

**AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING
OF HELLENISTIC GREEK AS A CLASSICAL LANGUAGE:
PLANNING AND VALIDATION**

by

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DEDICATION

Τῷ δὲ βασιλεῖ τῶν αἰώνων, ἀφθάρτῳ ἀοράτῳ μόνῳ θεῷ,
τιμὴ καὶ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

*Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise,
be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.*

*I dedicate this magister dissertation
to my sister, Zandra Machin,
who plays an indispensable part in shaping my life –
you are the best καθηγητης I know!*

(καθηγητης – one who provides instruction and guidance)

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work submitted here is the result of my own independent investigation. I further declare that the work is submitted at the University of the Free State towards the Magister Artium (Higher Education Studies) (Interdisciplinary) for the first time and that it has never been submitted to any other university/faculty for obtaining a degree.

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SUMMARY

“Teaching is the purposeful creation of situations from which motivated learners should not be able to escape without learning or developing.” (Cowan 2006:100)

Four educational action research questions directed the study. The first two questions relate to the *concerning issue* I wanted to research and the reasons why I was interested in researching the issue. The definition of Cowan encouraged me to evaluate my own teaching values and the current teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek at the University of the Free State (UFS). As lecturer of Hellenistic Greek at this institution, I became aware of contradictions between my personal values and the expression of these values in practice. I realised that students who registered for the course were often unmotivated to study the language and experienced certain levels of anxiety towards the study of Greek, especially the first-year students. Reasons for students’ lack of motivation were therefore investigated and my reflection on the findings led to the realisation that innovation in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek was necessary to alter students’ perceptions and to enhance their performance.

In order to address the third educational action research question – *what kind of evidence can be gathered to show my interest in this issue* – I performed an extensive literature review as well as an empirical investigation. The aim was to gather evidence relating to the following aspects: the importance and relevance of the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek for theology studies; and possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek that necessitate innovation. Reflection on the collected evidence raised the question of *what I can and/or will do* (fourth educational action research question) to address the need for an innovative approach and the findings that emerged from the collected evidence.

I set out to explore Fink’s taxonomy for significant learning (Fink 2003a:30), other selected innovative approaches presented in literature and student suggestions to improve the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek. The aim of this

exploration was to determine if elements/suggestions from these sources are applicable to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek.

All the evidence that emerged during the study was used to compile directives that characterised an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek. These directives contributed to recommendations for the actualisation of this approach. An action plan was also drafted to guide the process of implementing the directives and the innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek. The final step in the study was to have the proposed set of directives and action plan validated by role players and other experts in the field of Hellenistic Greek and New Testament studies.

Key words: Hellenistic Greek; Koiné Greek; New Testament Greek; higher education; South Africa; action research; educational action research; process planning; teaching and learning; innovative teaching; Fink's taxonomy; taxonomy of significant learning; action plan; validation.

OPSOMMING

“Teaching is the purposeful creation of situations from which motivated learners should not be able to escape without learning or developing.” (Cowan 2006:100)

Vier vrae met betrekking tot pedagogiese aksienavorsing was die dryfveer agter die studie. Die eerste twee vrae hou verband met die aspek waaroor ek bekommerd was (*concerning issue*) en die redes waarom ek daarvoor bekommerd was. Cowan se definisie het my uitgedaag om my onderrigfilosofie en -waardes, sowel as die onderrig-leerkonteks van Hellenistiese Grieks aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat (UV), te ondersoek. As dosent aan hierdie instelling het ek bewus geraak van teenstrydighede (*contradictions*) tussen my persoonlike onderrigwaardes en die realisering van hierdie waardes in die praktyk. Ek het besef dat studente wat vir Hellenistiese Grieks geregistreer het, dikwels ongemotiveerd was om die taal te bestudeer en dat hulle ook angstigheid ervaar het, veral die eerstejaarstudente. Moontlike redes vir hierdie ongemotiveerdheid en angstigheid is ondersoek. Die evaluering van hierdie redes het gelei tot die besef dat innovering binne die onderrig-leerkonteks van Hellenistiese Grieks nodig was ten einde die negatiewe persepsies van studente te verander en om hulle prestasies in die vak te verbeter.

Ek het die derde vraag met betrekking tot pedagogiese aksienavorsing – *watter tipe bewyse kan versamel word om my belangstelling in die betrokke aspek te bevestig* – aangespreek deur 'n uitgebreide literatuurstudie sowel as empiriese navorsing te onderneem. Die doel was om bewyse te versamel wat met die volgende aspekte verband hou: die belangrikheid en relevansie wat die onderrig en leer van Hellenistiese Grieks vir Teologiese studie inhou; en moontlike tekortkominge binne die onderrig-leerkonteks van Hellenistiese Grieks wat innovering noodsaak. Die bestudering van hierdie bewyse het gelei tot die vraag: *wat kan en/of sal ek doen* (vierde vraag met betrekking tot pedagogiese aksienavorsing) om die behoefte aan 'n innoverende benadering en my bevindinge tydens die studie aan te spreek.

Laasgenoemde vraag het daartoe gelei dat ek Fink se taksonomie vir betekenisvolle leer (Fink 2003a:30), asook ander geselekteerde innoverende benaderings en

voorstelle van studente oor hoe om die onderrig-leerkonteks van Hellenistiese Grieks te verbeter, ondersoek het. Die doel van hierdie ondersoek was om vas te stel of elemente/voorstelle vanuit hierdie bronne binne die onderrig-leerkonteks van Hellenistiese Grieks toegepas kan word. Al die bewyse wat gedurende die studie versamel is, is gebruik om riglyne saam te stel waaraan 'n innoverende benadering tot die onderrig en leer van Hellenistiese Grieks behoort te voldoen. Hierdie riglyne het bygedra tot aanbevelings vir die verwesenliking van so 'n benadering. 'n Aksieplan is ook opgestel om die implementering van die riglyne en die innoverende benadering tot die onderrig en leer van Hellenistiese Grieks te vergemaklik. Die geldigverklaring (*validation*) van die voorgestelde riglyne en aksieplan deur rolspelers en spesialiste binne die veld van Hellenistiese Grieks, was die finale stap in die studie.

Sleutelwoorde: Hellenistiese Grieks; Koiné Grieks; Nuwe Testamentiese Grieks; hoër onderwys; Suid-Afrika; aksienavorsing; pedagogiese aksienavorsing; prosesbeplanning; onderrig en leer; innoverende leer; Fink se taksonomie; taksonomie vir betekenisvolle leer; aksieplan; geldigverklaring.

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Cowan (2006:100) defines teaching as “the purposeful creation of situations from which motivated learners should not be able to escape without learning or developing”. My own conclusion drawn from this definition is threefold: i) teaching in general, but also every teaching encounter with students has to be purposeful; ii) the students must be ‘captivated’ by the encounter (and their learning experience) to become motivated and remain engaged in the subject being presented to them; and iii) apart from learning (receiving knowledge), during the teaching process, students have to develop to become lasting learners of the subject and people who apply the knowledge they have gained in their daily lives and future professions.

