Changing for the better: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract. This paper provides an account of a project undertaken at University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University (ULISVNU) to institute an English fast-track program for students majoring in teaching English foreign language (TEFL) since 2001. Specifically, it gives insights into the change we initiated and how we have managed it once we started in order not to be overwhelmed by the process set in motion. This program can be described as a sea change in the local context which has helped generate creative ideas for course organization, learning activities and assessment methods. With great efforts by all stakeholders, the program has gained encouraging success, improving the teaching and learning and rendering a better quality of University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) graduates.

This paper provides an account of a project undertaken at University of Languages and International Studies, Vietnam National University (ULISVNU) to institute an English fast-track program for students majoring in TEFL since 2001. In particular, it gives an insight into the change we initiated and how we have managed it once we started so that we would not be overwhelmed by the process set in motion. This program can be described as a sea change in the local context. When we started the process the whole team involved was fully aware that this change was a tender and vulnerable affair, prone to derailment, diminution and abandonment in the given context.

1. Rationale for the change

English language teaching (ELT) has had quite a long history spanning a period of more than half a century in Vietnam. Many methods were tried with varying degrees of success. The old methods die hard. Believe it or not, the grammar translation is still there. Those who preach the usefulness of the communicative approach or learner centeredness are not always aware that what they have been doing is a far cry from what they preach. As Vietnam is opening its doors and market forces are in, change becomes inescapable. Globalization and informatization are other factors that push the ELT business forward. The country needs a new crop of quality teachers of English, interpreters/translators, and the need for a good command of English is felt across the land.

In response to these demands, ULISVNU with the blessing of Vietnam National University put together a project to launch a fast track program. The two authors and a number of dedicated teachers were in put charge. The idea was to first pilot it, and then spread it to the mainstream system. Students were selected on their own merit: they should demonstrate a willingness to join the project by writing a letter of application, and generally they were the most motivated and

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talented ones from the student body. Class size was 20 students. Screening involved studying their academic records and subjecting them to a selection test. Teachers were also carefully selected. All the team members were trained in an English speaking country and have a Master's degree. All of them should have prior experience working in a western style environment. We came to the task with humility and resolve, knowing that many previous attempts failed; for example, the large scale effort at changing teacher's teaching methods in the 1990s was not fruitful due to inadequate conceptualization and support as well as insufficient follow-up work, resources and appropriate policies. They simply introduced a model from outside and flew professionals with high credentials in and out without taking the local context into account.

2. The blueprint and planning stage

The final go-ahead was given and we started the conceptualization and planning process. Jack Lindquist [1] mentions four change strategies, which are rational planning, social interaction, human problem-solving and political approach. What Lindquist discusses is very insightful and interesting. In every organization, there will be a few innovators, eager to change and reinvent themselves, and usually uncomfortable with the status quo. A second group of about 12 to 15 percent of the organization is called the early adopters, open to new ideas and changes, though not as eager as the innovators. Following is the early majority, making up a third of the population. These are the cautious followers of the early adopters. Then comes another third, the so-called skeptical late majority, which wants fairly impressive evidence that the change is working, possible, and rewarded before they venture a try. Finally, about 15 percent of most organizations are the laggards, who will probably resist change until everyone is doing the next new

things. Lindquist's observations are quite true in our context.

Given our culture much influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, we decided on the social interaction approach. We implemented and managed the change as a social interaction where ideas should be communicated to people, and contacts, consultations, and persuasions were effective in bringing people round to our view. A number of workshops were held among the team members where we discussed the following issues:

(a) What is our philosophy regarding the organizing of a fast track course?

(b) What standards should we aim for in terms of knowledge, skills, and qualities/ characters?

(c) What should be our approach to delivering the goods?

(d) How should we monitor our progress and incorporate feedback into the project as appropriate?

(e) What sorts of likely constraints are there?

Defining an underlying philosophy was a break from tradition since in this country training programs are often defined in terms of aims and objectives. We believed that a philosophy clearly defined would help answer question (b), i.e. what standards we should go for in terms of knowledge, skills and qualities/characters. A philosophy would serve as a framework to set educational standards and assessment criteria, and to outline what the most important goals were to achieve, and what resources were required for the achievement of those educational aims. As Fuhrmann [2] excellently summarizes the major educational philosophies as we were about to enter the new millennium. This early decision was extremely useful in helping us design the kind of program we wanted. Also, the choice of teaching course books, and preparation of materials is much facilitated. Basically, we agreed that our philosophy underscored the following things

● Career preparation is an expected outcome of a college education,

● College should develop students' problem solving and decision making, evaluating, and interactional or interpersonal skills,

● Students must learn how to manage change,

● Students can learn in a variety of ways; all must be understood and fostered,

● Students must able to use IT and other technologies,

● Students should learn to interact in a variety of cultural environments, and

● Education is a lifelong process.

