

# Review of English Language Teaching in the Italian Scuola Media

---

Rome February 21, 1978

Professor Russell Campbell

University of California Los Angeles, California

<http://www.international.ucla.edu/languages/article.asp?parentid=3507>

## Sommario

1.0 - Preface.....	5
2.0 - Limitations .....	5
3.0 - Bases of the report .....	5
3.1 - Interviews .....	5
3.1.1 - Representatives of the Ministry of Education.....	5
3.1.2 - Scuola Media English Teachers .....	5
3.1.3 - University English programs .....	5
3.1.4 - British Council.....	6
3.1.5 - USIS.....	6
4.0 - Commitments.....	6
4.1 - Ministry of education .....	6
4.1.1 - Recognition of problem.....	6
4.1.2 - Inservice Teacher-Training Program .....	6
4.2 - Future Trainers or Co-ordinators.....	6
4.3 - Future trainers (SM Teachers).....	7
4.4 - U.S.I.S.....	7
4.5 - British Council.....	7
5.0 - Needs of SM Teachers.....	7
5.1 - English Language Proficiency .....	7
5.2 - Approach, Methods, Techniques .....	7
5.3 - Professionalism .....	8
6.0 - Recommended Inservice Training Programs For SM Teachers: Type One. ....	8
6.1 - Language Through Content Courses .....	8
6.1.1 - Listening Comprehension (techniques).....	9
6.1.2 - Reading Comprehension (techniques) .....	9
6.1.3 - Writing (techniques).....	9
6.1.4 - Speaking (techniques) .....	9
6.1.5.- Audio-visual Aids .....	9
6.1.6 - Test Construction .....	9
6.1.7 - English Structure.....	9
6.1.8 - Classroom Management .....	9
6.1.9 - Establishment of Course Objectives.....	9
6.2 - Time required to meet the Objectives for Type One Teachers.....	9
6.3 - Selection of Type One Trainees.....	9

7.1 - Content of Type Two Courses .....	10
7.1.1 - Establishment of Course Objectives.....	10
7.1.2 - Evaluation of Alternative Methods of Modern Language Teaching .....	10
7.1.3 - Development of Instructional Plans.....	10
7.1.4 - Textbook Evaluation.....	10
7.1.5 - Development and/or Selection of AV Aids.....	10
7.1.6 - Development of Classroom Tests.....	10
7.1.7 - Classroom Management .....	10
7.2 - Time Required to Meet the Objectives for Type Two SM Teachers .....	10
7.3 - Selection of Type Two Trainees.....	10
8.0 - Recommended Inservice Training for SM Teachers: Type Three.....	10
8.1 - Content of Type Three Courses.....	11
8.1.1 - Leadership and management Training.....	11
8.1.2 - Theoretical Foundations of English Teaching Methods .....	11
8.1.3 - Textbook Analysis and Evaluation.....	11
8.1.4 - Selection and production of AV Aids.....	11
8.1.5 - Advanced English Structures .....	11
8.1.6 - Development of Classroom Tests.....	11
8.2 - Time required for Type Three Teachers.....	11
8.3 - Selection of Type Three Trainers.....	11
9.0 – Inservice Teacher-Training Leaders .....	11
9.1 - Selection Criteria for Training at S.F.U. ....	12
9.1.1 - English Language Proficiency .....	12
9.1.2 - Professional Preparation .....	12
9.1.3 - Experience as SM English Teacher .....	12
9.1.4 - Maturity.....	12
9.1.5 - Commitment.....	12
9.2 - Assessment of Needs of Leaders.....	12
9.2.1 - Leadership Training .....	13
9.2.2 - English Linguistics as required by the SM Curriculum.....	13
9.2.3 - Selections and/or Development of AV Aids Appropriate for SM .....	13
9.2.4 - Selection and Collection of Teaching Techniques Appropriate for SM.....	13
9.2.5 - Selection and Collection of Language Testing Instruments Appropriate for SM .....	13
9.2.6 - Training in Textbook Analysis and Evaluation .....	13