During my first year of lecturing Hellenistic Greek at the University of the Free State (UFS), however, I realised that students registered for the course are often not motivated to study the language and that a certain level of anxiety towards the study of Greek is present, especially amongst first-year students. Instead of being *captivated* students (as concluded from Cowan’s definition), I view these anxious and unmotivated students to be *Greek refugees*. This study therefore investigates the current teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek to address possible limitations and to improve the teaching of Hellenistic Greek in order to ‘capture the refugees’ by means of an innovative approach.

An orientation to the study is provided in this chapter. This orientation commences with an explanation of the background to the research, which includes a brief introduction to the researcher’s values relating to teaching (see 1.2). The research problem and questions addressed in the study are presented in 1.3, followed by the aim and objectives in 1.4. The demarcation of the study and the clarification of concepts are touched upon in two subsequent sections (see 1.5 and 1.6, respectively). Section 1.7 provides an overview of the research design (a qualitative study based on action research principles) and the methodology employed in the

study. The chapter concludes with reference to the significance (see 1.8) and chapter lay-out of this report (see 1.9).

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Action research begins with values. As a self-reflective practitioner you need to be aware of what drives your life and work, so you can be clear about what you are doing and why you are doing it. You might need to spend time clarifying for yourself the kinds of values and commitments you hold. (McNiff 2002a:11)

According to Huang (2010:95), action researchers are “more autobiographical in their expression”. She therefore supports the use of the first person when an action researcher presents his/her claims to knowledge. “What may seem like autobiographical self-indulgence is offered to help contextualise the claims, create transparency and also to anchor ownership of expression that can otherwise masquerade as worryingly disembodied and neutral.” Since the research design for the study is based on action research principles (see 1.7), these perspectives on the values and an autobiographical presentation of findings are important to take note of.

In explaining the background to the research problem, I therefore commence with a presentation of the following personal values relating to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek:

- *I regard the study of Hellenistic Greek as relevant and important for theology studies.*

I realised this during my own theology studies (and compulsory study of Greek). Knowledge of Greek is central to exegesis and the critical evaluation of original New Testament and/or ancient Greek texts. This realisation guided the way in which I approached the study of the language.

- *Intrinsic motivation to know the language and to learn how to use it is necessary.*

I reached a point during my own studies where I *wanted* to study Greek because I really understood the significance thereof and not only because it was a compulsory module. It would be excellent if students who registered for Hellenistic Greek could echo the sentiments of Ruck (1968:ii) that Greek is

“communication with genius; it is (an) aesthetic experience; it is, to speak simply, enjoyment”.

- *Students need to realise the importance of the study of Hellenistic Greek.*

After two years (2007 and 2008) of tutoring the first- and second-year students and especially after becoming a lecturer in 2009, I realised that only a small number of students share my conviction that the study of Greek is really important.

- *The teaching and learning approach to Hellenistic Greek must invite students to be involved and help them to realise the relevance of the language.*

An ancient language is presented to contemporary students. Since the language itself cannot change to be more inviting to the students, I believe *innovation* regarding the entire teaching and learning context of the language is needed.

- *My teaching need to be characterised by integrity and consistency, to be innovative and purposeful, and to make a lasting impression on the students attending my classes.*

(See conclusion drawn from Cowan’s definition of teaching in the first paragraph of 1.1.)

- *Teaching and learning Hellenistic Greek must go beyond understanding, remembering and application.*

This value became important to me after my initial introduction to Fink’s taxonomy of significant learning (Fink 2003a:30). (See 4.3 for an explanation of this taxonomy and its application to Hellenistic Greek.)

However, sometimes, according to McNiff and Whitehead (2005:47), “something is happening that is contrary to what you believe in ... you may find that your research is inspired by this sense that things are not going as you wish... Your research then becomes an exploration of how you can come to live in the direction of your educational values”. When this happens, researchers might experience that their educational values are not realised in practice, and therefore they view themselves as a *living contradiction*.

In living theories *individuals generate their own explanations* of their educational influences in their own learning. The explanatory principles in living theory

explanations are energy flowing values embodied and expressed in practice.

(Whitehead 2009:87)

The background to the research problem of the study is related to my own experience of contradiction between my values and the expression (embodiment) of these values in practice. Despite my efforts to communicate and transfer my values, students studying Hellenistic Greek were unmotivated and experienced anxiety. What makes this a problem and/or a contradiction? Four possible reasons are provided subsequently:

i) Compulsory module

Hellenistic Greek is presented as a compulsory module for theology students at the UFS and they have to pass at least the first year before they can advance to New Testament exegesis. I find it difficult to bring about intrinsic motivation if students *have* to register for the module, instead of registering because they are interested in knowing more about Hellenistic Greek.

ii) Students doubt significance

From my experience as lecturer, it also seems as if students doubt the significance of studying Hellenistic Greek. According to them, the abundance of commentaries and available electronic resources can assist them in the translation of Greek texts and the exegesis of New Testament passages. Ironically, however, students need a solid foundational knowledge of grammar (and resources) before information derived from commentaries and electronic resources can have any significant meaning (Jay 1979:ix). A flawless translation will be meaningless if it only conveys what the student expected the text to say, or if it is only a copy of a memorised translation. Students must be able to analyse different translations critically and engage in discussions regarding textual issues such as the function of certain words or clauses (Anderson 2004:433; Anhalt 2006:45). However, students' lack of motivation to obtain foundational knowledge prevents higher cognitive learning such as application and integration and in the end Hellenistic Greek is not mastered efficiently.

iii) *Different abilities and learning styles*

According to Cowan (2006:139), lecturers deal with a range of different student needs and often have to accommodate different abilities and learning styles within one group.

iv) *Negative experiences*

According to Ruck (1968:i), “unfortunate experiences in the learning of classical languages have turned more than one student away from learning in general”. I agree with Ruck that students have negative experiences during the teaching process, i.e. the failure to pass, the lack of clear outcomes and inappropriate teaching methods. In my opinion, these negative experiences most likely lead to anxiety, thereby increasing their lack of motivation even further.

In the light of the contradictions between my values and the expression (embodiment) of these values in practice, I am of the opinion that an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek is needed to ensure the purposeful teaching and significant learning of the language.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS

Against the background provided in the previous section, the main research problem addressed in this study is *the need for an innovative approach to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek*.

Six research questions were formulated to address the research problem and guide the evolvement of the study. The questions are:

1. Why is the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek important and still relevant for theology studies?
2. What are possible shortcomings relating to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek that necessitates innovation?
3. How can the integrated components of Fink’s taxonomy for significant learning contribute to enhancing the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?

4. What elements from other innovative approaches can contribute to enhancing the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?
5. What, according to students, are necessary to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?
6. Which directives characterise an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The specific aim of the study was to investigate the most appropriate features and/or directives that could lead to a validated action plan to address the need for an innovative approach to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.

The research aim was realised by pursuing the following objectives:

- Gain perspectives on the relevance of the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.
- Reveal possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context to identify and confirm the need for an innovative approach to Hellenistic Greek.
- Explore the applicability of Fink's taxonomy, elements from other innovative approaches, and student suggestions to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek.
- Compile directives and draft an action plan to address the need for an innovative approach.
- Have the proposed set of directives and action plan validated by role players and other experts in the field of study.