2.1. Setting the standards

Thus the standards we set for our pilot project were very high. Students must reach the level four of the ALTE's or Cambridge's[1] CAE after about 900 hours of English teaching and learning. (All the students had 300 hours of English at their high schools). Our answer to question (b) was defined in terms of knowledge of English and culture required by the representational, interpretive and interpersonal skills. For example, students should develop the ability to interact both propositionally and interpersonally. They should have acquired the ability to make assessment, or evaluations, to work in a team and to be able to deal with both academic and emotional issues. Discussions were made to clarify what is meant by acquiring knowledge, for example. We followed Bloom's taxonomy [3] of educational goals. According to him, educational goals can be defined in terms of cognitive, motor skills and affective goals. On the cognitive scale, there are 6 levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. At the top

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[1] The Cambridge system has five bands: KEY, PET, FCE, CAE, and Proficiency, corresponding to the ALTE's Waystage, Threshold, Independent, Competent, and Good.

end, students should be able to look at issues critically, and make well-informed evaluation and assessment. Skills development and the interpersonal skills were given special attention right at the start to make sure the students would grow and develop into the type we set out. On this basis, learner-centered activities were designed to help students acquire knowledge and develop their skills. In setting these goals, we took into account a number of factors such as the market's demands for our products, the government's overall development goals, as well the availability of resources, both financial and otherwise. Without these inputs, it would be impossible to realize our program.

2.2. Our chosen approach

It is common knowledge that no matter how clear our aims and objectives are, the key to success is dependent to a large degree on our approach to delivering the goods. After a number of meetings, we discussed how to deal with the problem, and we all agreed that the best way forward was to translate the concept of learner's autonomy and learner-centeredness into action. The world we are living and working in now is very different from what we were familiar with. Knowledge is exploding and becoming more specialized and highly technical. Knowledge also has a short shelf life, too. Thus any approach based on giving knowledge is doomed to failure. Students need to be equipped with competencies, skills and suitable qualities so that they can survive and thrive in an ever-changing environment. It's learner-centeredness, stupid! This is what we often said to each other. The students involved in our project have turned out to be great resources. We gave them the opportunities to show what they were worth, and most of them[2] proved extremely

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[2] One of them dropped out for failing to rise to the challenge of the project.

competent to design learning materials, and capable of making contribution to the success of the project. Thus we successfully laid out a good foundation for a cooperative, collaborative, peer-interactive learning and tutoring. This is our first lesson: *keep going once you believe what you are doing is right, and develop appropriate and suitable methods of delivery.*

2.3. Defining good effective learners

Another issue we looked at was defining a good, independent learner. Knowing their characteristics would help us a great deal in designing suitable programs with appropriate activities for them. We concur with Hedge (2000: 76), who characterizes a good, competent learner as one who is

(a) aware of their study needs and can work with teachers to achieve their goals.

(b) able to study both within and without the classroom.

(c) able to further develop what they have learned in class.

(d) proactive in their learning.

(e) capable of adapting their learning strategies to suit their needs and make learning more effective.

(f) able to manage their time, and

(g) not dependent on teacher's inputs.

This served us well since this was the change we wanted to make in students. To start with this was no easy task.

3. Anticipating implementation problem stage

3.1. Some general and structural constraints

Anticipating implementation problems and constraints was important, too. We encountered some faculty resistance and unfavorable feelings in the beginning. Structurally, moving teachers around was unthinkable in a culture where stability is generally desirable. But we knew then that this was something unavoidable in any organization as Jack Lindquist suggests we

should be prepared for. Working in such a context, teachers should be encouraged and supported timely, getting all the resources they needed. Very critical in this connection was the fact that we all enjoyed the strong backing of the top leadership of our College and the Vietnam National University with which our College is affiliated and they still continue to do so. *The backing of the top leadership was instrumental in keeping the project on track.* This is our next lesson.

3.2. Setting the record straight

There has been a lot of misunderstanding about learner's autonomy and learner-centeredness; as a result, they were discredited in some circles of professionals. Some staffs were skeptical of whether our plan would work. They made unflattering comments such as: "This is nothing novel. We tried it before, and it didn't work". Some were even waiting for a time when they could utter "I told you so". This was discouraging for some people, but we did not give up. We were resolved to get people to understand the concept and the reality by striving to do a good job.

