INTRODUCTION

DENISE E. MURRAY

The field of English language teaching is constantly being required to adopt new methodologies, new theoretical bases for knowledge, new roles for teachers, new materials, new media for instruction, and new content mastery by teachers and learners. Much of this change is top-down, initiated by government and other agencies, with a goal of innovation or greater efficiency. This volume documents twelve different instances of innovative plans, all of which, while achieving some of the original goals, found both impediments and opportunities in the change process.

The change and innovation literature focuses on *managing* change and on issues such as early adopters (e.g., Rogers, 1995); however, the experiences discussed here demonstrate that innovation and change lead to unexpected outcomes. By carefully documenting innovative initiatives in a variety of contexts, the authors highlight how innovation is embedded within specific sociocultural and political contexts, both at national and local levels. These contexts interact dynamically with the innovators such that predicted outcomes are challenged, reshaped, or rejected. Most of the innovations were imposed top-down (e.g., teacher standards, new curriculum, new methodologies). This volume then describes the negotiation of change in different English language teaching contexts—in particular, identifying ways in which change is co-constructed by teachers and change agents.

The approach taken is for individual case studies, presented by teachers, researchers, administrators, and consultants who were involved in the specific innovations. However, they present more than self-reflections; they also present views from different stakeholders. The chapters include change and innovation in different countries, in different ELT sectors, in different aspects of the teaching/learning enterprise, and at different levels of educational administration. Some chapters discuss issues of assessing language of immigrants in English-dominant countries (Chapter 10 on Canada and Chapter 11 on Australia). A number of chapters examine teacher knowledge and understandings and the characteristics of effective teachers (Chapter 7 on the United States, Chapter 8 on Egypt, and Chapter 5 on Thailand). Two

chapters (Chapters 4 and 9) also reflect on the issues surrounding EFL countries commissioning foreign experts to guide innovation and change.

Although the volume is divided into two parts, *Changing Curriculum* and *Changing Teachers*, these two areas overlap. Changes to curriculum inevitably result in changes in teaching and what teachers do or are expected to know and be able to do.

The first part includes national curriculum renewal projects in K–12 education in Hong Kong (Chapter 2) and Singapore (Chapter 6). In both cases, a top-down approach was taken by government, with unexpected outcomes in implementation. Adamson and Davison (Chapter 2) describe the process of implementation of a student-focused, task-based methodology into Hong Kong primary schools. They show how different stakeholders reformulated the reforms. Goh and Yin (Chapter 6) describe curriculum reforms in Singapore, elaborating on the rationale for the innovation and then showing how teachers reinterpreted some of the specifications of the syllabus. In another setting in Asia, Burton and her doctoral students (Chapter 5) outline the effects of national reforms in Thailand at the post-secondary level. Katz, Byrkun, and Sullivan (Chapter 4) examine the way curriculum reform became instantiated in materials in Ukraine. They show how talk during the materials development process empowered the participants, even though they were not able to develop a Ukrainian version of their materials for the Ministry. Many countries are now using English as the medium of instruction for core school (or university) subjects, with the goal of improving the national level of English. Klippel (Chapter 3), reporting on two decades of integrated content and language instruction in English in German schools, presents the dilemma of using English as a medium of instruction.

The second part focuses specifically on the effects of change on teachers. Two chapters (Chapters 11 and 12) discuss national language assessment in immigrant programs in Canada and Australia, respectively. Cumming, Lam, and Lang (Chapter 11) describe their evaluation of the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. They examine the difficulties in developing national assessment programs and, in particular, how teacher knowledge of assessment processes is framed. In Chapter 12, Slatyer provides further insights into how to support teachers who are required to assess learners using a national benchmarking system in Australia. Three chapters focus on teacher development. Langman (Chapter 7) describes how a principal in a middle school in the United States provided all mainstream teachers with some TESOL training; however, because of the lack of professional focus on language learners, these learners became "incidental language learners." Katz and Snow (Chapter 8), describing a teacher standards project in Egypt, show how discussions about teaching and standards resulted in educators and project staff co-constructing meaningful and contextualized descriptions of effective instruction. They highlight, however, that the more innovative aspect of the project was in the development of the process of engagement that underlay

the development of the standards. Godfrey, Murray, Nimmannit, and Wirth (Chapter 9) examine the differing perspectives of the different stakeholders in a project in Thailand that was designed to train teachers to become professional development trainers. The examination shows how expectations and cultural mismatches led to a more iterative process of materials development than first envisaged. Creese and Leung (Chapter 10) pick up on the theme of the role of discourse in innovation first introduced in Chapter 8. They discuss teachers' interpretations of inclusive policy in the United Kingdom, showing how these teachers address linguistic diversity and language pedagogy. The part concludes with a chapter (13) that describes a project that sought to address curriculum renewal through teacher action research. The project design was innovative, involving collaboration among stakeholders and involving both top-down and bottom-up approaches. Lopriore shows how, through lack of government continued interest, the project became unsustainable.

These chapters provide examples of educational innovation and change—examples that invite us to examine assumptions underlying proposed change and innovation and to learn how to build changeability into our educational practice. They demonstrate how teachers resist, interpret, and adapt the change to their particular local context and their beliefs about language and language learning.

REFERENCES

Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations.* New York: The Free Press.