1.5 DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH

As indicated in 1.3, this study investigated the need for an innovative approach to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek. An attempt to address this problem necessitated an interdisciplinary study within the fields of Higher Education

Studies and Classical Studies, with Hellenistic Greek as the specific field of continuous application.

Aspects regarding teaching and learning, course design and student experience in Hellenistic Greek were explored in the study. These aspects are in concordance with the first three key themes for research into Higher Education, as identified by Tight (2003:7); thereby confirming the need for an interdisciplinary study. Tight also identifies subthemes within teaching and learning, and student experience, respectively. The following subthemes were addressed (some to a lesser extent):

- Student learning, different kinds of students, teaching in higher education and the “how to” genre within *teaching and learning*;
- The higher-education curriculum and technologies for learning within *course design*; and
- The on-course experience, success and non-completion and the transition from higher education to work within *student experience* (Tight 2003:60, 75, 91).

Greek modules, presented by lecturers from the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies at the UFS, were the focus of the study. Theology students (for whom Hellenistic Greek is a foreign language) from the Faculty of Theology at the same institution were involved as role players and participants. Other participants were lecturers within the fields of Hellenistic Greek, New Testament exegesis/studies and Hebrew, as well as selected ministers from the Dutch Reformed Church. Student participants comprised students who were registered for Greek modules during the course of the study, as well as students who have completed the compulsory Greek modules but were still busy with their theology studies. These students use their acquired knowledge and skills during New Testament exegesis and for the preparation of sermons. Since they have completed the compulsory Greek modules in recent years, they were able to evaluate implemented methods and curriculum content critically against what they have experienced as necessary for the successful integration of Hellenistic Greek in the remaining part of their theology studies.

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Three key concepts are presented in this section with the aim of clarifying the title and aim of the study:

1.6.1 Hellenistic Greek

This term, *Hellenistic Greek*, is firstly clarified from a historical perspective (see 3.2.2 for more detail). According to Wenham (1965:17), the Koiné (or common) dialect – the spoken language of the common man – became the international language or *lingua franca* of the civilised world during the so called *Koiné period* (330 B.C. to A.D. 330). This new international language was also referred to as *Hellenistic* and, according to Moule (1959:1-2), both these labels (Koiné and Hellenistic) are habitually applied to the *lingua franca*. According to Duff (2008:9), *Hellenistic Greek* is sometimes also used by modern scholars when they refer to Koiné Greek. When the term *Hellenistic* is used in the study, Koiné and Hellenistic Greek are implied. From a literary perspective, the term *Hellenistic Greek* refers to the language in which the Greek New Testament and Patristic literature were written (see 3.2.3).

Hellenistic Greek is the specific field of continuous application in this study. During the two years of compulsory Greek study at the UFS, students are introduced to the Greek of the New Testament and Patristic authors and by implication therefore to *Hellenistic Greek*.

1.6.2 Innovative teaching and learning

From a practical perspective, I view innovation in the study as something *new* or *different* from what has been done within the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek at the UFS over the past eight years (2003-2010). During this time, I was a student, tutor and lecturer of Hellenistic Greek, respectively and therefore I am able to give a reasonable account of the content, teaching and/or assessment methods and study material that have been used. By *new* and *different*, I refer to any aspect relating to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek, not only to the use of online learning or electronic resources.

A theoretical perspective that also reflects my view of innovative teaching and learning is presented by Jaskyte, Taylor and Smariga (2009:111) when they state:

A creative teacher is seen as the one who is consistently curious and constantly seeks out new ways to improve her or his teaching abilities. In addition to improving their skills, teachers must also increase their understanding of student needs and preferences and constantly seek out new ways for transmitting knowledge.

1.6.3 Planning and validation

“An action plan communicates the idea that a project or task should be undertaken in a systematic way ... in order to improve something, usually practice.” (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:26) *Planning* in the study therefore refers to an action plan for the implementation of an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek. This plan, which was only drafted towards the end of the study, proposes a (systematic) way in which the implementation of the approach can proceed in future. The plan indicates *what* needs to be done, *who* are going to do it, *how* it will be done and *how* (and by whom) the process will be *monitored* (see 5.3.2).

Validation: Within action research, a researcher produces evidence to back his/her claim of knowledge (McNiff 2002a:16). Validation occurs when a group of people from the researcher’s professional circle (validation group) critically considers this claim to knowledge during a formal gathering (validation meeting). If agreement is reached and they conclude that the presented claim was based on good research, the claim is validated (McNiff 2002a:17; McNiff and Whitehead 2009:61). Validation was also needed to validate the claim to knowledge in the study (see objective 5 in 1.4) The claim to knowledge relates to the proposed directives and action plan to address the need for an innovative approach to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (see objective 4 in 1.4). The validation group in this study comprised five lecturers from the field of classical/ancient languages and New Testament studies and five of the more senior students who participated in the study. One formal meeting was held with this group on 2 December 2010.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section commences with an overview of the research design and the theoretical framework that directed the study. The remainder of the section presents an overview of the research methodology of the study – and focuses on the following aspects: sampling, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations and quality assurance.

1.7.1 Overview of research design and theoretical framework

As researcher, I have undertaken a conceptual, qualitative study and selected a research design that showed correspondence with action research principles. The *action planning approach* developed by Whitehead and modified by McNiff (2002a:12), placed within the *process planning model* described by Zuber-Skerritt (2002:145), directed the development of the research design. A brief description of the action planning approach and the process planning model is presented subsequently.

Action planning approach: Whitehead's approach comprises a set of critical questions researchers can ask and find answers for within the context of their own practice. This study only focused on the planning and validation of an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek and therefore only the first four questions of Whitehead's approach were applicable, i.e.: i) *What concerning issue am I interested in researching?* ii) *Why am I concerned and want to research this issue?* iii) *What kind of evidence can be gathered to show my interest in this issue?* iv) *What can I do? What will I do?*

Process planning model: The process planning model (presented in Figure 2.1) consists of three major components (*vision, context and practice*), each with different elements. The model form two iterative cycles also referred to as the *figure-eight model*.

Based on the abovementioned two approaches/models, the research design for this study was organised into four phases, i.e. initial vision, context analysis, adapted

vision and practice. The four phases are discussed in detail in 2.2.3.2 and summarised in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.

