their knowledge of grammar; also, 81.9% believe that learning grammar rules is very important while just 18.1% stated that it did not really matter. It seems that the majority of the learners, coming from traditional schooling systems would rather stick to the familiar grammar approach. It might seem that more data could be collected if that item was changed to a 5-point Likert scale question instead of a yes/no question. However, at the time of item preparation, it was essential to keep the questionnaire simple, short, and limited, for the researcher did not want to trespass at colleagues' class time.

	Yes	No
Learners should study grammar in the IEP	65.3%	34.7%
Learning grammar rules is very important	81.9%	18.1%
One IEP objective is to improve learners' grammar	52.8%	47.2 %

Table 15: Role of grammar in the IEP according to students (N=277)

6.2.3 Pre-Questionnaire: Part III

Part three deals with one of the main components in the course: reading. 'Reading Comprehension' is considered one of the most important skills in language learning as by reading one gets more knowledge in the target language. Students are asked to comment on the importance of reading in an academic setting. One of the main questions deals with what students read and in what language. The results were as follows: the majority of the students read only newspapers in Arabic (206 out of the 277). However, English magazines are important to them, as 142 IEP students read them in English while 136 read them in Arabic. Through class discussion, it was found out that boys in general read magazines related to sports and cars in English while girls chose the regular women's magazines available in most bookshops.

Table 16 below shows what IEP students like to read and in which language. Of the 277 students responding, 148 students enjoy reading short stories in English and 142 read magazines in the target language. Thus, to interest and motivate learners in IEP classes, it is advised to choose English magazines articles and short stories rather than biographies or romance books. IEP staff should pursue this issue further when preparing the class syllabus.

	Arabic	English	French	Other
Newspapers	206	60	34	8
Magazines	136	142	68	10
Comics	66	66	36	4
Short stories	68	148	40	4
Romance books	57	61	47	4
Best sellers	25	86	21	5
Adventure	53	75	35	3
Horror books	36	61	25	1
Biographies	56	41	38	3
Science fiction	52	76	33	2

Table 16: IEP students' choices or reading matters and in which language (N=277)

This item shows the various languages the IEP students read in which pinpoints the typical multilingualism characteristic in Lebanon (see Chapter One, section 1.4). The majority of the learners read books in more than one language. Magazines score high in the native language (Arabic) (136 students out of 277 read magazines in Arabic) and in one of the other languages (notably English) (142 out of 277), and this can be explained by the high number of local and foreign magazines available in the Lebanese market. However, neither IEP staff nor learners questioned the difference between 'reading best sellers' or 'reading biographies'. This could be explained by a language translation (biographies and best sellers are very much different when translated into Arabic).

On a 5-point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree), learners were asked to choose what in their opinion is the effect of 'reading' on various skills and sub skills.

Reading improves my	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Scores
Vocabulary	126	114	19	14	4	4.2419
Writing Skills	101	133	33	9	1	4.1697
Knowledge	152	101	20	4	0	4.4477
Listening Skills	42	115	63	44	13	3.4657
Reading Comprehension	117	123	28	7	2	4.2491
Grammar	52	120	62	35	8	3.6245
Spelling	100	125	37	9	6	4.0975
Speaking Skills	107	114	36	14	6	4.0903

Table 17: Students' responses about the effect of reading on various skills and sub skills (N=277)

Table 17 shows that *Reading improves my knowledge* has the highest mean score (4.4477): of the 277 students, 152 chose the 'strongly agree' option, 101 'agree', 20 'are not sure', 4 'disagree', and no students 'strongly disagree'. *Reading Improves my Grammar* and *Reading Improves my Listening Skills* have the lowest mean (3.6245 and 3.4657 respectively). This can be interpreted that in most language centres, the programs are divided into four major groups: reading comprehension, writing skills, listening skills, and grammar. Because of this division, students could not link the latter two with reading. On the other hand, *Reading Improves my Writing Skills* scores high (4.1697) though writing is taught separately. However, it is said that in most Lebanese schools, students are told over

and over again that one should read in order to write well. This explains the high mean scores regarding the importance of reading in relation to other skills.

When asked about their comments regarding the importance of reading, the majority of the learners (210 (75.8%) out of 277) believed that reading skills help *increase their knowledge* (both in the target language and in acquiring general information) (see Graph 2). This answer compares well with the previous one: *Reading improves my knowledge* as 152 learners strongly agreed and 101 agreed with the issue (a total of 253 (91.34%) students). 138 (49.8%) students chose to *get more information* as another option, and only 118 (42.6%) chose reading for *studying purposes*. Though there is no significance difference between the two items (meaning wise) *I need reading to increase my knowledge* and *I need reading to get more information*, the percentage fluctuates significantly. This could be explained by either some of the first year learners did not read the instructions carefully, and thus did not circle more than one option for that specific question, or that some students' have a short attention span, so they did not read all the items of the question, or finally that students did not notice the similarity between the items (language problem or carelessness). *I need reading for studying purposes* could be interpreted similarly.
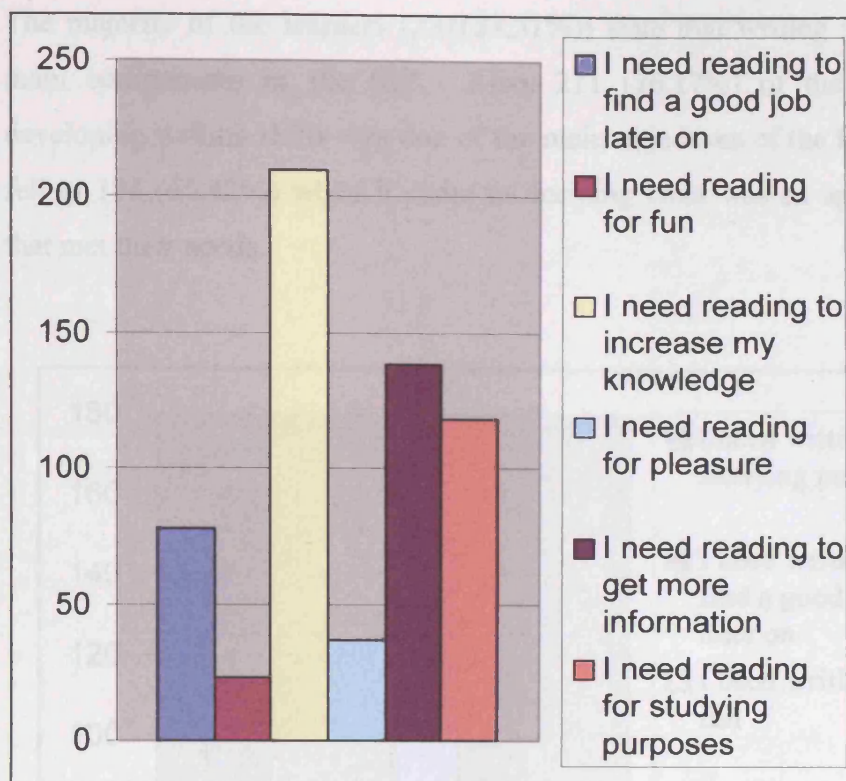
Graph 2: Students' comments about the importance of reading skills (N=277)

In general, in French system schools, learners are encouraged to read from as early as the KG classes (field notes, 1996-1999). Students grow up becoming avid readers as this habit has been instilled in them since their early age. Unfortunately, the case differs in most English medium schools; learners are not trained to read for pleasure. Thus, the majority of the students who read *to get more information* and *increase their knowledge* should be from a French medium school. Very few students chose *reading for pleasure* and *fun* as options (most probably because of the language barrier). Though it is expected that French educated students choose these two options, the results were surprising (8 (7.76%) out of 103 read in English *for fun* and 14 (13.59%) *for pleasure*). The majority tend to read French and not English books. The students who went to English medium schools did not score higher as 16 (13.22%) out of 121 chose reading *for pleasure* and 8 (6.61%) *for fun*.

6.2.4 Pre-Questionnaire: Part IV

Part four is related to writing, another essential component in EAP and in the IEP. Students in general do not like to write in English (110 (39.71%) out of the 277 students admitted it) because they say they do not know how and what to write.

The majority of the learners (231(83.31%)) state that writing skills is one of the main components in the IEP. Also, 211 (76.17%) of the students felt that developing writing skills was one of the main objectives of the IEP, but the number fell to 184 (66.42%) when it came to deciding what was an appropriate objective that met their needs.
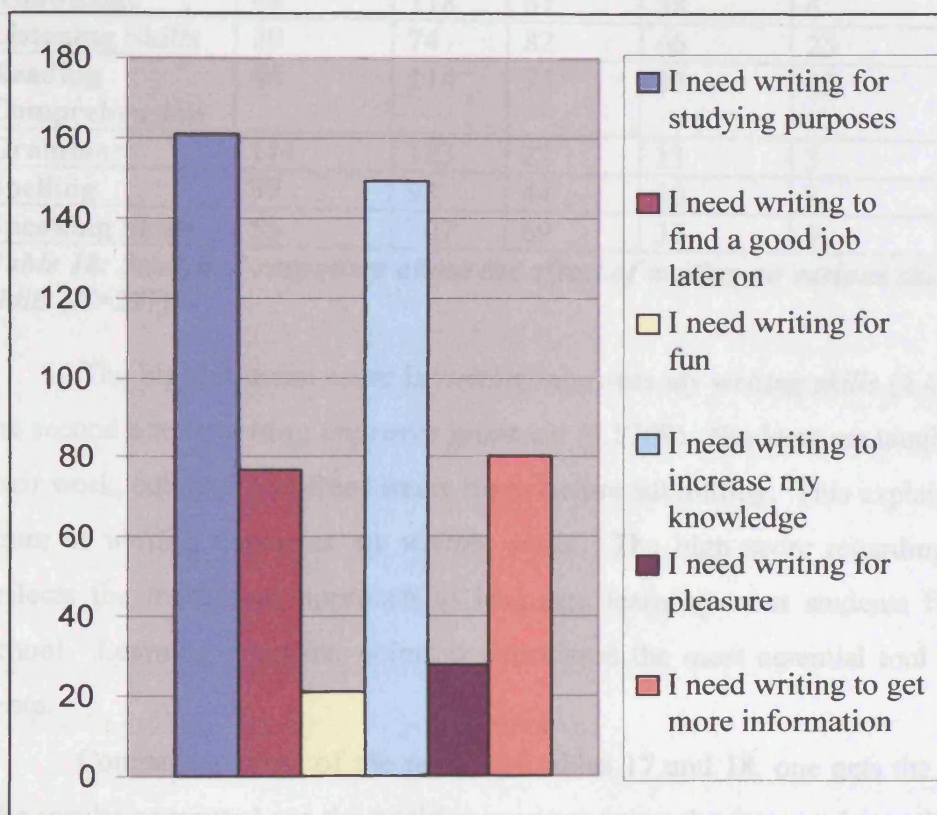
Graph 3: Students' comments about the importance of writing skills (N=277)

When learners were asked to choose various options regarding their needs for studying writing skills, many of them chose the two options *for studying purposes* (161 (58.1%) out of 277), and *to improve my knowledge* (149 (53.8%)) as shown in Graph 3. It seems that writing skills is only related to studying purposes. Few students chose writing for *fun (7.6%), pleasure (10.1%)* and *future jobs* (27.8%) (What are the secretaries for?) Learners seem to believe that writing skills (the English language) is a means to get them through higher education, and they would not need it after that.

On a 5-point Likert scale (5=strongly agree; 1=strongly disagree), learners were asked to choose what in their opinion is the positive effect of writing on other language skills.

Writing improves my	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Vocabulary	75	108	52	34	8	3.7509
Writing Skills	156	100	13	5	3	4.4477
Knowledge	48	118	67	38	6	3.5921
Listening Skills	30	74	82	66	25	3.0650
Reading Comprehension	44	114	75	32	12	3.5271
Grammar	111	123	27	13	3	4.1769
Spelling	97	98	44	30	8	3.8881
Speaking Skills	55	107	69	37	9	3.5848

Table 18: Students' responses about the effect of writing on various skills and sub skills (N=277)

The highest mean score is *writing improves my writing skills* (4.4477) while the second one is *writing improves grammar* (4.1769). Students are taught to reread their work, edit and proofread many times before submitting. This explains the high score of *writing improves my writing skills*. The high score regarding grammar reflects the traditional approach to language learning most students followed at school. Learning grammar points is considered the most essential tool to learn to write.