9.2.7 - Training in the Selection of Attainable Instructional Objectives given the Logistical Conditions in SM.....	13
10.0 - Post S.F. Considerations .....	13
10.1 - Incentives .....	13
10.2 - Adequate Physical Space.....	14
10.3 - A substantial, Practical Reference Library.....	14
10.4 - Supplies and Office Equipment .....	14
10.5 - Operational Funds (postage, telephone, travel) .....	14
10.6 - Clerical Assistance .....	14
11.0 – Notes and Observations .....	14
11.1 - Evaluation.....	14
11.2 - Ministerial Policy vis-a-vis English Language Instruction in the SM.....	14
11.3 - The Role of Universities.....	14
11.4 - Employment of Professionally-Prepared American and British Personnel in Inservice Training Programs.....	15
12.0 - Summary.....	15

## **1.0 - Preface**

This report contains a large number of descriptive and evaluative statements on English language teaching in Italy. It also includes suggestions and recommendations: I wish to assure the reader of the report that my interpretation of the total Italian situation and of many details related to teachers, schools, curricula, etc. is based upon a hurried and superficial exploration of a complex system. I regret any misinterpretations that may be found here. I hope the report will be judged in terms of the bases upon which it was prepared and conceived. May it facilitate and encourage the further development of English teaching in Italy.

## **2.0 - Limitations**

Although Italian students receive English language instruction at many different levels both in public and in private institutions, I have limited my brief study to the examination of English language instruction in the Scuola Media (SM). This school covers three years of post-elementary school, compulsory grades that cover the sixth, seventh and eighth years of public school education in the Italian school system. Since English language instruction for most students is initiated in the SM it was decided that the strength and weaknesses of English language teaching at that level be given my full attention. Nevertheless, it became clear that one part of the educational system cannot be considered without at least some reference to the others. Therefore, while this report concentrates on English teaching in the SM, it will when appropriate (esp. 11.0 below) refer to other agencies that impinge upon the SM and its English language program.

## **3.0 - Bases of the report**

Many people have generously given their time to provide me with explanations, descriptions, and demonstrations of the human and physical aspects of English language teaching in the SM: I mention them, when possible by name, with sincere gratitude for their patience in the face of my incessant questions and requests.

### **3.1 - Interviews**

#### **3.1.1 - Representatives of the Ministry of Education**

Various representatives of the Ministry of Education, but especially Professor Renzo Titone and Dr. Raffaele Sanzo provided me with valuable background information on the Ministry's policy regarding English language teaching. Without that frame of reference, subsequent observations and conclusions would not have been possible. I am especially indebted to Dr. Sanzo, who served as a kind and considerate companion and guide as we visited schools and classes in five Italian cities.

#### **3.1.2 - Scuola Media English Teachers**

Perhaps the most useful information about the realities of teaching and learning English in the SM came from the classroom English teachers of these schools. During this study I have interviewed some 34 teachers in their respective schools in North, South and Center (Rome, Genoa, Turin, Catania, and Palermo). An additional ten or so spoke to me after talks or seminars given by me, Mr. Sanzo and Professor Mary Finocchiaro in Rome, Catania and Palermo. My interpretation of what these teachers reported or what I observed during interviews with them has provided critical data underlying my recommendations.

#### **3.1.3 - University English programs**

I also had opportunities to speak with professors and instructors at four different Italian universities who de facto prepare teachers for SM English language programs. Their descriptions of current and projected

involvement in the training and education of SM English teachers added a great deal to my understanding of the current situation and have influenced my recommendations.

### **3.1.4 - British Council**

Mr. Kevin Flanagan of the British Council kindly shared with me his considerable knowledge of English teaching in Italy. He described the role that his organization has played and may play in the future in any effort to ameliorate the situation in the SM.

### **3.1.5 - USIS**

Dr Richard Arndt, Cultural Attaché, demonstrated both substantial knowledge of and genuine concern for the teaching of English in Italy. His observations and his guidance were helpful in the carrying out of this study. The support of PAO John W. Shirley must also be mentioned. From one person came the greatest amount of information, in a manner that could most readily be understood in my own professional frame of reference: my colleague and friend of many years Dr. Mary Finocchiaro. No other person appears to have a better grasp of the situation than this scholar who has involved herself deeply and intimately with the teaching of English in Italy for so many years. Without shame, I have exploited her knowledge in preparing this report.