The following main concepts of educational research (as identified by McNiff 2002b:16), constitute the theoretical framework of the study:

- **Ontology** refers to the theory of how people view themselves in relation to their environment (Whitehead and McNiff 2006:22). As lecturer *and* researcher, I was part of the students' and other Greek and New Testament lecturers' environment. This study could not be separated from the research being done in their environment and consequently I have adopted an insider, participative approach to the study.
- **Epistemology** refers to the theory of how people *understand* knowledge and this understanding involves two perspectives, namely knowledge itself (what is known) and knowledge acquisition (how knowledge becomes known). In action research (and in the study), knowledge is perceived as something that is being created by the researcher, in collaboration with other people who also create their own knowledge (Whitehead and McNiff 2006:23). I had no preconceived idea of what to expect from the study and set out to understand the way in which the participants experienced the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek and socially constructed meaning to their activities subjectively. The study was therefore approached from an interpretivist and constructivist epistemological perspective.
- **Methodology** refers to the theory of *how things are done* and is influenced in educational research by the applied perspectives of ontology and epistemology (Whitehead and McNiff 2006:23). I was part of the 'world' of the study and therefore my values, experiences, interaction with participants and continuous reflection on my practice directed (and influenced) the way in which my claim to knowledge was created.

1.7.2 Sampling

Accessible information-rich participants have been selected for the study according to predetermined criteria and characteristics through maximum variation and stratified purposive/convenience sampling (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007:109-114; McMillan and Schumacher 2001:400-402).

The perspectives of the following homogenous groups were needed since they were involved with Hellenistic Greek, either as students or as people who apply their knowledge of Greek in their profession:

- Students: 67 currently registered Greek and/or theology students, grouped according to their year of study as well as their performance/results.
- Lecturers: seven Greek, New Testament and Hebrew lecturers.
- Ministers: five ministers from the Dutch Reformed Church (see 2.3.1 for details on sampling).

1.7.3 Data collection

In the study, I set out to collect data that related to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek. Non-empirical data collection was done through an extensive literature review in order to obtain theoretical perspectives on the relevance and teaching and learning practices of Hellenistic Greek, and to explore a variety of innovative practices. Data were also collected from participants during an empirical investigation to gain their perspectives on the relevance and possible shortcomings and/or enhancement of the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek. Data from students were collected during semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions (see 2.3.2.1), while data were also collected from lecturers and ministers during informal conversational interviews (see 2.3.2.2). Data were furthermore derived from my continuous reflection on practice. The keeping of a reflective journal and especially self-reflection (also called reflexive critique) assisted me in this process of continuous reflection (see 2.3.2.3).

1.7.4 Data analysis

According to Whitehead and McNiff (2006:80-81), a researcher generates evidence from the literature review and empirical investigation by sorting, categorising and analysing collected data (in terms of what they are saying) in order to identify certain criteria from which conclusions are drawn. One method of data analysis suggested and employed by Norton (2009:128) during action research, is *thematic analysis* (also described as *searching for patterns*). (See Table 2.3 for a summary of thematic analysis as described by Norton 2009:117-123.) This method of thematic analysis was used to analyse data in this study. I adhered to the principles of reiteration and careful coding while working through the seven stages of the method (see 2.3.3).

1.7.5 Ethical considerations

The demonstration of ethical behaviour is especially important in educational action research according to Whitehead and McNiff (2006:77). As competent lecturer in Greek at the UFS, I performed the required action research with the necessary ethical sensitivity by adhering to three fundamental principles during the research process and especially during data collection. These principles were: informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, and protection from harm, as identified by Norton (2009:181) and complemented by other authors (Cohen *et al.* 2007:52-58, 65, 70; Strydom 2005:59, 62). Participants had a choice whether they wanted to participate, and collected information was only used with their permission. The necessary permission from the relevant departments to conduct the study was also obtained (Mouton 2001:244).

1.7.6 Quality assurance of the study

As researcher, I applied a series of quality assurance measures in the study. The measures were based on the four elements of trustworthiness according to Lincoln and Guba (in Babbie and Mouton 2001:276), and included the following: credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability) and confirmability (objectivity).

In order to ensure *credibility (internal validity)* in the study, the compatibility between the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the respondents and those that are

attributed to them was indicated (Babbie and Mouton 2001:277). This was done by means of the following 'procedures':

- Prolonged engagement (continuation until data saturation).
- Peer debriefing (frequent critical conversations with professional colleagues).
- Member checks (to reveal possible errors in my interpretation and to provide participants with an opportunity to add additional information).
- Reflection (reflective journal and reflexive critique) (see 2.3.5.1).

Transferability (external validity), according to Babbie and Mouton (2001:277), relates to the application (or non-application) of specific findings to other contexts or with other participants. The teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek was the specific field of application during the study. It can therefore not be assumed that findings would have automatic relevance (and applicability) to other teaching contexts or modules. I do however believe that the findings of the study could be transferable to other classical and/or ancient languages such as Latin and Hebrew – if the relevant lecturers adapt these for their specific circumstances (see 2.3.5.2).

Dependability (reliability) are ensured when researchers present evidence that if their research “were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents (subjects) in the same (or a similar) context, its findings would be similar” (Babbie and Mouton 2001:278). According to Lincoln and Guba (in Babbie and Mouton 2001:278), one way to contribute to the dependability of a study is through an inquiry audit. An inquiry audit entails the presentation of critical incidents, a running account of the process of inquiry, and the product (the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations) for scrutiny by participants/professional circle. During the study, some of my findings from literature and the empirical investigation were discussed with critical friends when using them as soundboards during my reflection on data. My data, findings and recommendations were also presented to role players and experts in the field during a formal validation meeting (see 2.3.5.3 and 5.4.2).

Confirmability (objectivity) in a study is determined by the extent to which specific findings (and not the biases of the researcher) can be viewed as the product of the study's focus (Babbie and Mouton 2001:278). In the study, *confirmability* was

ensured by being a perspectival observer, adhering to the principle of openness and allowing an inquiry audit of my research findings (Babbie and Mouton 2001:278; Chenail 1995:1 of 8; Maykut and Morehouse 1994:20) (see 2.3.5.4).

1.8 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

I am convinced that an innovative approach can enhance the teaching and learning (context) of Hellenistic Greek if it includes the identified perspectives/suggestions from literature and participants (generated during the study), and is based on Fink's taxonomy for significant learning (Fink 2003a:30). In my opinion, the innovative approach could assist the lecturer to alter the attitude of students to be more positive and to become motivated and lasting learners of Hellenistic Greek. I further believe in the possibility to apply the developed approach, with minor adjustments, to the teaching of Latin and Hebrew as classical and Semitic languages, respectively. As additional value, a new innovative approach might seem academically less daunting and might attract even non-theology students to study this ancient but very relevant language. The value of the study also stretches further and may certainly add to knowledge in the fields of Higher Education Studies and Classical Studies in particular when shared by means of publications, conference papers and at other forums (see 6.3 for an elaboration on the significance of the study, also for me personally).

1.9 LAY-OUT OF CHAPTERS

The study was structured according to the first four steps (questions) in Whitehead's action planning approach, as referred to in 1.7.1. These questions are also used to present an overview of the contents and lay-out of chapters for the study.

- Chapter 1 introduces the first two questions of Whitehead, i.e.: *What concerning issue am I interested in researching? Why am I concerned and want to research this issue?* (See 1.1, 1.2 and the research problem in 1.3.)