Comparing some of the results of tables 17 and 18, one gets the following. The results computed are the positive answers (strongly agree and agree) from both tables 17 for the reading skills and 18 for the writing skills. It seems that learners believe that reading is the most essential skill in the IEP (though many of them do not read books), for only for *writing improves my writing skills, grammar* and *knowledge* does writing score higher than reading. This shows that IEP students are aware of the importance of reading and writing.

	Vocabulary	Writing skills	Knowledge	Listening	Reading	Grammar	Spelling	Speaking skills
Reading	240	134	153	157	240	172	225	221
Writing	183	256	166	104	158	234	195	162

Table 19: Comparing tables 17 and 18 positive answers

6.2.5 Pre-Questionnaire: Part V

Part five of the pre-questionnaire deals with technology and computer. In the revised Lebanese National Curriculum (1995), Information Technology (IT) has an essential role. Therefore, it is vital to use IT in the IEP. This section gives information whether students have access to and know how to use computers, email, and surf on the Internet.

Do you know how to use	Yes	% Yes	No	% No
A computer	182	65.7%	95	34.3%
Email	116	41.9%	161	58.1%
Internet	135	48.7%	142	51.3%

Table 20: Learners' knowledge about computers, email, and Internet (N=277)

The computer as a tool in language learning is becoming indispensable in the classroom. In fact, all IEP learners should be computer literate, but not all of them are on entry to the program. If the syllabus of the IEP is going to require from students the use of computers (computer assisted instruction or for language learning CALL), then 182 (65.7%) students know how to use computers, 116 (41.9%) access to email and 135 (48.7%) use the Internet already. This question therefore reveals that many students already have familiarity with IT, and this is a positive basis on which to introduce CALL into the IEP.

6.3 Findings from the Post-Questionnaire

The post-questionnaire was distributed near the end of each semester. By that time, the learners had completed all the class requirements. The only remaining assessment was the final comprehensive exam. Thus, students should be able to evaluate the IEP course.

6.3.1 Post Questionnaire: Part I

The post questionnaire is divided into three main parts. Part I deals with general information about the IEP and the learner. Students in general agreed that they were quite interested by the materials used in class.

	IEP encouraged discussion	IEP encouraged student participation in class
Yes	161 59%	141 65.7%
No	112 41%	132 44.3%

Table 21: Students' responses regarding the IEP (N=273)

After spending a semester in the IEP, more than half of the IEP students agreed that the program encourages class discussion (161 (59%) students out of 273) and allows student participation in class (141 (65.7%)). The expectations were that the majority would be actively involved in the IEP and would at least acknowledge that discussion and student participation are major elements in the program. One interpretation can be that by the end of the semester, learners believe that they are not concerned with the course anymore (see Sharp, 1990). Why should the program be changed? They, the learners, are moving forward, and the next group of students should decide whether they like the way the course is taught or not.

The IEP is different from other language courses		
Yes	157	57.5%
No	30	11%
First time taking such course	86	31.5%

Table 22: Students comparing the IEP to other language courses (N=273)

The main aim of the IEP is to train students to cope with EAP for their university life. Automatically, one expects the teaching to be different from other regular courses. As a matter of fact, students noticed the difference (see Table 22). 157 (57.5%) students out of 273 gave a positive answer regarding the issue while only 30 (11%) found that the course was not different from other language courses given in the country. The other 86 (31.5%) could not answer the question, as they had not attended other language courses before joining the IEP. An explanation for the 30 negative answers could be that those students were either failing, rarely attended classes, or they were not motivated. The numbers are encouraging as learners (at least those who were enrolled in other language courses) were able to notice the difference between the IEP and other language courses.

	Did you like IEP classes?	
A lot	53	19.4%
It is all right	162	59.3%
Not much	48	17.6%
Not at all	10	3.7%

Table 23: Students' responses on whether they enjoyed IEP classes or not (N=273) Mean = 2.0549

The problem is that students still believe that they do not belong in the IEP. When asked if they liked the classes as Table 23 shows, the majority of the learners, 162 (59.3%) out of 273 said that it was all right (meaning that they could have taken

some remedial English courses with their regular courses). 53 (19.4%) students pointed out that they liked the course a lot, 48 did not like it much, and 10 (3.7%) did not like it at all. The IEP may be seen as demeaning. It is a remedial course that some students believe is making them lose a semester of their life. However, if the two positive *responses 'a lot'* and *'it is all right'* are added then 215 positive answers of 273 would explain that the majority of students did not express dislike for the IEP. The mean score of 2.0549 also shows that most students believe that IEP is *all right*. Indeed, the results are encouraging, but to ensure more positive answers, it is essential to continue course development and find more motivating and challenging ways to interest learners.

	Did you find IEP classes interesting?	
Always	67	24.5%
Often	121	44.3%
Sometimes	72	26.4%
Rarely	8	2.9%
Not at all	5	1.8%

Table 24: Students' comments on whether the IEP classes were interesting (N=273) Mean = 2.1319

Then, when students were asked if they found the IEP classes to be interesting, 67 (24.5%) students answered positively. 121 (44.3%) learners out of 273 said most of the time, 72 (26.4%) chose sometimes, 8 (2.9%) rarely and 5 (1.8%) not at all. The mean score of 2.1319 indicates that a good number of students found the course *often interesting*. Again, if the sole data to be used in this study were the questionnaires, then it would seem that learners did not have any problem with the course.

	Did you like the way the classes were taught?	
Yes	244	89.4%
No	29	10.6%

Table 25: Students' opinion about IEP classes (N=273)

The majority of students liked the way the classes were taught as 244 (89.4%) students said yes and only 29 (10.6%) answered no. One interpretation is the different methods used in class. Cooperative learning was often used as students enjoy group work and learn more from each other (see Slavin, 1990). Oral presentations, attending lectures (not related to the IEP) and taking notes, reading authentic materials based on current issues, doing without all complicated grammar

rules were all part of the syllabus. A full integration of all the skills was used most of the time.

	Did you get help from IEP teachers?	
Always	223	81.7%
Often	35	12.8%
Sometimes	10	3.7%
Rarely	3	1.1%
Never	2	0.7%

Table 26: Students' comments on IEP staff (N=273) Mean = 1.2637

It was essential to get feedback from students regarding the help the teaching staff of the IEP provided. 223 (81.7%) students stated that they always got the help they needed from the teachers, while 35 (12.8%) answered often, 10 (3.7%) sometimes, 3 (1.1%) rarely, and only 2 (0.7%) replied never. The mean score of 1.2637 seems more than satisfactory. Not all teachers and students can work together harmoniously without clashes. Thus, it was expected that some learners would state that not all faculty members were helpful all the time.

6.3.2 Post Questionnaire: Part II

Part II of the post-questionnaire deals with specific information learners have about the IEP.

Objectives that meet students' needs	Yes	
Understanding spoken English	150	54.9%
Knowing grammatical structures	133	48.7%
Developing reading strategies	57	20.9%
Perceiving the organization of texts	51	18.7%
Speaking English	145	53.1%
Writing in English	212	77.7%

Table 27: Students' opinion about the objectives of the IEP that meet their needs (N=273)

Learners' responses regarding the objectives of the IEP that met their needs were the following. 212 (77.7%) students stated that writing in English was a main objective. Indeed, many class hours were spent on teaching students to use process writing techniques, edit, and then present their final work. 150 (54.9%) learners stated that understanding spoken English was an essential objective while 145 (53.1%) believed that speaking English was important. However, it was surprising to find out that only 57 (20.9%) chose developing reading strategies as an option (though in most classes, reading strategies were stressed). Also, 133 (48.7%) chose

the *grammatical structures* as an option though the trend of IEP course development was to emphasize grammar much less and integrate grammar points with language skills.

6.3.3 Post Questionnaire: Part III

Part III of the post-questionnaire is the summary and conclusion the learners reached regarding the IEP.

My English improved a lot	158	57.9%
My English improved a bit	102	37.4%
My English stayed the same	11	4%
My English got worse	2	0.7%

Table 28: Students' comments about how much their English language improved (N=273) Mean = 1.6996

Finally, the majority of the learners acknowledged that their English language improved after spending a semester in the IEP. Indeed, 158 (57.9%) answered that their language improved a lot, 102 (37.4%) improved a bit, 11 (4%) stated that their language stayed the same, and 2 (0.7%) students insisted that their language got worse. The mean score of 1.6996 shows that the majority of the students stated that their English language improved somehow. These 2 learners may have chosen their answers at random without reading the questions, or they were anyway failing the course and were aware that their English was not improving.

Learners' attitude towards the IEP throughout the semester increased noticeably. 244 students out of 273 showed enthusiasm and interest in the way the classes were conducted though the majority of these learners were obliged to join the IEP to become university students. 260 learners admitted that their language improved; these results show that after all a semester of IEP helps learners improve their language.

Parts II and III of the post-questionnaire are not reported in details as it was seen more fit in this study to compare the answers of these parts to answer collected in the pre-questionnaire.

6.4 Comparing Results of Pre and Post Questionnaires

In this section some of the results of both the pre and the post questionnaires are compared and reported accordingly.

Objectives I consider more appropriate to meet my needs	Pre-Questionnaire (Mean Score)	Standard Deviation	Post-Questionnaire (Mean Score)	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
Understanding Spoken English	0.4368	0.4969	0.5495	0.4985	0.090
Knowing Grammatical Structures of the Language	0.3899	0.4886	0.4872	0.5008	0.058
Developing Reading Strategies	0.2310	0.4223	0.2088	0.4072	0.316
Perceiving Organisation of Texts	0.1805	0.3853	0.1868	0.3905	0.792
Speaking in English	0.6029	0.4902	0.5311	0.4999	0.484
Writing in English	0.6643	0.4731	0.7766	0.4173	0.973

Table 29: Comparing the mean scores and standard deviation of pre- and post-questionnaires regarding objectives learners consider appropriate to meet their needs, and calculate the significance level between the two (N1= 277; N2=273)

The analysis of variance or ANOVA, a statistical technique usually used to "examine the variability of the observations within each group as well as the variability between the group means" (Norusis, 1993, p. 269) was used to test the null hypothesis.

In the pre-questionnaire, learners were asked to choose the various objectives that they consider most appropriate to meet their needs. The same question appeared in the post-questionnaire to check whether these objectives were met or not (see table 29).

Thus, the following was reached by using ANOVA to check the significance level of each item: The results show that there is no significance difference between the items as the level of significance for each statement is more than 0.05. The means of *Developing reading strategies* fluctuate from X1 (means of pre-questionnaire) = 0.2310 to X2 (means of post-questionnaire) = 0.2088 with a level of significance of 0.316. This means that there is no sufficient evidence that show that the variances are unequal. The same applies to the other statements, *speaking in English* (X1 = 0.6029 vs. X2 = 0.5311 with a level of significance of 0.484).

Because of the integration of skills some learners probably did not notice that the reading strategies were included at all times in the program. They must have expected the strategies to be explained and practised separately as it happens traditionally (this was also noticeable when results of semesters were compared, see section 6.6). The same applies to the speaking skills. In the fifteen contact hours per week during the fifteen-week semester, the English language is used in classes whether for explanation, communication, research, or activities conducted. On the other hand, the means of *understanding spoken English* increased in the post-questionnaire (0.5495) when compared to the pre-questionnaire (0.4638); the level of significance is 0.090 though smaller if compared to the other items in the table, is still higher than 0.05. This may be because of the language lab where the emphasis is on listening skills. The mean scores of *Knowing Grammatical Structures*, *Perceiving Organization of Texts*, and *Writing in English* increased, too, but the level of significance is 0.058. It seems that learners felt that writing skills were strongly emphasized in the IEP. This seems true because in the schools or the language centers in Lebanon the students are taught the techniques needed to get a passing score in the English entrance multiple-choice exams (EEE or TOEFL). In the IEP, the program revolves around EAP, but the emphasis shifted unnoticeably towards Academic Writing instead of integrating all language skills

The objectives of the IEP are	Pre-Questionnaire (Mean Scores)	Standard Deviation	Post-Questionnaire (Mean Scores)	Standard Deviation	Significance
Improving Writing Skills	0.7617	0.4268	0.8315	0.3750	0.290
Improving Knowledge of Grammar	0.5199	0.5005	0.5458	0.4988	0.717
Increasing Vocabulary	0.6426	0.4801	0.5348	0.4997	0.592
Developing Skills of Comprehending Texts	0.5234	0.5004	0.2561	0.4375	0.278
Improving Speaking Skills	0.6643	0.4731	0.4762	0.5004	0.212

Table 30: Comparing the means scores of pre- and post- questionnaires regarding the objectives of the IEP

The same applies to the objectives of the IEP (see table 30). There is an increase in the mean scores of *improving writing skills* (level of significance = 0.290, i.e. higher than 0.05) and *improving knowledge of* grammar (level of significance = 0.717). For the other options, the mean scores are less, and the level of significance for each one is above 0.05. This is somehow surprising. To remedy this problem, IEP faculty should revise the techniques used in integrating all language skills and clarify more the objectives and aim of each class session.