We managed to create more followers by starting small, keeping a low profile, and determined to make our work a success right from the start. The success and students' words would speak for us, and this strategy was working. More students were interested in our fast track project, and wanted to join. We could not accept all of them, so at the beginning of each new academic year, a qualifying test was given to decide who would be invited to participate in the program. This is our third lesson: *be realistic and keep a low profile when you are just starting to avoid unnecessary publicity.*

3.3. Staffing problem

This is one of the issues that we anticipated very early on would happen. Like

us at the beginning of the project, they were given training in the methods of delivering the course, and we made sure that they were in step with us. Some left the project either to study overseas or move on to other assignments as dictated by the circumstances, and others joined us. There has never been a manpower vacuum. This is very important to ensure consistency and quality.

4. The implementation stage

Whatever design we might have brought to the program and whatever importance we might have attached to the concept stage, we were aware that the implementation was far more important and that it was the key to the success of the project. Students should be able to participate in well-designed, well-organized activities and learning experiences set for them, and we could really become the type of facilitators that we always talked about.

Team work was encouraged and students found themselves working in an open and relaxed but serious manner. Everybody's say was counted, as we teachers listened to students' feedback. Therefore, we were able to deal with their problems very early on. Enforcing learning discipline in the sense that each student had to work on their own study program and meet deadlines took some time in the first year as students were finding themselves struggling to make a break from high school routines. All of us worked very hard and patiently, and by the end of the first year at college, things were fine-tuning. Our students were very quick studies. Everyone was satisfied with their progress. This lesson is *we must put in place an open, participatory process*.

Monitoring progress and incorporating feedback into our agenda was also an important aspect of this pilot project. Consultations with students and getting written feedback is now a way of life for us.

Students are very imaginative and indeed, they contributed a great deal to our work. As our project moved forward, more staffs were recruited to join the program.

Developing and preparing resources has always played an important part of a program. However, we did not intend to be the only source. In fact, what happened was that we chose a core set of textbooks which could provide the students with fundamentals of the language system and necessary cultural background knowledge. Then, both students and we were to make use of a variety of resources from the Internet, newspapers and journals. Students were encouraged to develop, to do research, and to bring materials to class to share with their classmates and to evaluate their preparations. They learned and grew fast. Study materials have never been in short supply. Now, we will move on to discuss the typical class activities and extra-curricular activities we developed and co-developed with our students.

4.1. In teaching and learning speaking

Besides the application of speaking activities traditionally used in the English Department prior to the Fast-track program such as pair work and group discussions and presentations, we made a special use of various types of presentation, debate, forum and role play.

a) Presentation

As presentations are frequent tasks for students in all the four years at college, we made them meaningful and interesting by setting different levels and standards for each year. For example, students were taught and expected to be able to give informative presentations in the first year, persuasive presentations in the second year and investigative presentations in the third year. In the last level, students had to choose a burning issue to investigate and then present the results along with their analysis and comments. The aim of all these types is to

develop students' knowledge, public speaking skills, confidence and multiple abilities such as managing presentations within time limit and handling questions from the audience.

b) Forum

The aim is to develop students' general knowledge about the topic and skills to speak, argue, interrupt politely in English, etc. The procedure, according to Nguyen et al [4], is as follows. First, students select a topic from a pool provided by their teacher or a topic of their own interest or level. Then they search for materials to learn more background knowledge about the topic. Later, all the students share materials, each contributing a minimum of one article so that each student has copies of about 20 articles to read to for content as well as the English vocabulary frequently used in the topic. As for the grouping, students are divided into sub-groups of from 3 to 4 students. Each group is given a role in the forum. For example, with the topic of *Sex education at upper secondary school in Vietnam*, the roles will be: parents, teachers, students, psychologists and sociologists (Nguyen et al). Groups will prepare for their assigned roles accordingly. During a forum, there will be a lead group which will present briefly about the topic, raise questions for discussion and facilitate the discussion. After the forum, teachers and groups give feedback on the language performance (accuracy and fluency), content, groups' or individuals' contributions, etc. based on an agreed set of criteria for a good presentation, facilitation and contribution.