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the research design and methodology employed in the study. A concise overview of the research design is presented in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.
- Chapter 3 addresses the third question of Whitehead, i.e.: *What kind of evidence can be gathered to show my interest in this issue?* An overview of the history and development of the Greek language is followed by a reflection on two sets of evidence generated from the literature review and empirical investigation. The first set of evidence relates to the relevance of the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek for theology studies, and the second to possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek.
- Chapter 4 addresses the first part of Whitehead's fourth question – *What can I do?* The applicability of Fink's taxonomy, elements from other innovative approaches and student suggestions to enhance the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek are explored. The aim of the exploration is to identify elements (possible directives) that can contribute to enhancing the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.
- Chapter 5 addresses the second part of Whitehead's fourth question – *What will I do?* Proposed directives and an action plan for the implementation of an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek are presented and validated. Inferences from the validation of the proposed directives and action plan are also presented.
- Chapter 6 concludes the study by providing an overview of main findings and conclusions. Some perspectives on the significance and limitations of the study, as well as on future studies and research are also provided.

1.10 CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 has provided an orientation to the study. The next chapter addresses the research design and methodology employed in the study before the rest of the chapters address the relevant issues as set out in 1.9.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The study is characterised by an action research planning process with data collection from various sources, including literature, closely related, integrated and intertwined with an empirical investigation. The aim of this chapter is therefore to orientate the reader to the research design, theoretical framework, and research methodology employed in the study (see 2.2 and 2.3, respectively). Ethical aspects and quality assurance are also touched upon (see 2.3.4 and 2.3.5, respectively).

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section commences with a description of the *type* of study before the study is placed in a *theoretical framework* by referring to three elements of educational research, i.e. ontology, epistemology and methodology. An extensive exploration of the chosen research *design* concludes the first part of this chapter.

2.2.1 Type of study

A profound understanding of *why* students do not regard the study of Greek as relevant and important or *why* the current teaching methods are not working effectively (see 1.2), was necessary to shed some light on effective ways of how to improve the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek. In my opinion, theoretical information derived from literature can only make a limited contribution to this understanding. A substantial amount of data also had to be collected from other active participants in the study (e.g. students and other lecturers).

In its broadest sense, the qualitative research paradigm refers to “research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions. It also produces descriptive data in the participant’s own written or spoken words. It thus involves identifying the participant’s beliefs and values that underlie the phenomena.” (Fouché and Delport 2005:74) The primary aim of qualitative research is to develop an in-

depth ('thick') description and understanding of a situation as it is constructed by the participants. This can be done by using face-to-face techniques to collect information from participants in terms of the meaning they have of the situation (Babbie and Mouton 2001:270; McMillan and Schumacher 2001:35). As researcher, I had no idea of what to expect from my investigation into the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek. An approach to elicit a valid understanding of the participant's beliefs, values and experiences in the context of Hellenistic Greek was needed for this study and therefore I selected a qualitative research approach.

The following characteristics of qualitative research, as derived from various authors, are applicable to this study and accentuate my decision to work within the domain of qualitative research (Fortune and Reid, in Fouché and Delport 2005:74; Babbie and Mouton 2001:270; McMillan and Schumacher 2001:395-7; Maykut and Morehouse 1994:20):

- Emphasis is placed on the process/evolution of the study and not only on the eventual outcome.
- A qualitative researcher uses different methods to acquire in-depth knowledge on how participants construct their social world (the insider role).
- Qualitative research is context sensitive – it is field research within the natural setting of the participants. (In this study, the context is the teaching and learning milieu of Hellenistic Greek.)
- A qualitative researcher's own perspective on the study is emphasised, since the human mind is the 'main' instrument in the research process for making interpretations and testing results.
- Qualitative research has the added advantage of being inclusive of differing perspectives, i.e. perspectival. It involves interactive inquiry and a researcher collects data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected samples – through participant observation and unstructured interviewing, for instance.
- Qualitative research strategies are interactive and flexible – a researcher can use different combinations of techniques to collect data.
- Participants' individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions are described and analysed.

Since this qualitative study was conducted within the field of Higher Education Studies, with specific application in Hellenistic Greek (which is situated in the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Studies at the UFS), it was necessary to explore the main concepts of educational research that constituted the theoretical framework for the study.

2.2.2 Theoretical framework

McNiff (2002b:16) identifies *ontology*, *epistemology* and *methodology* as key elements and terms used in educational research, which she views as “always socially embedded”. These key elements also underpin the theoretical framework of the study.

Ontology refers to a *theory of being or reality*. “Reality as portrayed by qualitative research tends to follow the constructivist cue that reality is a social construction; it accepts that the researcher cannot be separated from the research; and it asserts that research findings are *created* rather than *discovered*.” (Niewenhuis 2007a:54) The theory of how people view themselves in relation to their environment influences their perception of other people and the kind of approach they adopt to research (McNiff and Whitehead 2009:8; Whitehead and McNiff 2006:22-3; McNiff 2002b:16). As lecturer and researcher, I viewed myself as part of the students’ and other Greek and New Testament lecturers’ environment. It was impossible to separate myself from the research being done in their environment and consequently I adopted an insider, participative approach to this study.

The second element, **epistemology**, refers to a *theory of knowledge and how one knows reality*. In essence it implies how people *understand* knowledge and this understanding involves two perspectives, namely knowledge itself (what is known) and knowledge acquisition (how knowledge becomes known). Whitehead and McNiff (2006:23) state that “[i]f you believed that you were part of the world and not a fly on the wall, you would probably see knowledge as something you create, in company with other people who are also creating their own knowledge”. It is clear from this citation that ontology influences epistemology (McNiff and Whitehead 2009:8; Whitehead and McNiff 2006:23; McNiff 2002b:16).

This qualitative study was approached from an interpretivist and constructivist epistemological perspective. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:396), qualitative research is based on a constructivist philosophy and consequently reality is viewed by qualitative researchers as “a shared social experience interpreted by individuals ... (and) ... a social construction, that is, individuals or groups derive or ascribe meanings to specific entities, such as events, persons, processes, or objects”. Since I had no preconceived idea of what to expect from this study, I set out to understand the way in which the participants subjectively experienced the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek and socially constructed meaning to their activities.

The third element, **methodology**, refers to the theory of *how things are done*. An educational researcher’s methodology is influenced by his/her ontology and epistemology. Whitehead and McNiff (2006:23) state, “if you perceive yourself as a participant in the world, interacting with others, you may see your interactions as a process of creating new knowledge individually and collectively”. As an insider in the ‘world’ of this study, my values, experiences, interaction with participants and continuous reflection on my practice directed the way in which knowledge regarding the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek was created. The chosen research design (see 2.2.3) provided assistance towards understanding how the participants in this study might have generated knowledge from their experiences or influenced social change within this particular environment (Whitehead and McNiff 2006:23; McNiff 2002b:18).

In conclusion, “[i]f you can improve what you are doing (at least improve your understanding of what you are doing), there is a good chance you will influence the situation you are working in” (McNiff 2002a:8). “People can generate their own knowledge from their experience of living and learning. Knowledge is never static or complete; it is in a constant process of development as new understanding emerges.” (McNiff 2002b:18) The research for this study was performed in a real social situation and new knowledge, based on my personal values (see 1.2) and interaction with other participants in the study, was constructed. If this new knowledge can improve my understanding of the current (and future) teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek, I believe there is a good chance I can have a positive influence on the situation I am working in.