In this section the results of the pre- and post- questionnaires with a chronological survey of each semester included in the action research project were discussed. Comparisons of results collected in the various semesters and the pre- and post- questionnaires were pointed out. However, questionnaires alone do not identify the problem clearly for lack of enough reliability and validity of the results. Therefore, other research methods (notably, interviews, observations, recording minutes in meetings, discussion) were used to complete the evaluation of the IEP.

6.5 Chronological Survey of the Action Research Cycles

One of the main goals of the IEP is to teach students different approaches to learning various techniques for handling the growing body of knowledge they are being exposed to (Wallace, 1980). Therefore, an initial attempt was a flexible syllabus (content-based; see chapter 2, section 2.1.8) with an emphasis on topic/theme-based area. This approach would enable the students to be involved in exploring new content horizons and get more information about non-language areas, which might be related to the subject matter of their majors. "The somewhat loose framework of the theme area permits easy integration of materials on film, slides, tapes, and records while point of historical, geographical, sociological, etc. interest arise out of the source texts and are followed up in project work" (Johnson, 1982, p. 101). Therefore, the syllabuses of each semester included in the action research project were prepared carefully. Table 31 shows a summary of the number of students, IEP sections, number of teachers, syllabus type followed in each semester in which the action research project was conducted.

	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Summer 1998	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Summer 1999
Number of students	76	39	8	122	54	10
Number of sections	4	3	1	6	3	1
Number of teachers	6	5	4	12	6	4
Syllabus type	Thematic	Thematic	Thematic	Task based writing genres as a framework	Task based writing genres as a framework	Task based writing genres as a framework

Table 31: The Six Semesters Included in the Action Research Project

123 students studied under the thematic (content-based) syllabus while 186 students followed a task-based syllabus. The number of students who followed a task-based syllabus (during three semesters) is higher than the ones who followed the thematic syllabus (also during the same number of semesters). This is due to the increase in the number of admitted students to the IEP. Though the same syllabus was used for three consecutive semesters, the approach followed differed from one semester to another. This is mainly due to the nature of the action research project as after each cycle, evaluation takes place, and changes are planned and implemented in the next one.

6.5.1 Fall 1997: Cycle I

The first semester the action research project started was Fall 1997. A fully detailed explanation of the various decisions, steps, learners' and IEP staff's comments and attitudes that took place during this semester are reported. The syllabus for Fall 1997 was thematic (content-based instruction) prepared under four main headings, which were the four themes to be discussed during the semester. All the teaching points (whether grammar, vocabulary, usage, writing genres, etc.) revolved around these topics.

The general themes, chosen for that particular semester, were four: *'Royal Families,' 'Hong Kong 1997,' 'Children's Rights,' and 'Mars, the Forgotten Planet.'* These topics were chosen because in Fall 1997 they were current issues; it was easy

to find different reading selections related to the topics via newspapers, magazines, journals, or the Internet. However, as a prudent step it was decided that it was still too early and too risky to change the whole program at once and do without textbooks. Lebanese students, in general, feel more secure, if they have a textbook to rely on in class (field notes, 1996-1999). During Fall 1997, the main textbook consisted of a Writing/Grammar book that is normally used for a grade twelve class. However, this textbook was not designed for ESL students but for L1 students (native American/English speakers). The main problem faced was that the language of the book was too 'American' for the students to understand easily. Also, most examples and exercises used in the textbook were culturally American oriented, and thus more than once, students felt at loss because of this.

In previous semesters (prior to Fall 1997), the trend was that four different instructors teach each IEP section with each instructor being responsible for one language skill (either reading comprehension vocabulary, writing skills, grammar, and listening) and teaching it during the whole semester. In Fall 1997, all IEP faculty members agreed to try a different approach to encourage more integration of the skills (collaborative action research). This still meant that four different faculty members were teaching each section.

An illustration of Fall 1997 semester is the following: there were three sections of Intensive III and one section of Intensive II. Instructor (R) taught IIIA, IIIC, and II while instructor (M) taught IIIA, IIIB, and IIIC. Instructor (P) taught IIIA, IIIB, and II, instructor (N) taught IIIC and II, while instructor (L) a part timer who joined LAU for one semester taught IIIB. The only common factor between all sections was and still is the language lab hours that were/are supervised by the same faculty member. Though the faculty met regularly and had a very detailed syllabus to follow, it was expected that the actual teaching and class interaction would differ from one class to another and from one teacher to another. By having different instructors teach different classes, students would be exposed to more than one style of teaching.

Fall 1997 started very smoothly. Students were very keen to work on the themes chosen for the course. The first theme was "*Royal Families,*" and students, in groups of three or four in each section researched their own topic related to different royal families in the world. The countries IEP students were interested in

were Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Spain, England, and Monaco among others. (Many IEP students were Kuwait, Saudi, or Jordanian citizens). Researching and presenting information about their own country motivated them tremendously. In fact, students were excited because they were talking about topics they were familiar with (though they had not necessarily discussed this before in English). They focused on the language and not so much on the content of the presentation. The oral class presentations were very informative, explicit, and interesting especially that the students were trained in the IEP classes to present information in a lively manner, read from their notes (field notes, 1997). The second topic "*Hong Kong 1997*" was also an interesting one. The students researched their topic well; this was shown from students' presentations.

Problems started with the next two topics. It was already the mid-semester. Most instructors were complaining of heavy workloads because of the extra preparation and research they had to do to find the appropriate selections for the classes (minutes of the IE, December 1997). Students were feeling restless: it was near Christmas break, and many IEP learners decided to travel home a week before the break (missing classes) (field notes, 1997). Therefore, the lack of cooperation from instructors and motivation from the students slowed the progress achieved during the Fall semester. Innovative ideas that could be implemented in the program seemed frozen. The thematic syllabus drifted back to a functional notional one. Language skills (Reading Comprehension, Writing, Grammar, and Listening/Speaking) were divided again among instructors, and the semester ended in an old traditional approach to teaching (minutes of IE, 1997-1998). However, near the end of the semester the IEP team evaluated what was achieved so far and planned for the next step (part two of the action research plan) to improve the program.

6.5.1.1 Pre-Questionnaire: Cycle 1

In Fall 1997, 63 students filled in the pre-questionnaire. 40 were males and 23 females. Therefore, the majority of the students were young men who usually tend to spend more time at school working on scientific problems then worry about language classes. Also, more than half of the students (32 (50.8%) out of 63) had followed an English medium system at school. If such students had spent fourteen years of their life studying all subject matter courses in English, yet still fail their

language entrance exam, then it is understandable that some lack the motivation needed to work their way through the IEP. When asked whether they would read a book or watch the film, the majority chose the option watching the film. Why should they bother spending hours reading a book when they can lie comfortably on the living room couch and watch the film (with subtitles) in less than two hours time.

	Answers	
Read the book	3	4.76%
Watch the film	30	47.62%
Read the book then watch the film	15	23.8%
Watch the film then read the book	15	23.8%

Table 32: Students of Fall 1997 reply to reading books versus Watching films (N=63)

Lebanese students do not like to read. When asked about the last book they read out of the 277 students, 78 (28.15%) chose not answer the question, 134 (48.37%) referred to an instruction book (studied at school), and only 55 (19.85%) students replied that the last book they read was a best seller (read in French or Arabic). Making students read is becoming a growing problem not only in the IEP, but also in the country as a whole. Even in French medium schools where children are trained and expected to read for pleasure, teachers are complaining (Field notes, 1997 - 2000). Is it because of the growing interest in the computer and the Internet or the availability of cable and satellite television that is influencing the population and giving this apathy towards reading? The problem persists unanswered, but the issue is not clear-cut since if indeed computer and Internet use is what students engage in rather than reading, it should be noted that reading skills are also required for such IT use. The clear-cut indication is that students do not read books.

Furthermore, the majority of these students believe that the most important skill they need to learn in the IEP is grammar. 53 (84.12%) stated that they believe that learning grammar rules will help them improve their language while the other 10 (15.87%) chose *it does not matter* as an answer. Out of the 63 students, 27 (42.85%) stated that grammar helps improve the language, 11 (17.46%) said that grammar improves their writing skills, 3 (4.7%) chose both reading and writing skills, 7 (11.1%) claimed that it improves their speaking, 5 (7.9%) stated that their speaking and writing skills could improve, and 10 (15.87%) decided not to answer.

The response was surprising as when the questionnaire was piloted in the academic year 1996-1997, students showed strong resentment against studying all types of grammar rules (though they believed that grammar was an important skill that they should master). One explanation could be that Fall 1996 students filled in the pilot questionnaire near the end of the semester while Fall 1997 students completed it in the first week of classes. Coming fresh from schools or from language centres, these students may have decided that whatever approach was followed at school should be followed at university. These learners might feel more confident following the traditional methods they are used to (even if this means repetition) then trying new approaches to language learning; changes might be scary. Moreover, in tables 17 and 18, students reiterated the need to learn grammar as 172 (62.09%) out of 277 stated that *reading improves grammar* and 234 (84.47%) out of 277 that *writing improves grammar*. Also, in table 14, 81.9% agreed that learning grammar rules is very important while 65.3% stated that grammar should be studied in the IEP.

When students were asked what they think they would learn in the IEP, the responses were the various language skills (see table 33).

	Yes	% Yes	No	% No
Writing Skills	47	74.6%	16	25.39%
Reading Comprehension	31	49.2%	32	50.79%
Grammar Rules	47	74.6%	16	25.39%
Vocabulary	49	77.77%	14	22.22%
Spelling	14	22.22%	49	77.77%
Speaking Skills	30	47.6%	33	52.38%
Listening Skills	25	39.68%	38	60.31%

Table 33: Students of Fall 1997 answers on what they think they would learn in the IEP (N=63)

The data in table 33 can be related to the background the students come from. Surprisingly enough, vocabulary learning is dominant with 49 (77.77%) out of 63 students believing that it is the most important skill they would learn in the IEP while the grammar and the writing skills are similarly expected with 47 (74.6%) answers. Then reading comprehension follows with 31 (49.2%). This is followed by the speaking component that scored 30 (47.6%). Listening skills is next with 25 (39.68%) and the least expected is the spelling with a 14 (22.22%). It was interesting to see that students do not believe that spelling should be taught in the

IEP when many of them have major spelling mistakes (field notes, 1997-1999). However, this does not mean that it should be a major component in the program especially if an integrated approach is followed. It would be more appropriate to provide the students who have difficulties in spelling with specific exercises that might help them, e.g. using self-accessed computer assisted learning activities or referring students to the language lab. (This is assuming that trained educators would help learners with the language difficulties and problems they are facing.)

6.5.1.2 Learners' Views

In the first session (Fall 1997), the researcher interacted with as many IEP students as possible. This was pursued to ascertain students' expectations from the IEP and the best way to deal with them while enjoying classes. From the pilot study conducted earlier, the researcher already knew that there were major and minor problems with the program, and this explains the need to have many participant observations conducted in classes.

From Fall 96 up to Summer 99, students were asked to comment at various times about the IEP program. This was done through class discussion, writing assignments, journal writing, and oral presentations. From these comments, it was clear that the majority of the students want to learn, improve their language, and do well in the university. Example comments (Fall 1997) are given below.

Comments: (Document Analysis; Journal Writing)

- *Student A*: Practising English almost everywhere at the university helped me improve my language
- *Student B*: I understand English, and now I can express myself better.
- *Student C*: How come what we were taught in school was different?

These comments show that students believe their language is improving due to the IEP. However, the main problem seems to be that students are not happy to spend a semester in remedial English without getting credits for it. (Observation; Classroom Discussion)

- *Student A*: Fine, I admit, I learned a lot from the class, but it is not fair that the credits do not count.
- *Student B*: I am a freshman student; this means I have to spend four years and a half at the university on top of the intensive.

Some wondered why the Intensive English could not be a side course that they would attend simultaneously with their major courses (see adjunct content-based syllabus,

earlier section, Snow and Brinton, 1990). This simultaneous organisation is how language support classes are arranged in British universities. (Observation; Classroom Discussion)

- *Student A*: Let me start regular classes, and I will register for the Intensive English with it.
- *Student B*: What? I am not allowed to start with my major courses because of Intensive English.
- *Student C*: I will start working and paying attention to classes as soon as I start regular classes.