c) Debate

The procedure for a debate is quite similar to that for a forum. The difference is that there will be only two participating groups of three students, and that each group chooses either to agree or disagree with the topic in discussion. They will need to collect information, build their arguments and during the debate provide instant attack on the opinion of the opposing team. Debate is conducted at two levels: free style for the second year students and professional style for third year students. While the free style is the open discussion between the two groups without any specific turn-taking procedure, the professional debate will give each member of a group only one chance to speak. Thus he/she has to try to attack the other group's view and argue for his/her group's view effectively. After the debate, teachers and groups may ask further questions to clarify unclear points and give feedback on the language performance (accuracy and fluency), content, groups' or individuals' contributions, etc. based on an agreed set of criteria for a debate and vote for the group they think is more persuasive. Through this activity, students could actively develop impromptu speaking skills, persuasive speaking, quick responses, analytical thinking and problem-solving skills.

d) Role play

Each semester, fast-track teachers design role play activities to match with the semester's targeted objectives in terms of knowledge and skills. For example, in semester 6, K36 students were involved in an employment project. The topic was preparing human resource for a soon-to-be-opened Language Support Unit (LSU) for students who have difficulties in learning in ULIS, VNU. The class was divided into a group of university officials (recruiters), managers of the LSU (interviewees, recruiters), senior students who want to work as managers or tutors for the LSU (interviewees) and journalists who cared for the event. Recruiters had to design a leaflet advertising for managers, managers had to design another leaflet advertising for tutors, and senior students needed to write application letters to the university for the posts of managers or tutors and sit for a job interview. Selections

would be discussed among recruiters and announced to applicants. University officials, selected managers and selected tutors were then interviewed by journalists. The first working session was also done right in front of the class. Though this was only a simulated authentic task, most students expressed that they really enjoyed it. They explained that during the play, they acted their roles seriously, wanting to succeed and making efforts to be accepted by others, so they had feelings that they were experiencing a real-life situation.

4.2. In teaching and learning Writing, Listening and Reading

a) Portfolios

Portfolio is collections of students' writing, reading passages or listening materials during a given period of time. It is a type of journals for students to record their learning activities both in and outside the classroom. Keeping a portfolio helps students form a good habit of listening, reading and writing frequently and have a good record of their study progress.

Requirements for portfolios vary from one semester to the next, depending on students' level. For instance, teachers of reading could ask first year students to collect reading papers according to certain themes to find the new words, form new sentences with those words and summarize the content of the papers. For their second year students, they would ask them to collect reading papers, list the new words and make sentences with those words, summarize the passages, provide a critical review, and design exercises to practice a certain reading skill introduced in the semester. Similarly, in listening lessons, teachers would require students to keep portfolios of what they listened every week, what problems they had, and how they solved their own problems.

Using portfolios in teaching writing, especially in group writing, is also highly

effective. In K35 semester 5 writing class for example, all the group members would sit together to discuss how to write a paper, and the first person wrote the first version. Other group members would then take turns to write the second and the third versions. Finally, the entire group agreed on one final version to submit. All versions were then included in order in a portfolio. When marking the portfolio, teachers could see both the process and the final product. They could therefore evaluate students' performance in each draft as well as in the final writing. An adaptation of this activity that we used in semester 6 required all group members to write the first version, and then they sat together to either select the best version to improve on or choose to combine the strengths of all the papers into the second draft, and then last draft. This method seemed to be more effective in making sure all students wrote their original thoughts down.

After collecting all entries for the 15 weeks of a semester, students were often required to write a final report to describe their work and evaluate the progress as well as the lessons they learned. This type of reflection helped students to be autonomous in their studying, rather than always looking to teachers for comments.

b) Teaching listening and writing using the multi-media or computer lab

In listening lessons, with the help of the Multi-media center, teachers could use the lab to teach listening and writing. They can use CD, VCD, video files and online web pages, such as those of CNN or BBC to teach. Teachers were even provided with five-minute original video files to use for their material development and daily teaching. During the last tsunami in Asia, teachers in the Fast-track program taught listening lessons live from http://www.cnn.com to check on the toll

number updates, and both teachers and students were pleased with the real time feature of the learning facilities.

In writing lessons, students could work on computers, and teachers could use the master computer to observe how each of them wrote under time pressure to offer help whenever necessary. After an individual writing activity, students could all save their papers on a shared folder and view each other's papers. The whole class could view any paper to comment and correct together. Organizing the class like this made the writing lessons more interesting, more real time, more visual and more effective.

c) Research project and tutoring project for fourth year students

The aim of the research project and tutoring project is to develop language skills, research skills and micro-teaching skills (e.g.: questioning skill, group-work, presentation skills, communication skills and facilitation skills).