## **4.0 - Commitments**

By the various agencies mentioned above (3.0), commitments for overall improvements of English teaching have been made. In some instances these commitments are well defined; in others only statements of goodwill and intent to help when and if possible could be offered at this time.

### **4.1 - Ministry of education**

#### **4.1.1 - Recognition of problem**

From previous surveys, observations and reports, Ministry officials have ascertained that the results of English language teaching in the SM do not meet their expectations. They recognize professional deficiencies on the part of many teachers and have taken a number of steps to remedy the situation. It is my understanding that an amount of at least L. 100,000,000 may shortly be allocated to carry out experimental or 'pilot' projects in the months ahead so as to establish the efficacy of inservice teacher-training programs for SM teachers.

#### **4.1.2 - Inservice Teacher-Training Program**

Briefly, the Ministry, in consultation with representatives from a number of educational agencies, both Italian and foreign, envisions a model of inservice teacher-training based on instruction and training for SM teachers in regional centers throughout Italy. In this model teachers' needs would be identified and courses made available to them during the school-year, following an orientation program before the school-year begins. A more detailed description of one version of this plan will be presented below (6.0, 7.0, 8.0). For now, suffice it to say that the Ministry has committed itself to the resolution of a recognized problem.

### **4.2 - Future Trainers or Co-ordinators**

In the model of inservice teacher-training most frequently discussed during my visit, a number of Italian English language specialists will be selected to be future directors and co-ordinators of regional inservice teacher-training programs. The selection and preparation of these co-ordinators will be discussed below (9.0). It appears that these persons must be prepared to commit a great deal of time and energy for the benefit of their colleagues, with very little material reward. This point will be raised again (10.1).

### **4.3 - Future trainers (SM Teachers)**

For the currently discussed model to succeed, SM teachers will need to commit substantial amounts of their free time (sample figures are given in 6.0, 7.0 and 8.0) both before and during the school-year. They must also submit themselves to extensive testing of their linguistic and professional competencies before and after the training. Again, the material rewards for such commitments so far appear negligible.

### **4.4 - U.S.I.S**

Through their good offices, the Fulbright Commission and USIS have committed themselves to facilitate a program of special preparation for 25 to 35 teacher trainers (4.2) at San Francisco State university (SFU) during the summer months of 1978. It has also agreed to request the services of a number of American English language specialists to provide guidance and instruction in inservice programs during the 1978-79 academic year. In general, USIS now demonstrates a strong interest to the resolution of the problems related to English instruction and stands ready to support to the extent it can any reasonable requests for its services. The Fulbright Commission likewise.

### **4.5 - British Council**

For years the British Council has provided opportunities, both in Italy and in Great Britain, for English teachers to receive special training in language and language teaching. Mr. Kevin Flanagan of the British Council has assured me that he and his organization are prepared to consider any request that would contribute to the success of the projected inservice teacher-training programs. The occasional, but planned, participation of its ELT specialists in the training programs would be one obvious way in which the Council can participate.

## **5.0 - Needs of SM Teachers**

The result of my interviews with and observations of SM English teachers confirm the existence of serious linguistic and/or pedagogical deficiencies. It should be noted immediately however that these deficiencies are in most cases easily explained and should not be construed as evidence of unwillingness to change. They most clearly desire to be highly qualified teachers, so far as I can see.

### **5.1 - English Language Proficiency**

It does not require highly sophisticated testing instruments to ascertain that a very high percentage of SM teachers would score badly on any standard test of English language proficiency. For whatever the reasons, perhaps three out of four SM teachers are incapable of comprehending natural spoken English, either in lectures or conversational situations, and are ill-prepared to express themselves without effort and then with only limited success. I am sorry to confirm these limitations of the SM teachers. I hasten to add that many teachers, even without benefit of language proficiency, have learned or can learn to become successful English teachers, either by exploiting a number of AV techniques or by concentrating on limited objectives in reading and writing that they can manipulate. One important positive factor: most teachers with whom I spoke seem to have an intense desire to improve their English language skills, both for their personal gratification and professional pride and for the benefits that their students would derive.