This general resentment of learners about the IEP is further seen in their journal writing: many students complained about the length of the course (though they acknowledged that they benefited from the course.) They wanted the administration to shorten the length of the course. This issue is recurrent as it was pointed out more than once in the questionnaire. Representative comments are given below:

Comments: (Questionnaire Analysis; Discussion)

- *Student A*: The time of the class is killing me.
- *Student B*: One semester; do you mean we have to study English until February? Can't you make it shorter?
- *Student C*: Can we choose our own hours?

This last suggestion is worth studying though it might create some administrative problems. Students are expected to attend a certain number of class hours per week. If they worked individually and attended classes for fewer hours, this might not be acceptable from the administrative view. The IEP is part of the income generation system to the university, and if the course is shortened then what would the students do before the beginning of the new semester? A possible solution to the problem would be to let students be in control in the last few weeks of the semester. The contact hours would be dedicated to oral presentations and group work rather than to teachers' explanation. This issue should be investigated further to be adapted in the syllabus.

As expected, learners when interviewed tried to blame some teachers for their lack of progress. Students declared that these teachers were hindering their progress because they (the teachers) could not control the class.

Extracts from Interviews:

- *Student A*: Mr. X class is very boring
- *Student B*: I am paying a lot of money for the course, and I don't think that this teacher should be teaching. He is not a good teacher.

On the other hand, learners showed great enthusiasm for working on the portfolios. The IEP team decided to exhibit learners' portfolios in the yearly education exhibition that takes place every spring semester. This would help make students proud of their work and might diminish the resentment against the IEP.

Comments: (Classroom Discussion; Observation)

- *Student A*: I enjoyed most the portfolio. Can't we just work on that?
- *Student B*: You should only grade the portfolio.
- *Student C*: The portfolio's work was great! I loved it

6.5.1.3 Teachers' Views

It finally happened. For the first time in years, the IEP staff started to look at their teaching methods critically. The beginning of the Fall semester was fine, and the staff's comments (meetings, interviews, and discussion) were great.

Comments: (Meetings, Interviews, and Discussion)

- *Instructor A*: Wow! We made it.
- *Instructor B*: It is actually working.
- *Instructor C*: I am enjoying it. Students are working hard for a change.

However, good things do not last long. In the middle of December 1997, the comments changed directions and started to be negative.

Comments: (Meetings, Minutes, and Discussion)

- *Instructor A*: I am tired. The students are bored. I strongly believe we have to go back to the old method. It was more effective.
- *Instructor B*: As long as at the end of the semester, most students are going to start regular classes, why do we have to change the way we used to teach? It was fine.
- *Instructor C*: I don't have time for all these meetings. This is time consuming.

Any new idea needs time to be implemented and accepted by others. Though the IEP faculty welcomed the changes at the beginning of the semester, they felt trapped into the new approach, which was in a way innovative and emancipatory when compared to their previous teaching experiences. For the first time, the IEP staff were working as a team, and not each one of them, acting as an individual, and

working the way s/he sees fit to work in the classes. This seemed rather unconventional for those teachers who were not used to changes (field notes, 1997).

Fall 1997 was the first step towards implementing changes. At the end of the semester, the IEP instructors had a long meeting to reflect on what was achieved so far, and what should be the next plan for cycle II, Spring 1998 (IE meeting, field notes 1998).

6.5.2 Spring 1998: Cycle II

A thorough evaluation of the Fall semester gave the faculty the impetus to plan the Spring semester differently. The approach to follow would be thematic (content based syllabus), but instead of choosing four general themes to be discussed during the semester, the IEP faculty decided to have two major topics. Fewer topics might keep students and teachers' motivation towards the program at its highest (IEP meeting, minutes of February 1998). However, the output of Spring 1998 was disappointing.

6.5.2.1 Teachers' Views

Though the thematic syllabus for the Spring semester was ready, and lengthy discussion about its application took place before the beginning of the semester, the implementation of the syllabus did not go as planned. First, some of the IEP instructors were different from those of the Fall 1997. They agreed with IEP plans at the beginning of the semester. However, in the second meeting (second week of classes), most of them showed reluctance to follow these plans and came with a negative attitude towards changes. Reasons given included time constraints (not enough time to prepare for courses), uncooperative students, not being paid enough (The IEP classes involve more contact hours with students than in other regular university courses, but the salary is the same (field notes, Spring 1998).

Comments: (Meetings and Discussion)

- *Instructor A*: I don' t want to spend the whole semester teaching all that.
- *Instructor B*: Students do not care so why do I have to bother; anyway I am already paid less than if I were teaching a regular class.
- *Instructor C*: Come on! We don't have enough time to do all this in class. I don't believe students are learning this way.
- *Instructor D*: We do teach other courses either at LAU or elsewhere. No need for us to kill ourselves to try all this new stuff when the old one was working fine.

Through discussion, participant observation, and meeting, the researcher found out that many of the IEP staff disregarded the thematic syllabus and decided to follow a skill oriented approach with emphasis on Writing Skills, Reading Comprehension, and grammar. The main reason for this was the refusal of some faculty members to use a whole language approach and thus a full integration of the language skills in their classes. When the IEP faculty were asked to explain why they thought it was better to go back to the traditional approach, they claimed that they did not know how to explain some language points to students or that they just did not like doing it. Some faculty members even insisted that they were using an integrated approach in their classes, but it was observed that they did not (lack of ethical professionalism?). Apparently, they either did not know how to or they wanted to avoid the extra preparation required for their new classes. Like the students, it seems they were reluctant to change.

6.5.2.2 Learners' Views

During this semester, Spring 1998, the learners also were not keen on following a different approach to language learning. The majority of the students could be judged as careless and lazy (as shown in common behaviour of misplacing handouts, forgetting homework, not attending classes).

Comments: (Journal Writing)

- *Student A:* I know this course has helped me improve my English, but we still need more and more. It would have been better without it.
- *Student B:* The teacher is too friendly. We talk all the time.
- *Student C:* I want to do well in all my courses and get good grades in regular English courses too, but I definitely don't need to start in Intensive English.
- *Student D:* The class is extremely boring. I don't like it. I don't belong here.
- *Student E:* I hate studying English.
- *Student F:* We need a more quiet atmosphere; more discipline in the class

It seemed that students did not care about rules, regulations, and class attendance. Most of them barely attended classes, and their attitudes severely affected the teaching (field notes, Spring 1998). It is common for students who join the university in spring semesters to have attitude problems. In general, these students had graduated from schools in the previous June and had applied unsuccessfully to various universities for the Fall semester. They then enrolled in a

language centre for the Fall semester before reapplying to LAU for the Spring. Thus, this group was greatly disaffected.

Another problem that emerged at the beginning of Spring 1998 was the IEP textbooks. The textbooks used in Fall 1997 had to be used again in Spring 1998 (though the language of these textbooks was American culture oriented and difficult for IEP learners). The problem (which is a recurring one) was that the textbooks that were ordered from the USA for Spring 1998 did not arrive to Lebanon on time. It was seen more prudent to reuse the Fall 1997 textbooks.

Thus faced with uncooperative teachers, unmotivated learners, and American oriented textbooks, the coordinator (the researcher) of the IEP, decided that the only appropriate way to ameliorate a worsening situation was to change the direction of the syllabus and have it more skill oriented. The IEP faculty agreed immediately, for this meant less work for them and having a more traditional approach they felt safer to follow.

Though these reasons hindered the success of the implementation of new innovative and emancipatory teaching approaches to language learning, the team (the researcher, full time IEP staff, and the critical friend) still had the strength and the motivation to move forward.

6.5.3 Summer 1998: Cycle III

Spring 1998 semester labelled the 'disaster semester' in this study did not put a stop to this action research project. The IEP faculty decided to reuse the same syllabus but with a different focus in Summer 1998. In fact, Intensive English summer semesters are the easiest to plan since in summer the trend is to have one section of Intensive English (both Intensive II and III students are grouped in the same section). The number of students usually fluctuates between seven and fifteen. Indeed, in Summer 1998, the number of students was 10, and four instructors - two full timers and two part timers who have been involved in the program for more than three years - were teaching this section. The integration of skills worked well. A thematic approach was followed. It seems that this approach works better with fewer students in class. Also, with ten students, the contact hours seem more of a tutorial than a regular class. Each learner gets more individual attention and help from the teacher (observation, Summer 1998).

6.5.3.1 Learners' Views

The students were enthusiastic about the class though many of them complained about having early classes (Interviews) (*Student A*: Please no morning classes; *Student B*: I hate these eight o'clock classes). Again, most of the students enjoyed working and presenting their own portfolio (Journal Writing; Discussion) (*Student A*: I am not a loser. I have done something by myself; *Student B*: I don't believe this: I have actually done it. It feels great). Also, students noticed that they became more confident using their English language. This maybe due to first having few students in the class and second that the instructors were only involved in teaching this class (four contact hours per week) (Journal Writing) (*Student A*: The techniques of writing helped me most; *Student B*: I can express myself in English; I can even speak and give an oral presentation in English).

6.5.3.2 Teachers' Views

The IEP faculty members involved in the teaching during Summer 1998 were very relaxed about the implementation of the program though they showed some reservation about applying the same approach in semesters to come. (Discussion; Meeting) (*Instructor A*: it is working well; I think it is because I am only teaching one section and I just have ten students; but I am worried about the Fall semester. What if it is a fiasco like the Spring? .. I know that Fall semester students are usually more motivated, but I am worried ...; *Instructor B*: Great, I definitely believe that the number of students (only 10) made all this difference in teaching, but I am not sure this is going to work in the Fall semester)

The reservations these teachers had towards the content-based syllabus and its application in the Fall semester, and the disastrous experience of Spring 1998 implementation of the syllabus were the main issues that let the IEP staff meet again and change the focus of the Fall 1998 syllabus. The following recommendation was made for Fall 1998: to disregard the thematic syllabus. Instead, it would be more appropriate to use selected writing genres (rhetorical modes included in the objectives, see Appendix A) as a framework and work out the syllabus accordingly, thus, a task-based approach to language learning.

6.5.4 Fall 1998: Cycle IV

In the academic year 1998-1999, the IEP staff tried hard to overcome the drawbacks faced the previous year in the IEP. However, there were major complaints. First, the huge number of students in each section was considered a severely limiting factor to the program with its current staffing levels (in some sections, the number of IEP students was 28 and even 30). Second, some of the classrooms used for the IEP were not sufficiently large for such numbers and furniture arrangements would not allow group discussion in classes. Third, some of the textbooks and materials ordered for the classes once again did not arrive on time for the courses. Fourth, the expressed or visible apathy of some students was not helping in motivating others; i.e. some students could be seen to have a negative impact on the classroom culture. Fifth, a few students were skipping classes and this affected the smooth progress of the other learners. Many more negative issues were discussed in the meetings, and various decisions about handling these problems were taken.

However, not all the comments were negative. The IEP team noticed that for the first time in years, learners were interacting positively with all the changes that were implemented in the program. The instructors kept track of the daily interaction with the students and tried to emphasise more the topics that interested the learners; topics that seemed boring to the class as a whole were disregarded.

In Fall 1998 the number of students (122) was higher than in previous years, so 12 faculty members were required. Many part-time teachers (without previous university teaching experience) had to be hired. In order to have a more productive and a closer coordination, two copies (one for the students and one for the instructors) of the syllabuses (the focus of the syllabus was task-based) were prepared. The student syllabus states the objectives, rules, evaluation scheme, textbooks, and detailed schedule for the course. The teacher's syllabus gives more details about the integration process to be followed during the semester. For the first time in the IEP, portfolio assessment had an important place in the course. The learners' daily work had a higher percentage of grades than in previous semesters. Oral class presentations were an integral part of the program, and the general view from both staff and students was optimistic.

6.5.4.1 Teachers' Views

The main problem during the semester was not the students but the relative proportion of inexperienced teachers. Many faculty members could not control their classes: lack of classroom management techniques (field notes, Fall 1998).

Comments: (Meetings, Interviews, and Discussion)

Instructor A: How do you keep the students silent in class
Instructor B: Mobile phones keep on ringing in class? What do I do?
Instructor C: Students talk all together. I cannot handle them.
.....

see (Appendix D for interview extracts with a current IEP staff)

One teacher left after six weeks of classes, another took a maternity leave a month before the end of the semester. Also, because of the integration of the skills, and of the need for close coordination, the inefficiency of some instructors was covered by the other faculty teaching the same group of students. This was mainly observed during meetings, discussion, and participant observation: some of the faculty were not experienced in teaching EAP and had no background knowledge of how to do it.