2.2.3 Research design

A researcher embarking on a research study needs to make certain decisions as to how he/she will plan and execute the study. These decisions regarding the planning of a study constitute the *research design* selected and followed by a researcher. A qualitative research design is not a step-by-step recipe, but is determined by a researcher's choices and actions. The choice of design is also influenced by the identified purpose and research questions of the study, and the skills and resources available to a researcher (Fouché 2005:268-9). The research design for this study had to support the selected qualitative approach.

2.2.3.1 Principles of pedagogical action research

The principle of pedagogical action research is very clear; it is to improve some aspect of the student learning experience. Put more formally, the fundamental purpose of pedagogical action research is to systematically investigate one's own teaching/learning facilitation practice with the dual aim of modifying practice and contributing to theoretical knowledge. (Norton 2009:xv-xvi)

According to McNiff (2002a:5), action research provides a practical way of evaluating your own work to check whether it is as you would like it to be. Enquiries within action research commences with the question: *How do I improve my work?* (McNiff 2002a:7) and this is exactly the question I wanted to answer – how can the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek be improved? An *action research design* was selected for this study in order to pursue the answer to this question.

In action research, similar to qualitative research, a researcher does not begin with a fixed hypothesis or idea. The research is open ended and a researcher follows a developmental and intertwined process of action and research (McNiff 2002a:5). The *action* principle refers to what a researcher does to improve a situation and involves “identifying a problematic issue, imagining a possible solution, trying it out, evaluating it, and changing practice in the light of the evaluation” (McNiff 2002a:6). The *research* process focuses on offering descriptions (describing what is being done and how a situation unfolds), explanations (providing reasons for actions taken and expressing possible achievement through the action) and analyses for action (promulgating the significance of the action research for new learning and discourses) (McNiff and

Whitehead 2009:12). During the research process of this study, light was shed on the current teaching and learning situation of Hellenistic Greek at the UFS and on continuous and future action as the study unfolded (description). The reason and purpose for all decisions and actions are given (explanation) and the reader is made aware of the significance (or possible limitations) of the study (analysis).

2.2.3.2 Research design for this study

The research design shows correspondence with the *action planning approach* developed by Whitehead and modified by McNiff (2002a:12), placed within the *process planning model* described by Zuber-Skerritt (2002:145). The research design was organised into four phases. A succinct description of the abovementioned action planning approach and process planning model is given before the design is discussed in detail according to the four phases.

Action planning approach: Whitehead

According to McNiff (2002a:12), the aim of Whitehead's approach to action planning is to encourage researchers or practitioners to ask critical questions about their own practice and to find answers for themselves. Whitehead's approach includes eight steps incorporated into the following questions:

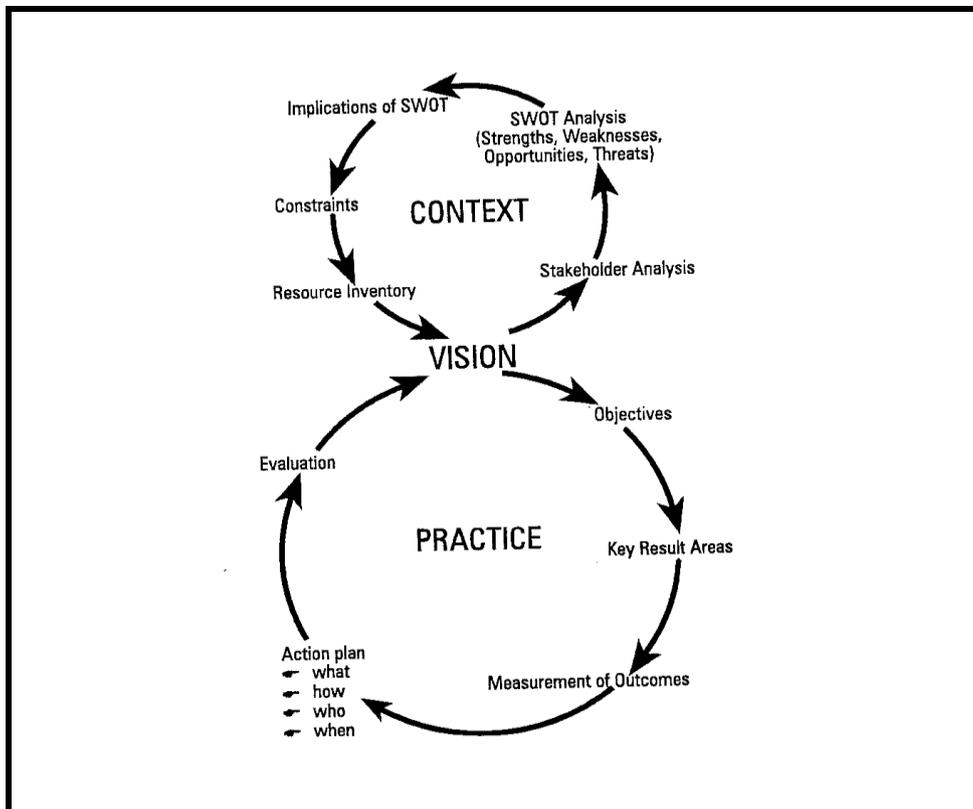
1. What issue am I interested in researching? (What is my concern?)
2. Why do I want to research this issue? (Why am I concerned?)
3. What kind of evidence can I gather to show why I am interested in this issue?
4. What can I do? What will I do?
5. What kind of evidence can I gather to show that I am having an influence?
6. How can I explain that influence?
7. How can I ensure that any judgements I might make are reasonably fair and accurate?
8. How will I change my practice in the light of my evaluation?

Only the first four questions (steps) of Whitehead's approach were dealt with in this study. By conceptualising (and organising) these steps according to Zuber-Skerritt's process planning model (see Figure 2.1), an action plan was compiled to address the need for an innovative teaching and learning approach to Hellenistic Greek. The actual implementation and evaluation of this compiled action plan may serve as a

basis for action research cycles in future studies. More detail regarding the different steps/questions is discussed as part of the particular phase where they feature in the research design.

Process planning model: Zuber-Skerritt

The process planning model referred to by Zuber-Skerritt (2002:145) in the discussion of her generic model for the planning of action learning and action research consists of three major components, i.e. vision, context and practice. These components, each with their different elements, form two iterative cycles. The model is also referred to as the *figure eight* model and is presented in Figure 2.1.



Source: Zuber-Skerritt (2002:145).

Figure 2.1: Process planning model: Zuber-Skerritt

The two iterative cycles of the model were completed and the main components were used to organise the research design for this study into four phases, i.e. initial vision, context analysis, adapted vision and practice. These phases are discussed subsequently.