### **5.2 - Approach, Methods, Techniques**

When interviewing SM teachers, I frequently elicited their suggestions about the content of inservice teacher-training programs. The most common response can be paraphrased as follows: "Train us. Teach us how to teach." In Palermo, a teacher with six years of classroom experience said, in effect: "I am a failure, I don't know how to teach." This admission characterized the vast majority of teachers we met. I believe the

sample can be generalized to describe nearly the entire SM English teacher population. Reasons for this bleak situation were suggested by various sources. Basically, SM teachers of English have not been prepared as English language teachers. Whatever skills they demonstrate are learned by trial and error, with more 'error' than success, to the detriment of SM students. This evaluation must not detract from my impression that the teachers want to be good teachers. They are in fact highly motivated, industrious, and extremely receptive to offers of support and guidance.

### **5.3 - Professionalism**

This study did not discover a high degree of professionalism among SM teachers. They did not demonstrate that they were members of a large group of scholars around the world who are seeking ways and means of improving the foreign language teaching and learning. Typically they do not meet with other language teachers, even in their own schools, to discuss objectives, methods or results; neither do they read publications related to their field, nor do they contribute their experiences to their colleagues by writing papers or giving talks. Each teacher appears to lead a lonely professional existence. I will not attempt to explain this situation but only note that the absence of these aspects of professionalism has serious negative consequences for the morale and motivation of the teachers, and hence, for the students they teach.

## **6.0 - Recommended Inservice Training Programs For SM Teachers: Type One.**

Given the deficiencies described in 5.0, we need a concentrated effort to improve at least teacher competency if not the logistical conditions under which English is taught in the SM. The dimensions of the task are enormous. The commitment of National resources will have to be equally large if any significant change is to take place. If such a commitment cannot or will not be made, only two alternatives come to mind: do nothing and accept conditions as they are; or discontinue English language instruction in the SM, perhaps in order to invest currently allocated resources for English instruction in the SM to English language programs at a later scholastic level. The seriousness of the deficiencies, especially in regard to language itself, suggest that no simple short-term program can significantly change the behavior of the teachers or the results they will obtain with their students, particularly with language-deficient teachers (Type one).

### **6.1 - Language Through Content Courses**

Among the teachers who can benefit from inservice training, there are those who are deficient in both language and in knowledge of methods and techniques. For these Type One SM teachers, the first priority is to help them improve their English language skills. I do not believe this problem can be met by submitting them to straightforward, traditional courses in English. This would be psychologically demeaning and generally unacceptable to them, nor do I believe it would be the most efficient approach. Rather, I believe English language instruction should be incorporated into what are ostensibly content courses that deal with the teaching and/or testing of language in the SM classes. I believe this must be a guiding principle in the design of the language component of the inservice training programs. Language skills must be taught and developed, but the teachers' programs should emanate from a consideration of concrete teaching problems. For example, to help teachers teach listening comprehension, they would be given realistic guidance and practice in techniques which they in turn can use with their students in subsequent classes. As they develop their own proficiency in understanding spoken English, they learn techniques that they can use at their very next meetings with students. This same principle can and should apply to at least all of the

areas listed below. (It must be clearly understood by trainers and trainees, however, that the training is intended to improve the teachers' English language proficiency. The medium, in this case, is the consideration of methods and techniques; the message is better English skills).