6.5.4.2 Learners' Views

The learners in Fall 98 were very much motivated. Most of them worked hard in classes (Observation; Interviews) (*Student A*: I want to talk in English; *Student B*: It is a good course in general to learn how and what to write; *Student C*: The tasks helped me write in a correct way, and the reading gave me new words to use in my writing) but complained about the timing of some class hours (*Student D*: Change the time we spent in classes. Make it shorter; *Student E:* I hate afternoon classes). Also, few students complained about some of the IEP staff and their lack of experience in controlling the class (*Student F*: Students talk a lot; *Student G*: Change the Lab teacher)

The textbooks used during Fall 1998 were easier to handle than the ones used in former academic years. The textbooks (e.g. *Panorama* and *Academic Encounters* published by Cambridge University Press) were specifically designed for ESL learners. Each unit revolved around a single topic, and all the skills were integrated. Thus, for the first time in years, it seemed that the course was making developmental progress.

6.5.5 Spring 1999: Cycle V

In Spring 1999 the number of students dropped to 54. Thus, fewer part time teachers were hired, and the coordination job became easier.

Though the Fall 1998 semester seemed to have worked well, there was still a need to reflect on what was achieved so far, evaluate, and plan the next cycle of the research. In Spring 1999, the IEP syllabus was somewhat similar to the Fall 1998 syllabus, but the focus of each unit was clearer. Also, the number of students was manageable, and this allowed more constructive changes to the program.

6.5.5.1 Learners' Views

The students were keen on keeping a portfolio (Journal Writing) (*Student A*: I just love it: *Student B*: I think the best part in the program is the portfolio; *Student C*: I learned mostly while I was working on my portfolio). They were more ready to work than students of previous semesters (*Student D*: We want to learn. Finally, we are learning how to communicate better with others using the English language; *Student E*: For the first time in my life, I did not fail; *Student F*: My English has improved. The thing that helped me the most was sharing ideas with classmates and working in groups, but sometimes we got bored).

It was unclear whether this was because of the syllabus or because the country was visibly moving towards more stability so that students felt that they should be more serious. Was it because the learners followed more regular schooling than the previous students who were affected by the civil war? The apparent improvement might be the effect of all these points. The learners were of a different calibre. They seemed to be motivated and ready to work.

6.5.5.2 Teachers' Views

Even the IEP staff involved in the teaching process in Spring 1999 noticed the changes in the students' body. (Meetings, Interviews, and Discussion)

- *Instructor A*: It seems that the students are different this semester; they are actually interested in working.
- *Instructor B*: Do you think that students are more serious now because the political situation of the country is more stable? Or do you think the new approach we are using in the class is making this difference?

The staff showed more interest in what was happening in the classes; the discussion in the meetings became more oriented towards collaboration and team teaching, and improving the program, the syllabus, and the interaction between learners and faculty (Meeting, Discussion)

- *Instructor A*: I tried this activity in the class today, and it worked well; students seemed to be motivated and interested.
- *Instructor B*: Why don't we meet more often and discuss how we can make our classes more learner-oriented; I am sure if we plan it carefully, it would be a success.

The evaluation of Spring 1999 was more than satisfactory (minutes of IEP meeting: June 1999). It seems that the program was finally heading towards the right direction. The IEP staff decided that it was time to strengthen the grounds already established and try to review the syllabus and the changes implemented each semester to improve not only the IEP but also to ensure professional development to the staff involved in the program (minutes of IEP meeting: June 1999).

6.5.6 Summer 1999: Cycle VI

The Summer 1999 semester was similar to the Summer 1998 in terms of students' motivation and willingness to work. The syllabus followed was more or less similar to the Spring 1999 syllabus.

6.5.6.1 Learners' Views

Learners' comments during Summer 1999 were somehow similar to the comments collected in previous semester. Most of the students stressed the need to improve their language. (Discussion, Interviews)

- *Student A*: I want to improve my language.
- *Student B*: I need to improve my language to be able to do well in my major courses.
- *Student C*: If I don't improve my language, I won't be able to get a good job.

6.5.6.2 Teachers' Views

Teachers' comments were also similar to the comments collected in Spring 1999 (Discussion; Meeting) (*Instructor A*: The students seem to be quite motivated this semester; *Instructor B*: Look at their portfolios; it is about time we see such

creativity in their work: *Instructor C*: I enjoy team teaching, don't you? At least we can learn from each other and improve our teaching).

In this section the six semesters included in this action research project are discussed, and learners' and teachers' views are reported. The researcher gave a detailed discussion of the first cycle (Fall 1997); this was not the case with other cycles to avoid repetition.

6.6 Comparing Semesters

From Fall 1997 to Summer 1999, major changes took place in the country and at LAU. First, Lebanon regained its stability and peace. The developing Lebanese markets were sought by foreign companies who drowned the employable Lebanese with job demands that require qualified people with IT knowledge. To cope with these urgent demands, LAU restructured its curriculum accordingly. Second, technology came to be considered an essential tool available in every household. Learners seemed to be more involved in education. This is clear in the significant differences in the mean scores in the various semesters included in the study.

For instance, in the pre-questionnaire, in the section related to technology and computer, students were asked whether they know how to use email and Internet and have access to them. The following results (both percentages and mean scores) are summarised in table 34:

Do You	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Summer 1998	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Summer 1999
Have a home computer	0.5238	0.7273	0.7143	0.7130	0.6735	0.5000
	52.4%	72.7%	71.4%	71.3%	67.3%	50%
Know how to use email	0.3175	0.5455	0.2857	0.4609	0.5102	0.7000
	17.5%	54.5%	28.6%	46.1%	51%	70%
Know how to use Internet	0.3810	0.6364	0.1429	0.5739	0.4898	0.8000
	23.8%	63.6%	14.3%	57.4%	49%	80%
Have access to email	0.2540	0.5152	0.4286	0.4261	0.5102	0.8000
	25.4%	51.5%	42.9%	42.6%	51%	80%
Have access to Internet	0.3333	0.6667	0.2857	0.5130	0.4898	0.8000
	38.1%	66.7%	28.6%	51.3%	49%	80%

Table 34: Comparing the percentages and mean scores of the uses of technology over the six semesters of the study

Throughout the semesters, IEP students became more aware of the available technology. Though the mean scores fluctuate both ways among the semesters, there is a significant positive difference in students' answers about knowing how to use email (17.5% in Fall 1997 vs. 70% in Summer 1999). A few years ago, email was unheard of at LAU. Since the end of 1998, and upon registration, each LAU

student is given an email address, thus, the difference in the mean scores from Fall 1997 to Summer 1999. The same applies to Internet use (23.8% in Fall 1997 vs. 80% in Summer 1999). A few (but not enough) P.C.s are available for students' use in the LAU library. In years to come, the expectations are that all LAU prospective students (IEP as well) would be computer literate and email and Internet users. More or less the same fluctuation can be seen regarding 'using Internet' and 'having access to both Internet and email'. The changes in the mean scores in the time span the action research study took place are well noticed. During these two years, many changes occurred. From a negligible entity, the IT has become an essential tool to every student and faculty member.

Tables 35 and 36 indicate the mean scores of students' perceptions about what they learned from the IEP and what they believe they managed to do as a result of the IEP. As the results gathered in these two tables are of different groups, different numbers, and at different period of time, the mean scores and the percentages are reported without the use of a specific statistical technique.

IEP	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Summer 1998	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Summer 1999
Changed my way of reading in English	0.3143 31.4%	0.3429 34.3%	0.1429 14.3%	0.1262 12.6%	0.2449 24.5%	0.3333 33.3%
Helped me develop previous knowledge of English	0.4571 45.7%	0.6286 62.9%	0.4286 42.9%	0.4563 45.6%	0.5510 55.1%	0.3333 33.3%
Changed your way of writing in English	0.7571 75.7%	0.9143 91.4%	0.7143 71.4%	0.7864 78.6%	0.6531 65.3%	0.6667 66.7%
Helped me write only for Academic Purposes	0.1286 12.9%	0.1324 13.2%	0.1429 14.3%	0.1845 18.5%	0.2245 22.5%	0.2222 22.2%
Taught me how to study better	0.2143 21.4%	0.2286 22.9%	0.4286 42.9%	0.1165 11.7%	0.3469 34.7%	0.3333 33.3%

Table 35: Comparing mean scores of students' perceptions about what they learned from the IEP

As a result of the IEP I managed to	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Summer 1998	Fall 1998	Spring 1999	Summer 1999
Take notes more efficiently	0.3429 34.3%	0.3429 34.3%	0.4286 42.9%	0.3689 36.9%	0.3878 38.8%	0.6667 66.7%
Cope with Academic Writing	0.1714 17.1%	0.2000 20%	0.2857 28.6%	0.2718 27.2%	0.3061 30.6%	0.2222 22.2%
Use reading strategies	0.2143 21.4%	0.2000 20%	0.4286 42.9%	0.1121 11.2%	0.2449 24.5%	0.2222 22.2%
Develop my own way of reading	0.2429 24.3%	0.2857 28.6%	0.1429 14.3%	0.1942 19.4%	0.2449 24.5%	0.1111 11.1%
Get to know the English language better	0.6000 60%	0.6000 60%	0.7143 71.4%	0.5534 55.3%	0.5510 55.1%	0.2222 22.2%
Cope with different types of writing	0.4714 47.1%	0.5143 51.4%	0.2857 28.6%	0.5049 50.4%	0.5306 53.1%	0.4444 44.4%

Table 36: Comparing mean scores of students' perceptions about what they managed to do as a result of the IEP

In table 35 the mean scores of each item fluctuate inconsistently. A recurrent negative reply from IEP students is related to reading skills. Learners do not seem to have noticed much change in their already acquired reading skill techniques. For instance, the mean score of *IEP changed my way of reading in English* is 0.3143 (31.4%) in Fall 1997 and end with 0.3333 (33.3%) in Summer 1999 (a very minimal difference indeed). However, all through the semesters, this mean score rose to 0.3429 (34.3%) in Spring 1998 and then decreased significantly to 0.1429 (14.3%) in Summer 1998, 0.1262 (12.6%) in Fall 1998, but again it had a slight increase with 0.2449 (24.5%) in Spring 1999. The same applies to table 31 where *as a result of the IEP I managed to develop my own way of reading*, the mean scores decreased significantly (0.2429 (24.3%) in Fall 1997 to 0.1111 (11.1%)in Summer 1999). It seems that from the students' views IEP faculty failed to cover all aspects of language skills during the action research project. Even if at points the mean scores differ slightly from one semester to another; the results obtained are low compared to other skills. *Writing skills* and *taking notes more efficiently* scored significantly higher than reading. This might be due to the task-based syllabus that was followed during the last three semesters of the study. Though the approach most IEP staff followed was an integration of all skills, still more emphasis was geared towards writing skills, i.e. academic writing.

Comparing the semesters included in the action research project shed light to some of the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Some language points were more emphasized than others. This is reflected in learners' replies in the questionnaires. The drawbacks of the IEP are clearer after comparing semesters. Though the validity and reliability of the results might be questioned because different students were involved each semester, the persisting similarity of the results (negative or positive) related to certain questions show consistency in the answers and thus reliability. In fact, learners seem to have acquired at the same time the language skills needed and enough self-confidence to move to regular university classes.

In this section, the data collected from various research methods, observations, document analysis, interviews, pre- and post-questionnaire were reported, analyzed, and interpreted. The changes that happened in the IEP during from the pilot study stage (1996) until the end of the action research project (1999) are both encouraging and positive. However, an action research is a non-ending process, and one should keep on investigating, implementing, and evaluating to improve the teaching/learning process.

Chapter Seven
Summary, Limitations, and Suggestions

In this section, four main features will be discussed. First, a summary of the key points of the action research study is presented; second, the limitations of the study are pointed out. Third, the recommendations gathered from the study to make use of the research conducted are stated. Finally, the conclusion and a self-reflective analysis about the study are drawn.

7.1 Summary of the Study

This study is an action research project conducted during a period of two years at the Lebanese American University in Beirut. Its main purpose was to plan, improve, implement changes, and evaluate the Intensive English Program to ensure a higher quality of teaching with the best available techniques within the limitations and constraints set by the university. A multi method approach was used throughout the project to collect, analyze, plan, and implement innovations in the IEP. In the study, enough data was gathered from documents, students and staff to strengthen the importance of the urgent need to change the focus of the approach used in the program. From a structural to a functional notional to a thematic, then to a task-based syllabus, the IEP has been through various stages that allowed the permanent staff to pick up the best of each syllabus and concoct its own tailor made one.