In the research project, students conducted a research project in groups of four[3]. They went through all the steps of a research cycle from choosing the topic, identifying the research question, writing the literature review, collecting real life data, analyzing data and writing the conclusion and recommendations. Reportbacks were held weekly and support was offered timely to ensure the research progress of all the groups.

Running parallel, the tutoring project[4] was held with the participation of fourth year fast-track students and two groups of second year mainstream students for 12 weeks. During the 12 weeks, fast-track students were guided on how to conduct tutoring activities,

from analyzing learners' needs to working out the syllabus, making lesson plans, facilitating lessons in front of the class and self-evaluating their tutoring performance. Students were supervised and assisted throughout the process. After each tutoring session, feedback was provided to students so that they could help mainstream students better in their following session. Participants' feedback at the end of the semester revealed that this activity proved especially helpful to fast-track students in practicing integrated language skills and in learning how to teach and handle a class. It was also beneficial to the mainstream participants in receiving instructions and advice on areas they needed to improve.

The results of both the research and the tutoring project were exhibited in the Open House at the end of semester 7 where K35, K36 and K37 fast-track students welcomed visitors to see their research and tutoring outputs.

4.3. In conducting extra-curricular activities

Besides learning in class, fast-track students also organized some extra-curricular activities such as providing orientation for new students (at the beginning of every new academic year), tutoring mainstream students (as K37A1 students helped K38 mainstream classes in 2005) and participating in preparing Bulletin/ Newsletters. These activities helped students to improve their language and give them a chance to help other students in a co-operative learning environment.

5. Results

To evaluate the effectiveness of the change we initiated and to research the students' perception of all the elements of the four-year training program, we conducted a comprehensive program evaluation in mid-2005 to survey all the fast-track students of K35, 36, 37 and 38A1. Some major findings about the learners' needs, the course

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[3] The research component follows a model of that in the Talkbase program at Asian Institute Technology, Center in Vietnam.
[4] As the project involved about 30 mainstream students, teachers sought the approval of the dean and vice-deans of the English Department and the head of the Language Skills II before embarking on it.

objectives, the testing and assessment methods, the learning materials and the detailed aspects of the teaching and learning process can be summarized below.

a) Student's needs

Regarding whether the educational program met their needs, students of all the four courses had quite positive judgments. From 80 to 90 % of the students in each course found the program either good or very good. Only about 10 to 20% found it average. No student reported that the program did not meet their training needs.

b) Course objectives

When asked how well the course met the objectives, 8% found this *very well*, 50% *well*, 40% *average*, and only 2% said *not very well*. Thus, 98% of all the students found that the course met the targeted objectives[5]. This result, according to Brown's view of program evaluation [5], shows that the fast-track program has been a successful one. However, the 2%, though negligible, means that teachers would need to work harder to make sure all the objectives could be met.

c) Testing and assessment

When asked about the fairness of different evaluation methods used in the course, students highly valued the continuous assessment methods used in the fast-track program. Some of them stated that "*Continuous assessment methods help me see that I am evaluated throughout the course, not only at the middle or at the end of the term when I take the mid-term or final tests*". All the students evaluated the testing and assessment methods we applied very positively. From 60 to over 90% of the students in each course found them either *good* or *very good*. Only around 5% of the

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[5] The course objectives as well as semester and year objectives were presented to students at the beginning of the course and reminded throughout the four years.

students found them *not good*. K35A1 students, who had gone through the four years of the program and had a most complete view of all the methods used, evaluated them most favorably with no one finding them *not good*. Despite that, the 5% of students reporting dissatisfaction in K38A1 and K36A1 means that teachers would need to help students understand the assessment tools better and at the same time adjust their methods to make them fairer and more effective.

Besides, the survey also shows that students found the assessment methods very helpful in orientating and assisting them to learn. The methods were evaluated most favorably among first year and fourth year students with 65% and 47% saying *very good* respectively. The second year and third year students (K36A1 and K37A1) evaluated the supportiveness of assessment tools as *good*, and only one third year student in K36A1 considered it *not good*. This result was very encouraging to the teaching team as all these methods took both students and teachers a great amount of time.

d) Learning materials

As mentioned in a previous section, the learning materials used in the fast-track program included a core set of materials for students' self-study and a set of supplementary materials designed and compiled by the teaching team to be used in class. Instructions and support from teachers were provided whenever students had problems with learning the core materials.