Some of the elements to be covered in content-orientated programs:

#### **6.1.1 - Listening Comprehension (techniques)**

#### **6.1.2 - Reading Comprehension (techniques)**

#### **6.1.3 - Writing (techniques)**

#### **6.1.4 - Speaking (techniques)**

#### **6.1.5.- Audio-visual Aids**

#### **6.1.6 - Test Construction**

#### **6.1.7 - English Structure**

#### **6.1.8 - Classroom Management**

#### **6.1.9 - Establishment of Course Objectives**

### **6.2 - Time required to meet the Objectives for Type One Teachers**

In my judgement, to bring about any substantial change in SM teachers' proficiency a minimum of 100 hours of instruction will be required. Leaving aside for the moment all of the difficulties that the design and execution of such a program would entail, my recommendation would be that a course should have the following dimensions:

Three 90-minute meetings per week, for twelve weeks in the Fall (e.g., Oct. 1 to Dec. 20) and twelve weeks in the Spring (e.g., Jan. 15 to April 15). This would provide 108 hours of instruction.

### **6.3 - Selection of Type One Trainees**

In this instance, as well as for the other types, the initiative for participation must come from the individual SM teachers. They must agree that they could benefit from instruction and volunteer to participate. However, some constraints must be imposed if there is to be a degree of homogeneity in the inservice classes. This will probably require the administration of language proficiency test to determine the specific levels of instruction required and to attempt the assignment of teachers with similar needs to the same classes. Of course, to measure the success of the language programs, post-tests will also be recommended.

#### **RECOMMENDED INSERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR SM**

Teachers: Type Two

Among the SM English teachers, there are already a number whose proficiency in English is good, so that they do not need additional instruction in English language skills. These we shall call Type Two teachers. These teachers are similar to those who are admitted to graduate programs in TESL/TEFL in the U.S. and Great Britain. That is, they speak English and they have university degrees; but they have little or no formal preparation as language teachers. They have one asset that many universities students do not have, namely, experience and current, well-defined teaching responsibilities to which they can relate the substance of the training program. In any program designed for these teachers, this asset must be

exploited. In fact every shred of inservice instruction should be directed toward resolving the specific problems and/or objectives these teachers face in SM classes. Among the subjects that should be included in a program for these teachers are the following:

## **7.1 - Content of Type Two Courses**

### **7.1.1 - Establishment of Course Objectives**

### **7.1.2 - Evaluation of Alternative Methods of Modern Language Teaching**

### **7.1.3 - Development of Instructional Plans**

### **7.1.4 - Textbook Evaluation**

### **7.1.5 - Development and/or Selection of AV Aids**

### **7.1.6 - Development of Classroom Tests**

### **7.1.7 - Classroom Management**

## **7.2 - Time Required to Meet the Objectives for Type Two SM Teachers**

It is my belief that substantial gains can be made by Type Two teachers in the area of methods and techniques in a course that would have the following dimensions:

Three 90-minute meetings per week for twelve weeks (e.g. Oct. 1 to Dec. 20).

My optimism is founded in the fact that teachers will have students, with specific goals learning, in well-defined and understood conditions to which to relate their instructions. I ask that the course should be considered a training program, as opposed to an educational program. This will greatly reduce, if not altogether eliminate, the need to delve deeply into theoretical aspects of teaching and learning.

## **7.3 - Selection of Type Two Trainees**

We assume that the trainee will be a practicing SM English teacher. We assume that his English language proficiency will be high. To participate in Type Two training, the teacher would have to be able to score 500 to 550 on the TOEFL Proficiency Test. Some such measure should be selected and administered to those who wish to participate. Of course, self-reflection comes prior to either of these points. The SM teacher must wish to participate.

## **8.0 - Recommended Inservice Training for SM Teachers: Type Three**

In the model of inservice teacher-training envisioned here, there is the expectation that highly qualified SM teachers, those whose English language proficiency is very good and whose knowledge of methods and techniques is both current and extensive, can and should be used to train Type One and Type Two teachers. Teachers with such qualifications I refer to as Type Three teachers. At this time I am unable to judge the soundness nor the feasibility of this expectation: in the first place I met few such SM teachers. However, I am willing to assume that they exist and could in fact be trained to help with the training of teachers in the other categories, especially if they themselves are given guidance in teacher-training. Further, it is assumed that some of those who successfully complete Type Two training might well qualify to serve as teacher trainers. This assumes that they will receive additional training themselves.