The main aim is not to divide the language into chunks but to keep it as a whole where all skills are integrated. Within the various steps of the action research, the latter was achieved. However, this should not end here; on the contrary, the action should continue so that the results reached so far would not be in vain.

This study has proven to be a very useful and important one, not only for the researcher but also for the IEP staff (their attitude towards language teaching and learning has changed). Because of the special characteristics of the action research, the collaboration of the permanent staff strengthened the team spirit. This research gave way to research at LAU that was not seen before. Also, students' attitudes towards the program changed. They seemed somehow more motivated. One should

check students' motivation within the next few semesters before making such an assumption.

This study is important and worthwhile because by its nature it can be duplicated, adapted, and implemented in other universities in Lebanon and the region.

7.2 Achievements

This research has been about the implementation of a new revised language program for first year university students at the Lebanese American University. The researcher has conducted a two-year action research project by planning, implementing, and evaluating the changes. A collaborative, participatory, and emancipatory action research allowed learners and staff to work together as a team. This researcher was able to establish a strong bond among all permanent IEP staff who collaborated and participated in the research wholeheartedly even though they were burdened with heavy workload and the research was tiring and demanding. However, it was rewarding at the end. The incorporated changes have triggered the motivation of the students; for instance, learners' portfolios were slowly but surely incorporated in the syllabus. The various tasks students have to work on to include in their portfolios have been chosen carefully so that they relate to learners' daily academic life. At the same time, the changes in the teaching process followed in the classes were met favourably by the students who showed more enthusiasm while working on the various tasks. Not only did the changes affect learners, but they also had a strong impact on the faculty themselves who felt rewarded at the end because of the positive results reached. Also, this particular study has set up a model to other universities in Lebanon and in the region. In Fall 2000, the changes are going to be incorporated in the other LAU campuses, and discussions with colleagues teaching in other institutions are taking place. The latter are interested in the changes achieved so far and would like to implement them in their own classes.

The research process is an ongoing one that each teacher whether involved in research or not should engage in. It is only by questioning, experimenting, implementing, evaluating, and re-planning that one can achieve better results

7.3 Limitations of the Study

During the course of this study, the researcher faced many problems, which may be considered as limitations. These problems can be divided into four main groups: those associated with the faculty, the students, the researcher, and the administration.

The first main issue is the IEP staffing. No precise number of prospective students is supplied ahead of time to the course designers. This problem limits the planning of the course until the first few days of classes in each semester. If the number of students is higher than expected, then part-time teachers have to be hired on the spot. An option might be to contact these part-timers ahead of time, but then the administration refuses to make definite commitments to a part-timer before being sure that s/he is going to be needed for the course. Thus, some part-time faculty members who have never taught English for academic purposes at a university level are hired for a semester. These part-timers might not feel committed to LAU because they may well hold a more substantial teaching post elsewhere. The majority of these teachers do not come from a language teaching background but hold degrees in literature. Some of them are not even aware that language teaching and learning does not have to follow a traditional approach. In some cases they resisted the changes to program integration that the other more experienced and more relevantly qualified IEP team members wanted to implement for fear of the unknown. Such part-time teachers faced some disciplinary problems in controlling classes (see earlier section). There is no claim that university students are easy to handle and to control, but a non-experienced newcomer might face more disciplinary problems in the classroom. Furthermore, some of them faced problems with the grading scale: they tended to give grades based more on assessment of structure, format, and organisation than on content. Learners were aware of the differences between teachers if different sections in controlling classes, grading criteria, teaching styles, and this caused ill feelings among the IEP staff. One way to solve part of the problem is to have a teacher training session that all IEP staff should attend. It can be a reflective session geared towards staff development, but some faculty might feel threatened from this step and thus be unwilling to attend and contribute to this session. To hold such sessions also has implications for funding and timetabling if hourly-paid teachers expect to be paid to attend.

The second main issue is the students. Coming from different backgrounds, whether different countries, school systems, or even language centres, LAU learners commonly feel lost at the beginning of each semester. It is rare for IEP classes to start on time on the first day of classes. This is due to students' late registration and the unexpected number registered. Thus, at the last minute some part time teachers have to be hired, and this delays the preparation of the schedule and the allocation of the respective classrooms to be used. Learners, coming fresh from high schools, feel lost and threatened by frequent changes. Students are not used to this uncertainty. Some of them face problems dealing with some faculty members (see earlier section). Others come to the program with a negative attitude. They feel disappointed (Levering, 2000) because of the low scores they got in the entrance exams, and thus in retaliation they do not want to work because they compare the program with other language courses they attended before where the emphasis was more on skills and a TOEFL type exam. Again, the prospect of the 'lost' semester makes some of the learners uncaring about the course work. They tend not to see that the IEP, by improving their English, will help their progress in their other courses and, very likely enhance their employment and career prospects.

The third main limitation is the researcher who is at the same time the coordinator of the program and a teacher of some of the classes. This created some ill feeling from other IEP staff at some points in the course; however, because of the nature of action research, (participatory and collaborative), the IEP team became involved in the study, and this helped release the tension. The many meetings, discussions, and group decisions were essential to IEP staff peace of mind. On the other hand, the heavy workload can become a burden that not all IEP faculty can carry for a long time. Thus, they might resist and oppose the implementation of new changes in the program. This also raises for the researcher the issue of dilemmas of objectivity (as researcher) and subjectivity (as teacher and course organiser) vis-à-vis both students and faculty as colleagues. However, this issue might have influenced the validity and reliability of the study, but the researcher was able to avoid such a problem by using triangulation. One can, perhaps, judge program improvement, by assignment grades and test scores but in the present research the students' voices - via questionnaires and interviews - have formed a major element. However, since there is a widespread feeling of lack of motivation or a sense of

prior failure among IEP participants, the accuracy of their perceptions remains uncertain with regard to how far it might be clouded by such emotions. More fundamentally, are first year university students realistically able to assess their language needs or judge precisely how much they have learned? Also another limitation is that the research took place over a fairly long time period during which the researcher was reading about the topic, taking courses in research, i.e., the researcher's understanding of the nature of research and of this project changed. Probably, the study would have been dealt with differently; for instance, the questionnaires would have included different types of questions that would have enable the collection of more data (e.g., more Likert scale type question than yes/no). Also, some items in the questionnaire should have been disregarded or reworded, and other items should have been used instead.

The fourth main issue is the administration. Unfortunately, a course leader cannot change the rules and regulations of the university. The number of students in each section is set (though for many semesters, it went higher than usual because of the administration's recommendation). Second, the number of hours per section cannot be changed (15 hours/week over a period of fifteen weeks). Thus, no block or shorter courses are allowed although theoretically there might be useful alternative forms of course organisations (see Jordan, 1997). Though Intensive English III students are allowed to register for one regular university along course with the Intensive English, the options are minimal to them (Arabic or Business/Basic Math), and this upsets students who would like to start major courses immediately (at least one with the IEP). A solution might be pursuing the matter again with the administration. It is possible that in years to come the policy changes and that a different approach might be adopted. Until then, one has to work within these administrative constraints.

In this section, the major limitations encountered during the action research project were pointed out. In light of these limitations, the next part (proposed actions) is discussed.

7.4 Proposed Steps and Actions

After examining the results of the questionnaires, interviews (both learners and teachers), classroom observation, document analysis, meetings, and discussion,

one can see that there are a few pitfalls in the IEP. The action research project conducted during the two consecutive years (six cohorts of students) helped analyse these drawbacks and come up with solutions. However, these recommendations when applied to a new syllabus are insufficient. The action research cycle should be a continuous process, and the program should often be revaluated and redesigned so that the outcomes fit the needs of the students better in the general LAU context of continuing development.

In general, many students encounter problems through their school/university years because of lack of familiarity in using appropriate study skills per se, and through the medium of English. By the end of the IEP, students should be expected to manage the language to write essays, understand lectures, read and think critically, take comprehensive notes, give oral presentations, and work their way into projects with a minimum of time. In other words, students would be expected to move into more advanced studies with more confidence and ease (see Appendix A). To achieve these goals several procedures and recommendations should be followed. First, have a task-based syllabus, which acts as an umbrella to all other syllabuses. Thus, it was seen appropriate to use an integrated approach with the writing skills component as a basis to build this syllabus. However, one might say that a mixture of everything might confuse the learners (or teachers) more than help them achieve what is planned within the course, but this factor would be taken care of if the orientation of the material used is not changed very often. The units should be consistent and should follow the same process all the way through. Also, integration of all the skills should be studied carefully in each unit. So far, in the IEP, the results of the questionnaires pointed out that the reading component had been overlooked.

The second issue is the choice of text material for Intensive English programs; this is critical, and the selection process should be very meticulous. If the text chosen is too simplified or over complicated, then it is a disservice to the learners. Content-based learning seems essential and thus text material should be authentic with study guides, glossary, graphs, illustrations and various designs that would motivate learners and instil in them a positive attitude towards the language of instruction.

Commercially purchased textbooks would be of great help especially given that students believe they need to have a book to refer to, but a textbook alone is not sufficient. Van Lier (1996) believes that textbooks limit the ability of the teachers to engage in innovative, exploratory teaching, but admits that unfortunately without them students (and some teachers) are at loss. However, he questions the content of the textbooks as according to him, most, if not all, textbooks nowadays include almost everything. Thus, they discourage the development of teachers' innovative ideas. Teachers are labelled finders instead of discoverers. Publication houses when advertising their textbooks, stress the fact that their books are politically, racially, and socially appropriately neutral, but these might be considered constraints that hamper the creative and authentic use of such textbooks. Thus the mere fact of using these books in the classroom might be looked upon quite negatively.

The textbook becomes the dictator that class teachers have to abide by and not a valuable resource that would provide stability to students. Therefore, course instructors need to prepare extra material that would reinforce the learning of the students (e.g. a bank of activities to refer to and update continuously). Thus, it is imperative to supply the teachers with locally developed material that would relate to the content course materials whenever they are published. However, this does not mean that the mechanics of writing would not be part of the syllabus. To prepare students to cope with EAP, enough time in class should be devoted to sentence combining exercises, writing essay assignments, and studying model answers (Snow and Brinton, 1990).

Also, as the current trend is for the use of computers as a tool for aided instruction, different software should be made available for students so that they can be used in the language lab or for self-studying. Use of the computer in general is sought after by students. They enjoy spending hours surfing the Internet, sending emails to fellow classmates, friends, and teachers, and seeking diverse information. Many students would rather submit typed and not hand written assignments. Thus, instead of letting students search for only what they are interested in, carefully prepared assignments could combine both language teaching and interesting topics that can be theme based content language instruction; learners will be more motivated and enthusiastic about language teaching. On the other hand, the faculty should also be trained to become not only computer literate but also competent in

the use of computers. In the new national Lebanese school curriculum (1995) great emphasis is placed on ELT technology, and thus school students should be exposed to various computer-assisted learning activities (see earlier section). However, while some of the IEP students are very comfortable using computers, others have hardly a clue about the use of computers, and feel awkward using them. This depends on the schools the students come from. This situation will hopefully disappear in years to come, for all future school students coming from the public or private sector, should become computer literate and users (Lebanese National Curriculum, 1995). (That is, if the schools have the means to buy all the new equipment needed for technology teaching (El-Hage, 1999). Moreover, LAU with all its facilities and innovations has also to be able to provide an unlimited access to computer centres to students to help them overcome as smoothly as possible this transition period. This is rather a critical issue to discuss at LAU because the number of computers available on campus is insufficient for all students, and understandably priority usually goes to Masters' students or to the ones majoring in computer science or business.

In order to overcome some of the limitations and pursue the implementation of the recommendations for improving the IEP, the following steps should be followed. First, prepare a proposal to the administration with the various recommendations suggested:

1. Hire more full time teachers who would be dedicated to the institution (but, how can one ensure that these full-timers are going to be dedicated to the institution?). This would solve partly the problem of having many part-timers in some semesters and could ensure staff continuity.

2. Have the IEP language lab computerized so that learners can benefit more from the new technology available. However, this does not mean that the lab should only be for computer language learning purposes.

3. Have fewer students in each section; i.e. smaller classes. This might be a purely administrative task but worth investigating.

4. Prepare a list of courses (major ones) that learners can take simultaneously with the IEP. This might gear the IEP to be more content-based oriented, and the portfolio assessment which is purely academic

(see Murphy, 1994; Hamps Lyons, 1994) for the time being can be changed to a disciplinary (subject oriented) one (see Hiverta, 1997).