The survey results indicate almost no negative feedback for learning materials. Generally, students enjoyed what we used in class. One of them said: "*I like the writing and speaking materials. They are very good*". Another said: "*The supplementary materials are even better than the core ones*". However, one second year student stated "*Some exercises are rather*

difficult", and one fourth year student said "*We need more materials*". These comments are indeed quite sharp, bringing to life a fact that to a fast-track class with specific characteristics, specific objectives and specific needs, the reliance on any one course book will not satisfy all students. It also reveals that the flexible self-designed or self-compiled materials, though time-consuming, are in fact more suitable and therefore more useful. The comment that some parts of the materials were difficult is understandable because up to the point of the survey, materials, especially those for our first load of students, had not gone through any prior pilot.

e) Teaching and learning

Apart from the four above elements of a training program, the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities was also surveyed. Students' feedback was on the whole affirmative with the converted average scores ranging from 60 to 95 out of 100 for each learning activity. The activities for writing skills were evaluated most highly with scores from 75 to 95. Next come activities for speaking skills with scores from 70 to 90. Both activities for listening and reading received scores ranging from 60 to 90. This result shows that our writing and speaking programs were very well-received by the students, and that the listening and reading were seen as fairly good. However, detailed statistics still shows that opinions varied among members of the same class and among classes. This is reasonable because each student has his or her own perception of approach to different learning activities. However, it is obvious that the teaching team needs to review all the teaching activities, promoting good ones and improving or removing weak ones to satisfy students better.

In addition, when asked about how satisfactory all learning activities were in

terms of the level of effectiveness felt, level of motivation created and level of learner autonomy developed, 95% of the students stated that the activities were effective, 80% found them motivating, and 100% said they helped them be more autonomous in learning.

So far in this section, we have presented the most important results gained from our program evaluation survey. As can been seen, the program has received highly positive evaluation of almost all the students on its five elements. This marks its initial success in rising up to our expectation of a special training program that brought about a truly learner-centered learning environment and more importantly an improved education quality. The IELTS scores of the 16 students[6] who took the test at the end of the four-year program in 2005 (5 students got 7.5, 9 got 7.0 and 2 got 6.5) have proved that our goal of yielding a group of students with an equivalence of level four of the ALTE's or Cambridge's CAE after about 900 hours of English teaching and learning has been met.

These days, it is encouraging to see our K35 and K36 graduates as a young generation of educators in the English department and other departments of our university, sharing the work with us and receiving positive comments from their employers. It is also heart-warming to hear that our students who received scholarships to various Master programs in America, Singapore and Thailand shortly after the course are doing very well, too.

6. Conclusion and lessons learned

The project has been acclaimed as a successful experiment, and our mother organization, Vietnam National University, has continued the project and moved forward with

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[6] Other students did not take the test because they went on other training programs right after the course.

transferring the expertise and experience to the mainstream. Every year we receive more funding and investment. Looking back, we understand that there are some good lessons we have learned every step of the project was. It is critical to:

(a) do the conceptualization and planning well and thoroughly.

(b) make sure that we are blessed with management backing, and dedicated and can-do teachers, those who can walk the walk.

(c) be aware of constraints and anticipate possible implementation problems.

 (d) given our culture, we must look into some social factors such as staff's envy or ill-wishing.

(e) start small, and be realistic, but think big and keep a low profile to avoid unnecessary publicity.

(f) have an open and participatory system.

(g) have strong belief in what you are doing.

Change should be seen as a way of life rather than something forced upon us. This is a proactive attitude. However, it is also true that the most change-resistant institutions or people often turn out to be those once the most unique and most distinctive. Thus, running this process is a challenge we learn both to manage and to enjoy.

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Đổi mới trong đào tạo: thách thức và cơ hội

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Bài viết này chia sẻ các bước thực hiện Dự án đào tạo Cử nhân Chất lượng cao chuyên ngành giảng dạy tiếng Anh tại trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội từ năm 2001. Bài báo nêu rõ những thay đổi trong dạy học mà chúng tôi áp dụng và cách chúng tôi quản lý những sự thay đổi đó để không bị choáng ngợp khi quy trình dạy học được đưa vào hoạt động. Chương trình này có thể được coi là một sự thay đổi lớn lao trong bối cảnh cụ thể chúng tôi làm việc mà thành quả là những ý tưởng sáng tạo trong cách tổ chức khóa học, các hoạt động học và các hình thức kiểm tra đánh giá. Với những nỗ lực đáng trân trọng của tất cả các bên liên quan, chương trình đã thu được thành công đáng kể, cải thiện chất lượng dạy học và đào tạo được các Cử nhân Chất lượng cao.