## **8.1 - Content of Type Three Courses**

With the reservation expressed above, I would tentatively recommend the following areas for inclusion in a Type Three training course:

### **8.1.1 - Leadership and management Training**

### **8.1.2 - Theoretical Foundations of English Teaching Methods**

### **8.1.3 - Textbook Analysis and Evaluation**

### **8.1.4 - Selection and production of AV Aids**

### **8.1.5 - Advanced English Structures**

### **8.1.6 - Development of Classroom Tests**

## **8.2 - Time required for Type Three Teachers**

It is difficult to estimate the time requirements for the preparation of Type Three teachers. Arbitrarily I would design a course that had the following dimensions: three 90-minute sessions per week for twelve weeks (e.g., Oct. 1 to Dec. 20). With careful planning, a good part of this training could be integrated with Type One programs. That is, Type Three teachers could serve as apprentice, "on-the-job" assistants in Type One programs. This experience, under the supervision of highly qualified trainers, could perhaps prepare trainers who subsequently could be given independent assignments on trainers.

## **8.3 - Selection of Type Three Trainers**

The best candidate for this group would be those who can demonstrate high language proficiency (test scores) and have recently completed advanced courses (in Italy or abroad) in TEFL or TESL. Any lower qualifications would more than likely make them unacceptable trainers of Type One and Two, although some of the graduates of Type Two training could be selected for Type Three training.

## **9.0 - Inservice Teacher-Training Leaders**

As mentioned above (4.4), there are plans for the selection and subsequent training of some 25 to 35 Italian English specialists at S.F.U. during the summer of 1978. These individuals would, upon their return to Italy, be expected to organize and administer inservice teacher-training programs of the types mentioned in 6.0, 7.0, and 8.0 to SM teachers, in the various regions where they currently are employed. In addition to preparing detailed curricula for the SM teachers, they would be required to inform and recruit the teachers who would participate, locate the sites where they would be trained, assemble the supplies required for preparation of the training materials and do the bulk of the actual instruction. That this is not a completely outlandish set of expectations can be accounted for by the fact that the plan calls for the recruitment of additional leaders in each training area who already have professional credentials to form part of the instructional team. These resource-people are in fact to be found, at least in the larger urban areas, and they could clearly contribute much to the success of any inservice training program. However, in their case, as well in that of all other participants in the model under consideration, the incentives are small. The availability of these additional qualified resource-persons is to me an unknown quantity. Yet their participation or lack of it will seriously affect the design and even the location of the training sites. This dimension must be resolved before final plans can be formulated. I predict that there will be no shortage of viable candidates for the projected six-week training program in San Francisco. I offer the following as suggested criteria for their selection:

## **9.1 - Selection Criteria for Training at S.F.U.**

### **9.1.1 - English Language Proficiency**

Specialists chosen for training in San Francisco should have near-native proficiency in English (e.g., a score of approximately 600 on the TOEFL Test). There will be no time for language instruction in the six-week course and no time can be lost because of inability to participate in an English medium program.

### **9.1.2 - Professional Preparation**

Although there will be sentiment to give teachers who have never been abroad a chance for such an experience, preference should be given to those who have already completed advanced programs in applied linguistics, methodology and educational psychology. Again, time is the critical factor. There will be no time for participants to acquire the most basic general skills of English linguistics, methods, testing, AV Aids, etc. The S.F.U. program should be designed to provide the future trainers with opportunities to learn how to apply knowledge in these areas to the special problems of SM teachers in Italy. I would recommend then as one of the criteria that the most highly qualified candidates, as measured by past successful involvement in specialized TESL/TEFL programs, be selected.

### **9.1.3 - Experience as SM English Teacher**

### **9.1.4 - Maturity**

This term is meant to cover a number of personality traits that have to do with interpersonal relations with one's colleagues and administrators. The leaders will be peers of the trainees but will be in the position of providing instruction, criticism and evaluation of their colleagues' performance. Maturity here cannot be measured in years of experience or of longevity, although both of these may be most beneficial; we need real evidence of prior leadership in previous positions, and acceptance of that leadership by others.