5. Involve other professors from various disciplines in the IEP. Contact the professors and ask them to come as guest speakers to IEP classes. This step would prepare the students to their regular classes later on and give many relevant content introductions to their majors. It would provide practice content-based academic listening and discussion.

6. Investigate in the next couple of years the issue of allowing the Intensive English III students to take two to three regular courses in conjunction with the IEP. The latter would be given through a whole year instead of one semester, and thus learners would bring their language problems faced in subject area courses to the IEP (see adjunct content-based syllabus design; chapter 2, section 2.1.8). This step can be another action research project if one or more IEP teachers could be participant observers in the parallel content courses to note relevant language points and student problems. It might be a solution to the recurring motivation problem that learners lack, since links with majors or direct application of skills learned in the IEP would be clearer to students.

7. Continue investigating and researching the IEP to derive more substantial answers that would strengthen the results of this study. Thus, the program can be adapted to other institutions in the country and in the region that follow the same system of English teaching and support. One can start with the other campuses (Byblos and Sidon) before moving to other institutions in Lebanon, the region, and in other countries that bear similar bilingual or multilingual aspects in language teaching and learning as in Lebanon.

7.5 Reflexivity

This action research project in terms of research per se has proven to be essential and worthwhile. However, many points were raised during the process. What makes this research an action research and not a case study one? The two types of research might seem similar at some points, and in fact they are. A case

study might be part of an action research project, for the latter investigates a particular situation. However, the major characteristics of any action research are typical as collaboration, participation, critical enquiry, emancipatory, and others are involved within the study.

Few dilemmas were encountered such as the subjectivity involved with the research; everybody knows everybody, the researcher, the IEP staff, the students; this acted as an emotional versus a rational dilemma at one point. Also, the question of validity (or should I say veridical) and reliability arose many times. The participants are in the system, and it is their perceptions and interpretations that are reported. Were they truthful about what they wanted to say? Were they able to convey the message they wanted clearly? There is an element of doubt, for maybe what learners said was not exactly what they thought. Their perceptions were discussed with the researcher (their teacher at some point). The ethical aspect of the research could be questioned.

On the other hand, the confidentiality aspect of the research could be pointed out. Did the researcher abide by this trust? Was she able to interpret and convey the message of the people's voices? The invested interest in the research answers this issue. Both the learners and the researcher want the changes. Also, the shifting in the staff attitudes is worth mentioning. It is believed that faculty, students, and researcher had a mutual interest in the program. The research proved that permanent IEP staff genuinely wanted to reflect on their own teaching and think of various research projects they might pursue within their own classes.

7.6 Conclusion

In this study, the researcher has attempted to conduct an action research project regarding the IEP at the LAU in Beirut, Lebanon. A literature review of the various topics needed in the research has been prepared, the research context with the various methods used to conduct this research has been reported, the results, recommendations, and limitations of the study stated.

In one sense, as Fig.2 (Chapter 3, p.57) might indicate, an action research study is necessarily incomplete and may be unending because the research cycle can, and perhaps should, be ongoing. However, this study, while incomplete, must come to an end. This action research study loosened the traditional views that some IEP

faculty members and learners had about language learning. It allowed creativity and innovative ideas to be applied in the classes. Teachers were able to find ways to motivate learners and help them become an active part of the evaluation process of the program. To this extent and to the extent that the project encouraged both students and teachers to reflect on the program and on language learning, the research has been of immediate benefit to participants. Longer-term benefits might be judged on the basis of an improved IEP course or by investigating how students in their second, third, or fourth years evaluate the contribution of the IEP to their progress throughout their studies. The latter would, of course, be another study.

This study encouraged faculty members involved in the IEP and other English language courses to investigate the various opportunities available to make language learning more motivating to learners. It also made faculty aware of the various research projects they can investigate themselves, and thus at the same time beneficial to staff development.

It is hoped that faculty and researchers will follow up on this study to further improve the learning process.

1996 - 1997

General Goals for Intensive English II and III

EDU003 Intensive English II

A non-credit intermediate level English course aimed at consolidating previously learned skills and expanding into new areas using controlled texts, programmed materials and situational activities. Emphasis is placed on writing, reading, comprehension, and speech. An integrated approach is used in teaching all skills

EDU004 Intensive English III

A non-credit advanced level English course aimed at bridging the gap between minimal and college-level academic English proficiency in as short a time as possible. Emphasis is placed on reading, writing, comprehension, and speech. An integrated approach is used in teaching all skills.

By the end of the Intensive English Program, students will be expected to do the following:

1. Write paragraphs/essays using different rhetorical modes
2. Demonstrate comprehension of lectures and take comprehensive notes
3. Read literally and critically
4. Give oral presentations
5. Work their way into written projects in a set time

In other words, students would be expected to move into more advanced studies with more confidence and ease.

Written Communication Objectives

I. Develop appropriate composing strategies:
    - Use process writing.
        1. Apply prewriting, drafting, and revising.
        2. Show competence in revising structure, form and content.
        - Correct sentence fragments/run ons.
        - Combine sentences.
        - Choose words effectively.
        - Develop unity and coherence.
        - Use varied sentence structure, word order and sentence length.
        - Add/Delete/Rearrange information.
        - Elaborate by using details, examples, dialogue, quotation.
        3. Show competence in proofreading and peer editing (both content and structure)
            - Capitalization
            - Punctuation
            - Spelling
    - Capture reader's interest.
    - Identify audience and purpose.
    - Use appropriate language.

II. Produce a wide variety of paragraph/essay forms showing further competence in using discourse modes.
    - Narrate incidents and experiences from different points of view.
    - Describe situations and processes.
    - Develop by definition, classification, illustrations, cause and effect, and comparison and contrast.
    - Argue for/against an issue.

III. Produce specific written forms.
    - Write pieces for specific purposes (Journals, messages, forms, note taking, summaries).
    - Write summaries and paraphrases.

IV. Demonstrate ability to produce the appropriate linguistic, stylistic, and organizational components of a/an paragraph/essay.
    - Utilize grammatical and lexical components pertinent to specific subject areas.
    - Use appropriate lexical items to suit tone, style, mood, purpose, and theme.
    - Maintain thematic unity.
    - Establish and maintain coherence using sequencing (chronological, spatial, and logical), transitional, and repetition of key terms.

V.   Review grammatical usage through English in context.
  • Verb tenses
        - passive/active
        - conditionals
  • Subject-Verb-Pronoun agreement
  • Modifiers (Adjectives/Adverbs)

Study Skills Objectives

The purpose of the study skills is to aid learners in locating and using sources of information.

I.   To locate sources of information:
  •To familiarize students with the use of the library (library sections, card catalogue, reserve shelves, reference room, microfilm room, internet, etc.)

II.   To use sources of information
  1. Follow direction for accomplishing tasks.
  2. Practice study strategies (K-W-L, SQ3R, How to Study, etc.)
  3. Adjust methods of learning and monitoring rate of reading.
  4. Compare information from different sources.
  5. Distinguish book parts.
  6. Utilize graphic aids.
  7. Apply test-taking strategies.
  8. Fill out forms and applications.

Reading Objectives

I.   Intensive Reading
    • Demonstrate factual understanding of a variety of textual discourse:
        1. Identify main ideas/supporting details.
        2. Answer literal and relational comprehensive questions.
    • Demonstrate critical understanding of a variety of textual discourse:
        1. Analyze details.
        2. Make inferences and assumptions.
        3. Synthesize ideas/information.
        4. Identify tone, mode, attitude, and purpose of the author.
        5. React to the author's point of view.
    • Demonstrate ability to use reading strategies:
        1. Pre-read to establish background.
        2. Preview to establish general theme.
        3. Skim to outline main points.
        4. Identify the organization and sequence of ideas.
        5. Detect related discourse markers.
        6. Scan to detect specific information.
        7. Restate ideas (paraphrase).
        8. Summarize main ideas of a text.
        9. Differentiate between fact and opinion.
    • Demonstrate awareness of linguistic and organizational features of a text:
        1. Identify devices of coherence and cohesion.
        2. Identify elements of unity.
        3. Interpret figurative language and idiomatic usage.
        4. Analyze grammatical components in textual discourse.

II.   Extensive Reading
        1. Identify the plot, setting, theme, and characterization.
        2. Predict plausible outcomes (forshadowing).
        3. Draw logical conclusions.
        4. Relate information across fields (flashback).
        5. Identify introduction, complication, conflict, and resolution of a short story.

III. Vocabulary
        1. Recognize and build word structure (roots and affixes).
        2. Recognize and differentiate word forms (parts of speech).
        3. Identify the meaning of words in context.
        4. Recognize connotative/denotative meaning of words.
        5. Supply antonyms and synonyms in context.
        6. Recognize analogies.

Oral Communication Objectives

I. Listening Comprehension
- Recognize the purpose of a message.
- Identify main ideas.
- Identify supporting details.
- Recognize the speaker's point of view.
- Recognize the tone and mood of the speaker.
- Differentiate between fact and opinion.
- Infer/Imply meanings and assumptions.
- Predict outcome and anticipate what the speaker is going to say.
- Evaluate the presentation.
- Anticipate and develop outlining techniques.
- Use the title and/or graphic aids such as figures, graphs, etc. to predict.
- Guess the meaning of difficult terms and idiomatic expressions in context.
- Recognize agreement/disagreement in discussions or debates.
- Decipher non-verbal contextual cues in audio/audiovisual materials.
- Understand the meaning of expressions of concessions such as although, even though, despite of, and in spite of, etc.
- Know the expressions of quantity such as twice as many, half as many, number of, a number of, etc.
- Recognize transitions

II. Note taking
- Synthesize the information in a lecture.
  1. Understand what they have heard/read.
  2. Pick the most essential pieces of information.
  3. Understand how all the pieces of information fit together.
- Use and develop notational system.
  1. Identify main ideas.
  2. Edit the notes (review, clarify, and organize the information contained in them.

III. Speaking
- Engage in different speaking situations: conversations, debates, group projects, and public presentations.
- Determine general and specific topic purposes and appeal to the target audience.
- Establish coherence by using verbal or non-verbal transitional signals.
- Select supportive evidence, that is appropriate to the audience, occasion, setting, and mood.
- Gather and organize material.
- Use accurate, appropriate, clear, and vivid language.

Appendix B part I

Questionnaire for Intensive English Students
Pre-Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims at examining students' perceptions and attitudes towards the English language in general and in the Intensive English Program given at the Lebanese American University in particular.

The information you provide can help reevaluate the program and change its components and design for the benefits of all students; names are not required as the findings of the study will appear only as figures.
Please take a few minutes to answer each question accurately. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated as it is essential to make our effort successful.

Thank you in advance!