(i) *Phase 1: initial vision*

Two concepts are important in the first phase of this research design, i.e. vision and values. According to McNiff (2002a:11), *values* are the beginning of action research. It is therefore apparent for a researcher to be aware of the values and commitments that provide intrinsic motivation to do his/her work as a lecturer. These values and commitments direct and orientate any action research and thinking about future teaching enterprises (Passfield 2004:8; McNiff 2002a:11). (See 1.2 for the values that directed my teaching and influenced my action research with the aim of enhancing the future teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.)

On the other hand, Passfield (2004:6) describes *vision* as “belief without evidence” and an action that “allows individuals to see what the future could be like and to imagine the experience of working in those circumstances”. He is of the opinion that the development of a vision should make a researcher (and other people involved in the research) uncomfortable. If researchers and participants allow present constraints to hold them back, the realisation of the vision will seem unlikely. However, “[t]he gap between present reality and the vision stimulates energy and creative action” (Passfield 2004:6). A researcher must therefore think inventively and use this creative energy and action to pursue his/her initial vision. My initial vision for the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek is summarised subsequently:

When I think about my vision for the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek, a contradictory expression my father always used, comes to mind: “Follow me, I am right behind you.” Studying Greek deepened my own understanding of classical languages, the New Testament and theology in general and I would like to challenge students *to follow me* in order to gain a similar understanding and growth. I want to help them to become life-long learners of Greek. At the same time, however, I want *to walk behind them*, to encourage them not to turn around or get discouraged with this ancient language and its academic challenges. I want the students who register for Hellenistic Greek, to attend all the contact sessions and have the experience that the study of Greek is important and can be enjoyed. I want to change the attitude of students towards Greek – to be more

positive about the subject and to experience the relevance thereof for their studies.

The necessary content should also be taught in a more contemporary manner and this requires some innovation regarding resources and methodology. This involves the intensive revision of study material and in some cases the development of new material to incorporate the use of electronic resources. It also involves a paradigm shift away from traditional and content-centred methods that encourage students only to memorise facts or translations.

Previous studies relating to module planning and the development of study material in the Programme for Higher Education Studies at the UFS introduced me to Fink's taxonomy for significant learning (2003a:30). I am excited about the possible advantages the components of this taxonomy can hold if applied to the teaching of Greek. I visualise an innovative approach where I can equip the students to *use* foundational knowledge by teaching them how to apply and integrate this knowledge to Greek texts and New Testament studies. The approach must also go beyond the classroom and teach the students how to interact with and care about other people. (The rationale behind Fink's taxonomy is discussed in 4.3.1 and the different components of the taxonomy in 4.3.2.)

The development of my initial vision concluded phase 1 of the research design. The present reality was explored in the next phase by analysing the *context* of the study.

(ii) *Phase 2: context analysis*

The second phase of the research design relates to *context analysis* (see Table 2.1 for an overview of this phase). A researcher can only begin to think of ways to realise a vision after an extensive analysis of the present context in which teaching and learning take place. *Context* is the second major component of Zuber-Skerritt's process planning model and includes the perspectives of the internal and external stakeholders, an analysis of current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

(SWOT analysis) and reference to possible constraints and resources within the context (Zuber-Skerritt 2002:145).

The investigation into the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek was directed by the first three questions in Whitehead's action plan for educational action research as mentioned in 2.2.3.2. The first two questions related to my concerns regarding the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek, and the reasons why these concerns were being researched. These questions were already addressed in chapter one (see 1.2 and 1.3) where the rationale/background for the research was explained and the main problem was stated as the *need for an innovative approach to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek*.

The third question of Whitehead – *What kind of evidence can be gathered to show my interest in the issue* – is addressed in Chapter 3. In an attempt to answer this question, I addressed the first two research questions and objectives identified in Chapter 1 (see 1.3 and 1.4, respectively). Perspectives on the *relevance* of Hellenistic Greek for theology studies were gained in order to emphasise why the teaching of this language is (still) important. The current teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek was also evaluated in order to reveal possible shortcomings that necessitate an innovative approach.

According to McNiff (2002a:12), “[i]n doing your research you are aiming to make a claim that you have improved practice, so you do need to produce validated evidence to support that claim”. Different methods and techniques were used to gather evidence and analyse the current teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek for the purpose of comparison at a later stage. An extensive literature review provided important theoretical perspectives. Valuable perspectives were also gained through interviews (semi-structured and conversational) and focus-group discussions with relevant participants (stakeholders) and through continuous self-reflection (see 3.3.2, 3.3.3 and 3.4.2).

Table 2.1 Research design: context analysis

CONTEXT ANALYSIS				
EDUCATIONAL ACTION RESEARCH – (Whitehead and McNiff)	RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS	OBJECTIVES	METHODS	CHAPTERS
<p>1. What concerning issue am I interested in researching?</p> <p>2. Why am I concerned and want to research this issue?</p> <p>3. What kind of evidence can be gathered to show my interest in this issue?</p>	<p>Research problem Need for an innovative approach to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.</p> <p>Research question 1 Why is the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek important and still relevant for theology studies?</p> <p>Research question 2 What are possible shortcomings relating to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek that necessitate innovation?</p>	<p>Objective 1 Gain perspectives on the relevance of the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.</p> <p>Objective 2 Reveal possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context to identify and confirm the need for an innovative approach to Hellenistic Greek.</p>	<p>1. Literature review</p> <p>2. Interviews (semi-structured and informal conversational) and focus-group discussions with role players.</p> <p>3. Reflective journal and reflexive critique.</p>	<p>1. Overview of study</p> <p>2. Research design and methodology</p> <p>3. Critical evaluation of Hellenistic Greek as classical language: history, relevance and possible shortcomings relating to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek.</p>

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

(iii) *Phase 3: adapted vision*

This phase of the research design refers back to *vision* as one of the major components in Zuber-Skerritt's process planning model. Although her model starts with formulating a vision, Zuber-Skerritt (2002:145) also emphasises the need to revisit that vision since it might be altered after the extensive analysis of the context.

An analysis of the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek revealed that my initial vision might be too broadly formulated. A critical evaluation of the relevance and possible shortcomings relating to Hellenistic Greek (see Chapter 3) became available at the end of phase two. However, these findings alone could not be implemented as a solution to the initial research problem. Innovative methods and their potential impact on the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek should also be explored before an innovative approach to enhance my own teaching can be structured (for possible future implementation).

My initial vision was therefore revisited and the following adapted vision was formulated for the purpose of this study:

I still want to change (renew) the students' attitude towards Greek by helping them to realise that the study of Hellenistic Greek is important and can be enjoyed. I therefore still want to challenge them *to follow me* with a renewed understanding for its relevance in order to gain a thorough comprehension of the language. More importantly, I still want *to walk behind them* to encourage them not to turn around or get discouraged with this ancient language and its academic challenges.

After exploring the context relating to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (phase 2), however, it dawned on me that the abovementioned part of my vision cannot be realised by only forcing students to attend all the contact sessions, revising the study material or moving away from content-centred teaching methods as described in my initial vision. My vision should include the development of a new (innovative) approach – addressing the shortcomings relating to the context of Hellenistic Greek and the students' need for understanding the

relevance of studying this language. Therefore, I have to explore, implement and evaluate innovative teaching possibilities (including the taxonomy of Fink mentioned in my initial vision) in order to determine specific directives that will help me in developing an innovative approach that can be applied to Hellenistic Greek.