### **9.1.5 - Commitment**

Before the candidate is chosen, he must clearly understand what will be expected of him upon return. He must demonstrate that he can and will be able to reduce other commitments if he is to fulfill the responsibilities that will be given to him.

## **9.2 - Assessment of Needs of Leaders**

I shall try to envision the type of program I believe necessary for the Italian trainees. I realize a representative of S.F.U. has already surveyed the local situation and I readily accept the possibility that other approaches to the design and administration of their training program than mine are possible and justifiable. In general, the S.F.U. training program must provide specific opportunities for the future leaders to prepare themselves to offer instruction in the categories listed under the course content suggestions for Type One, Two and Three SM teacher-trainees. Every hour of instruction should be directly related to the specific pre-determined needs of SM teachers. For example, only those teaching techniques that are appropriate for students in SM should be considered; only those AV aids that nearly all SM teachers can produce, collect or find in their schools should be considered. Only tests that are usable and needed in SM should be considered, etc. This closely puts a heavy burden on the instructors in San Francisco. It behooves the Ministry to provide as much evidence as possible to the designers of the S.F.U. program so they may incorporate that information into their program. Some suggestions: (a) send samples of the most common English textbooks used in the SM; (b) send audio taped evidence of SM teachers' speaking ability in English; (c) send samples of SM students writing performance (e.g. extemporaneous essays collected from 3rd-year students); (d) send sample 3rd-year English language examinations; (e) if at all possible, send video-tapes of actual, unrehearsed English classes given in SM. This kind of evidence should contribute considerably to the

design of directly relevant training for the future leaders while they are in San Francisco. Below I list specific topics that I feel should be included in the San Francisco training program.

### **9.2.1 - Leadership Training**

### **9.1.2 - English Linguistics as required by the SM Curriculum**

### **9.2.3 - Selections and/or Development of AV Aids Appropriate for SM**

### **9.2.4 - Selection and Collection of Teaching Techniques Appropriate for SM**

### **9.2.5 - Selection and Collection of Language Testing Instruments Appropriate for SM**

### **9.2.6 - Training in Textbook Analysis and Evaluation**

### **9.2.7 - Training in the Selection of Attainable Instructional Objectives given the Logistical Conditions in SM**

## **10.0 - Post S.F. Considerations**

Although the selection of candidates to go to San Francisco and the design and execution of the program itself will be complicated and sometimes difficult, there will remain even more serious problems to be solved after the leaders return to Italy.

### **10.1 - Incentives**

I had heard repeatedly that either leaders (co-ordinators) or SM teacher trainees would voluntarily give of their time and energy for the opportunity to improve themselves professionally. I fear I was highly skeptical. After meeting with a reasonable sample of SM teachers, I have changed my mind to some extent. There is genuine interest in perfecting their English and in learning more about teaching, and this is a plus. However, I also heard them describe their teaching loads, their outside responsibilities (many hold second jobs, many women need to care for children and husbands) and the minimal preparation they were given while university students. All of these revive my original skepticism. I doubt that such an important undertaking can be built upon the goodwill and good intentions of the teachers and/or the prospective trainers. To increase the possibility of success I recommend several possible forms of incentives for sustained participation. If these are not possible, then I believe we have to reconsider the chance of success for this model of inservice training. Motivations:

Teachers who participate in the program could be given partial released time from their current teaching responsibilities. One formula I might suggest: reduction from 18 to 15 contact hours per week, so that the teacher and the school would each be contributing approximately equal time (3 hours each) to the program.

Successful completion of Type One, Type Two and/or Type Three would earn points that are counted in the "competitions" for teaching positions (punteggi).

Teachers who participate in and successfully complete one or more of the course would be paid a modest honorarium during participation, an amount that would at least cover the cost of transportation to attend the meetings.

Leaders, who will be asked to carry out an enormous administrative task as well as serve as multi-talented instructors must be released completely from their current teaching responsibilities. In other

words they should be given full time to design, co-ordinate and administer the inservice programs. It is inconceivable to me that their responsibilities can be considered part-time arrangements. The remaining items in this section, mostly logistic in nature, can simply be listed as fundamental requirements for the operation of inservice training programs.