A. Background Information
Please fill in with the correct information or put an **X** where appropriate.

1. Age ☐ 17-18 ☐ 19-20 ☐ 21-22

☐ 23-24 ☐ 25 and above

2. Major: ---

3. Sex ☐ Female ☐ Male

4. Nationality: --

5. Native language : ---------------------------------------

6. Language(s) spoken at home : ---

7. How do you rate your knowledge of the following languages?
Circle the abbreviation that best fits your answer
E = Excellent   G = Good   R = Regular   W = Weak   N = None

	READ	WRITE	SPEAK
1. English	E G R W N	E G R W N	E G R W N
2. Arabic	E G R W N	E G R W N	E G R W N
3. French	E G R W N	E G R W N	E G R W N
4. Other ------------	E G R W N	E G R W N	E G R W N

8. In which country did you study your:

- elementary classes [____] Lebanon [____] abroad, specify ----------------
- intermediate classes [____] Lebanon [____] abroad, specify ----------------
- secondary classes [____] Lebanon [____] abroad, specify ----------------

9. Which school medium/system did you follow at school:

[____] Arabic [____] English [____] French [____] Other, specify ----------

B. English
Circle **one** or **more** alternatives if necessary.
1. Have you attended any English language program before joining the Intensive English one?
a. Yes
b. No

2. If yes, Where?
a. LAU extension program
b. AUB extension program
c. American Language Center
d. British Council
e. Other. Please, specify: --------------------

3. Why have you joined the Intensive English Program?
a. To improve my language.
b. I had to.
c. I find it interesting.
d. To learn more.
e. To help me improve my English language.
f. It was the only way to join LAU.
g. I failed the English Entrance Exam.
h. I was obliged.
i. Others. Please, specify: --------------------

4. What do you think you will study in the Intensive English Program?
a. Grammar rules
b. Vocabulary
c. Writing skills
d. Reading Comprehension
e. Spelling
f. Speaking
g. Listening
h. Others. Please, specify: --------------------

5. In your opinion, what are the objectives of the Intensive English Program?
a. Improving your writing skill
b. Improving your knowledge of grammar
c. Increasing your vocabulary
d. Developing your reading comprehension skills
e. Improving your speaking skills
f. Others. Please, specify: --------------------

6. In Intensive English, which of the following objectives do you consider more appropriate to meet your needs:
a. Understanding spoken English
b. Knowing the grammatical structures of the language
c. Developing reading strategies
d. Perceiving the organization of texts
e. Speaking English
f. Writing in English
g. Other. Please specify _____

7. How important is it to you to learn the grammatical rules?
a. Very important
b. Does not matter
c. Not important at all

8. Why is it so?

----

9. In your opinion, in your course curriculum, English should:
a. Appear as an obligatory course
b. Appear as an optional course
c. Not appear in the curriculum

10. Do you like group work?
a. Yes, a lot
b. Does not really matter
c. Not at all

11. Why or why not?

----

12. How do you consider the Intensive English Program in relation to the major you are going to study at LAU?
a. Relevant
b. Irrelevant
c. Don't know

C. Reading

1. Circle **one** number in each row to indicate if you agree or disagree with each statement.

5 = strongly agree   4 = agree   3 = don't know

        2 = disagree   1 = strongly disagree

Reading improves my vocabulary	5	4	3	2	1
Reading improves my writing skills	5	4	3	2	1
Reading improves my knowledge	5	4	3	2	1
Reading improves my listening skills	5	4	3	2	1
Reading improves my reading comprehension	5	4	3	2	1
Reading improves my grammar	5	4	3	2	1
Reading improves my spelling	5	4	3	2	1
Reading improves my speaking skills	5	4	3	2	1

2. What do you read in your spare time? And in which language?
   Put an X where appropriate

	Arabic	English	French	Other
Newspapers				
Magazines				
Comics				
Short stories				
Romance books				
Best sellers				
Adventure				
Horror books				
Biographies				
Science fiction				

3. What was the last book you have read? And in which language?
   a. Title of the book: _____
   b. Language: _____

4. Do you ever discuss the books or articles you have read with your friends or classmates?
   a. Yes
   b. No

Circle **one** or **more** alternatives if necessary.

5. Why do you think you need to read in English?
   a. For studying purposes
   b. For finding a good job later on
   c. For fun
   d. For increasing my knowledge
   e. For pleasure
   f. For information
   g. Other. Please, specify: ------------------

Circle **one** number in each row.

6. How often do you read the following in **English**?

    5 = More than once a day   4 = once a day   3 = once or twice a week

       2 = once or twice a month   1= less than once a month   0 = never

Newspapers	5	4	3	2	1	0
Comics	5	4	3	2	1	0
Books	5	4	3	2	1	0
Magazines	5	4	3	2	1	0
Best sellers	5	4	3	2	1	0

7. How often do you read the following in a language **other** than English?

    5 = More than once a day   4 = once a day   3 = once or twice a week

       2 = once or twice a month   1= less than once a month   0 = never

Newspapers	5	4	3	2	1	0
Comics	5	4	3	2	1	0
Books	5	4	3	2	1	0
Magazines	5	4	3	2	1	0
Best sellers	5	4	3	2	1	0

8. Do you like to read in English?
a. Yes
b. No

9. If you answered no, then why not?
a. It takes a lot of time.
b. English is a difficult language.
c. I don't know what to read.
d. I don't have time.
e. I don't know.
f. There is no need to read.
g. Others. Please, specify --------------------

10. If both the book and the movie are available, would you rather read the book or watch the film?
a. Read the book
b. Watch the film
c. Watch the film first then read the book
d. Read the book first, then watch the film

11. What kinds of movies do you like to watch?
a. Horror
b. Comics
c. Science fiction
d. Documentaries
e. Adventure
f. Musical
g. Drama
h. Others. Please, specify ---------------------

12. What was the last movie you watched? In which language?

Movie _____

Language _____

13. At the moment, you use English for

a. Reading

b. Writing reports

c. Spoken communication

d. Computer use

e. Others, please specify ---------------------

D. Writing

1. Circle **one** number in each row to indicate if you agree or disagree with each statement.

5 = strongly agree   4 = agree   3 = don't know

     2 = disagree   1 = strongly disagree

Writing improves my vocabulary	5	4	3	2	1
Writing improves my writing skills	5	4	3	2	1
Writing improves my knowledge	5	4	3	2	1
Writing improves my listening skills	5	4	3	2	1
Writing improves my reading comprehension	5	4	3	2	1
Writing improves my grammar	5	4	3	2	1
Writing improves my spelling	5	4	3	2	1
Writing improves my speaking skills	5	4	3	2	1

2. Do you like writing?

a. Yes

b. No

3. If you answered no, then why not?

a. It takes a lot of time.

b. English is a difficult language.

c. I don't know what to write.

d. I don't have time.

e. I don't know.

f. There is no need to write.

g. Others. Please, specify -------------------

4. Why, in your opinion, do you need to write in English?

a. For studying purposes

b. For finding a good job later on

c. For fun

d. For increasing my knowledge

e. For pleasure

f. For information

g. Other. Please, specify -------------------

E. Technology

1. Do you use a computer at home?
a. Yes
b. No

2. Do you know how to use e-mail?
a. Yes
b. No

3. Do you know how to use the internet?
a. Yes
b. No

4. Have you ever used e-mail?
a. Yes
b. No

5. Have you ever used the internet?
a. Yes
b. No

6. Do you have access to e-mail?
a. Yes
b. No

7. Do you have access to the internet?
a. Yes
b. No

F. Topics of Interest

1. Circle **one** number in each row to indicate whether each topic listed below interest you or not.

5 = very interesting   4 = interesting   3 = indifferent
2 = not interesting   1 = boring

Volcanoes	5	4	3	2	1
Human Rights	5	4	3	2	1
Aids	5	4	3	2	1
China	5	4	3	2	1
Adoption	5	4	3	2	1
Violence on TV	5	4	3	2	1
Cloning	5	4	3	2	1
Mars	5	4	3	2	1
The Royal Family	5	4	3	2	1
Drugs	5	4	3	2	1
Smoking	5	4	3	2	1
Hong Kong 1997	5	4	3	2	1
Movies	5	4	3	2	1
Divorce	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix B part II

ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAM AT THE LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

At the beginning of the semester, you were asked to fill in a questionnaire regarding your expectations regarding the Intensive English Program. Now that the semester is nearly over, there is another questionnaire that will help evaluate the course itself from your own point of view.
Thank you for your help!

A. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT INTENSIVE ENGLISH AND YOU
Please circle the answer that fits best your way of thinking.

1. Did you ever feel like not coming to the Intensive English classes?
a. always
b. often
c. sometimes
d. rarely
e. never

2. Did you like Intensive English classes?
a. a lot
b. it is all right
c. not much
d. not at all

3. How much do you feel you have learned from Intensive English classes?
a. a lot
b. a fair amount
c. not much
d. nothing at all

4. Were you glad you were assigned to follow the Intensive English program?
a. yes
b. no

Why?

----

5. Have you always done your best in the Intensive English classes?
a. yes, always
b. sometimes
c. rarely
d. never

6. Did you like the way the classes were being taught?
a. yes
b. no

Why?

----

7. Did most of the teachers give you help when you needed it?
a. always
b. often
c. sometimes
d. rarely
e. never

8. Did you find the time you spend in the classes to be interesting?
a. always
b. often
c. sometimes
d. rarely
e. not at all

9. Were the Intensive English classes different from other English language classes you have had?
a. yes. In what way? _____
b. no. In what way? _____
c. I have never had other English courses.

10. If you answered *Yes* to the previous question, do you consider this difference
  a. positive
  b. negative
  c. unimportant

B. SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT INTENSIVE ENGLISH

Circle **one** or **more** alternatives if necessary.

1. In Intensive English, which of the following objectives did you consider more appropriate to meet your needs:
    a. understanding spoken English
    b. knowing the grammatical structures of the language
    c. developing reading strategies
    d. perceiving the organization of texts
    e. speaking English
    f. writing in English
    g. others. Please, specify _____

2. In your opinion the objectives of Intensive English were:
    a. improving your writing skill
    b. improving your knowledge of grammar
    c. increasing your vocabulary
    d. developing the skill of comprehending texts
    e. improving the speaking skill
    f. improving the listening skill
    g. others. Please, specify _____

3. You think that Intensive English:
   a. changed your way of reading in English
   b. helped you to read only for academic purposes
   c. helped you develop your previous knowledge of English
   d. changed your way of writing in English
   e. helped you to write only for academic purposes
   f. taught you how to study better
   g. did not help much

4. You think that as a result of the Intensive English program you managed to:
   a. take notes more efficiently
   b. cope with Academic English
   c. use reading strategies
   d. develop your own way of reading
   e. get to know the English language better
   f. cope with different types of writing
   g. none of the above
   h. others. Please, specify _____

5. In your opinion the materials that were used in class:
   a. de-motivated
   b. aroused interest
   c. were not interesting
   d. were selected carefully
   e. were related to your area of interest
   f. were irrelevant to your area of specialization
   g. were useful

6. You believe that the Intensive English program encouraged:
   a. the teacher-student relationship
   b. discussion
   c. student participation
   d. student attention/concentration in class

7. Taking into account your knowledge after you took this course, do you believe that you read and understand English texts:
   a. with more difficulty
   b. more easily
   c. faster
   d. with less confidence
   e. with more confidence
   f. none of the above

8. Taking into account your knowledge after you took this course, do you believe that you write English for academic purposes:
   a. with more difficulty
   b. more easily
   c. with less confidence
   d. with more confidence
   e. none of the above

9. Which of the following items appeared in your Intensive English program?
    a. strategies for approaching a text (guessing new words, etc.)
    b. awareness of the process involved in reading
    c. explanation and practice in grammar
    d. text functions (description, classification etc.)
    e. critical reading
    f. using the dictionary
    g. exercises to increase vocabulary
    h. connectives (because, however, etc.)
    i. text structure (locating main ideas, etc.)
    j. word formation (prefixes, suffixes)
    k. processing (process writing)
    l. note taking and note making
    m. others. Please, specify _____

C. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
Circle the answer that you think fits best.

1. Did this course meet your needs regarding the use of the English language?
    a. a lot
    b. adequately
    c. not much
    d. not at all

2. Your receptivity to the materials used in the course was:
    a. indifferent
    b. high
    c. very high

3. Did you have a chance to contribute in class with your specific knowledge and personal experience?
    a. always
    b. usually
    c. seldom
    d. never

4. At the end of the course do you think you were able to cope in a better way with Academic English?
    a. yes
    b. no
    c. don't know

5. When you entered the course, your knowledge of English was:
    a. excellent
    b. good
    c. regular
    d. weak
    e. none

6. After attending the Intensive English program you think your English:
   a. improved a lot
   b. improved a bit
   c. stayed the same
   d. got worse

7. Comments:

----

8. Would you like to add anything else?

Appendix C

Interview Questions
(Students' Interviews)

1. Why have you joined the IEP?
2. What do you think of the program?
3. What do you like/enjoy most in the program?
4. What do you like/enjoy least in the program?
5. What would you like to change in the program?
6. What would you like to have more in the program?
7. What do you think of the listening lab?
8. Are you trying your best in the classes?

Appendix D

Interview extracts with a current IEP staff:

Organization:
- I am impressed how smoothly the course is running in terms of organization
- Can we do something about class size?
- Can we do something about hours? I usually lose ten minutes, especially towards the end. It is a fight for motivation!...
- Can we not have very early classes?
- Please afternoon classes are killing me.
- Thirty in the class is too many

Contents:
- We could even have more "whole language" as suggested in the syllabus! Somehow we left that a bit behind.
- Have a textbook as the center. More than one teacher uses it at the same time (coordination is possible: have a logbook where every teacher describes (very briefly) what he/she is doing)
- Have additional readings, short stories, like process-writing, academic text types, contextualised grammar, when it fits into a unit ...
- Have more integration
- Invite native guest speakers! Students would enjoy this!

Student Motivation
- I see two main difficulties
  - They all start with the feeling 'I have failed my English exam. I am not a real student!' They are not looking forward to the course.
  - Problems of transition from school to university, especially ability to motivate oneself.
  - They act like high school students.
  - They don't want to work for Intensive classes. They prefer to wait for major courses
  - ....

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