## **10.2 - Adequate Physical Space**

## **10.3 - A substantial, Practical Reference Library**

## **10.4 - Supplies and Office Equipment**

## **10.5 - Operational Funds (postage, telephone, travel)**

## **10.6 - Clerical Assistance**

## **11.0 – Notes and Observations**

Permit me to touch upon a number of topics relevant to topics previously mentioned.

### **11.1 - Evaluation**

Without attempting to be specific, it goes without saying that careful records should be kept of each aspect of the proposed inservice teacher-training program. Appropriate evaluation instruments should be selected or developed, so that successes and failures can be noted so as to assist in the design of subsequent programs. It could be noted that this entire endeavor has interest far beyond the SM and beyond Italy. All scholars in the field will take a keen professional interest in the results of this project.

### **11.2 - Ministerial Policy vis-a-vis English Language Instruction in the SM**

Published statements of goals and objectives for foreign language courses in the SM are not precise. For the teacher this presents some advantages and some disadvantages. The advantages: it gives the teacher considerable latitude in choosing the content and the design of his English course. For the trained, imaginative teacher this is commendable; for the untrained, less motivated teacher, the results can be chaotic. Perhaps my most serious concerns, however, have to do with the question of standardization of SM English programs. The absence of standards makes it almost impossible to construct equivalent 3rd-year English examinations for all SM. Furthermore, many teachers, according to some formula I do not pretend to understand, are transferred frequently from school to school, hence the repeated need to modify their instruction to fit yet another school's loosely defined set of objectives must be extremely frustrating. In spite of the vagueness of objectives and the absence of testable standards, there is no doubt in my mind that there is a National policy that English must be taught in the SM. I have been given estimates of 25-27,000 English language teachers employed to teach in the SM. This means there must be nearly 4 million SM students of English. It is difficult for me to grasp the magnitude of this huge language teaching operation at all, given the observations that I have made above concerning the absence of well-defined goals for the three years of English instruction.

### **11.3 - The Role of Universities**

Much related to the above is the typical role of the universities in the preparation of English language teachers. With few exceptions, university English Departments do not seem to devote their resources to linguistic and pedagogical needs of those students who in the majority of cases will become English language teachers in the Italian school system. It is worth repeating this truism only to remind us that the

need for inservice teacher-training for future teachers of English will persist for some time. The division of language departments away from literary specializations has probably been considered. It would seem a practical possibility to me.

#### **11.4 - Employment of Professionally-Prepared American and British Personnel in Inservice Training Programs**

Both USIS and the British Council have indicated willingness to invite English language specialists to assist in academic aspects of inservice teacher-training programs. Such specialists can add a great deal to the program if they are acutely aware of the needs of the SM teachers. American and British personnel who have participated in earlier aspects of the program will have a headstart on all other and should be preferred. It strikes me that there would be mutual benefit derived if young American and British scholars who are completing, or have recently completed, graduate work in TESL/TEFL could usefully participate in the inservice programs. Clearly the Americans and British would profit themselves from the professional experience of teaching language and language teaching techniques to SM teachers and could carry out thesis or dissertation research in Italy. Meanwhile the SM teachers would benefit from additional exposure to native speakers; and American and British graduate students would double or triple the capacity of the Italian leaders, under whose supervision they might work, especially if the leaders are available only part-time. The problem: to remember the number that might be required and the amount of funds that would be required to support a significant number of such people. This may be a topic for later consideration.

#### **12.0 - Summary**

Although there are still unknowns in the design and execution of inservice training programs for SM teachers, there are sufficient knowns to encourage the initiation of such a program as presented here. The knowns: the needs of the SM teachers; the support committed by the Ministry of Education, the British Council and USIS; and the support expressed by a sample of SM teachers. The unknowns: the sustaining power of the courses and their actual effects on the teachers; the motivation of the leaders; and the impact on SM student achievement in English-learning.