Once I have the directives, I can align the aspects mentioned in the initial vision – revision of study material, use of electronic resources and the overall movement away from traditional teaching methods – with the innovative approach.

The adapted vision directed the next phase of the research design.

(iv) *Phase 4: practice*

“The methodology of action research means that you have to evaluate what you are doing [‘planning’ in this study]. You need to check constantly that what you are doing really is working.” (McNiff 2002a:8) This citation by McNiff implies active involvement in the planning process for the improvement of the current teaching situation of Hellenistic Greek. Phase four of the research design (see Table 2.2 for a summary) consists of two parts and is based on *practice*, the third major component of Zuber-Skerritt’s process planning model. This component includes objectives, key result areas, measurement of outcomes, an action plan (what, how, who, when) and evaluation (Zuber-Skerritt 2002:145).

The first part of this phase was directed by the third, fourth and fifth research questions identified in Chapter 1 (see 1.3). Answers to these questions also answered the first question of the fourth step in Whitehead’s action planning approach – *What can I do?* Different methods of data collection were used to accumulate information from student participants and about Fink’s taxonomy for significant learning and other innovative approaches. I studied literature to familiarise myself with the elements of Fink’s taxonomy and innovative approaches to the teaching and learning of classical languages (Greek in particular). Students were involved in semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions where I gathered relevant information from them.

Table 2.2 Research design: practice

PRACTICE				
EDUCATIONAL ACTION RESEARCH – (Whitehead and McNiff)	RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS	OBJECTIVES	METHODS	CHAPTERS
4a. What can I do?	<p>Research question 3 How can the integrated components of Fink’s taxonomy for significant learning make a contribution to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?</p> <p>Research question 4 What elements from other innovative approaches can make a contribution to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?</p> <p>Research question 5 What, according to students, are necessary to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?</p>	<p>Objective 3 Explore the applicability of Fink’s taxonomy, elements from other innovative approaches and student suggestions to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek.</p>	<p>1. Literature review</p> <p>2. Interviews (semi-structured and informal conversational) and focus-group discussions with role players.</p> <p>3. Reflective journal and reflexive critique.</p>	<p>4. Innovation in the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek: exploring Fink’s taxonomy, selected innovative approaches and student suggestions.</p>

PRACTICE				
EDUCATIONAL ACTION RESEARCH – (Whitehead and McNiff)	RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS	OBJECTIVES	METHODS	CHAPTERS
4b. What will I do?	<p>Research question 6 What directives characterise an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?</p>	<p>Objective 4 Compile directives and draft an action plan for the implementation of an innovative approach.</p> <p>Objective 5 Have the proposed set of directives and action plan validated by role players and other experts in the field of study.</p>	<p>1. Literature review</p> <p>2. Interviews (semi-structured and informal conversational) and focus-group discussions with role players.</p> <p>3. Reflective journal and reflexive critique.</p>	<p>5. Important directives and an action plan for implementing an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.</p>

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

The aim was to determine which elements and suggestions from these sources were applicable to and would enhance the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek. Information and perspectives gained in this part of phase four are presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

What directives characterise an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek? This sixth and final research question directed the second part of phase four. Answers to this question also provided answers to Whitehead's final question (in the context of this study) – *What will I do?* All the data collected during the exploration of Fink's taxonomy and other innovative suggestions were analysed. The aim of the analyses was to compile directives and draft an action plan to address the need for an innovative approach (objective 4 of the study). Finally, the compiled directives and action plan had to be validated by role players and other experts in the field of study (objective 5 of the study). The results for this final part of the research are presented in Chapter 5.

2.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Kaplan suggests the aim of methodology is “to help us understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself” (in Cohen *et al.* 2007:47). The second part of Chapter 2 relates to this process – the research methodology of the study – and focuses on the following aspects: sampling, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations and the quality assurance of the study.

2.3.1 Sampling

The quality of a piece of research stands or falls not only by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted. (Cohen *et al.* 2007:100)

It is clear from this citation that sampling plays a vital role in the methodology of any type of research. Two main methods of sampling are identified and described by Cohen *et al.* (2007:110), i.e. probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In *probability sampling* (also known as random sampling), equal chance determines members from the wider populations' inclusion or exclusion from a sample.

In *non-probability sampling* (also known as purposive/purposeful sampling), however, “some members of the wider population definitely will be excluded and others definitely included (i.e. every member of the wider population does not have an equal chance of being included in the sample)” (Cohen *et al.* 2007:110). The latter defines the approach to sampling in this study.

“The power and logic of purposeful sampling is that a few cases studied in depth yield many insights about the topic...” (McMillan and Schumacher 2001:401). In addition, the primary concern regarding purposeful (purposive) samples is not to be representative or to generalise their comments, but rather to obtain relevant and in-depth information from participants who are in a position to give it (Cohen *et al.* 2007:115). In this type of sampling, therefore, researchers build up samples by deliberately handpicking particular information-rich participants from the wider population for a specific purpose – to obtain sources with copious information to answer the research questions. Participants for purposive samples are selected because they share some defining characteristics that make them knowledgeable about the data needed for a study (Cohen *et al.* 2007:110, 401, 115; Niewenhuis 2007b:79).

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:404) are of the opinion that “[t]he insights generated from qualitative inquiry depend more on the information-richness of the cases and the analytical capabilities of the researcher than on the sample size”. The number of selected participants (sample size) do, however, relate to the purpose and research problem of the study, the method/s of data collection and the availability of information-rich participants (McMillan and Schumacher 2001:404). A combination of three strategies was employed to compile purposive samples for this study. Participants (students, lecturers and ministers) with knowledge and information on the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek were selected and sample sizes depended on the availability of participants from the different groups. A total of 67 students, seven lecturers (three teaching Greek, three New Testament and one Hebrew) and five ministers were involved. The majority of the participants’ mother tongue was Afrikaans. Five students were English speaking, with Sesotho as their

mother tongue. (More detail regarding the composition and size of different student samples, is presented towards the end of paragraph 2.3.2.1.)

2.3.1.1 Maximum variation sampling

This strategy is used to obtain different perceptions from a wide variety of participants to illuminate a research problem (McMillan and Schumacher 2001:402). Theology students, Greek and New Testament lecturers and ministers from the Dutch Reformed Church were subsequently involved to share their views on the relevance and teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.

2.3.1.2 Stratified purposive sampling

This strategy implies the selection of participants “according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question” (Niewenhuis 2007b:79). Participants for this study were selected from the different groups – students, lecturers and ministers – according to the following predetermined criteria:

Criteria for student participants included the following:

- Students who were registered for compulsory Hellenistic Greek (first- and second-year modules).
- Students who completed the compulsory Greek modules but were still busy with their theology studies (predominantly students in their third to sixth year of study).
- Students with an average, below-average and above-average performance in Greek. (Important remark: students were NOT divided into these categories according to their results. The students involved were known to me and I was able to interpret their feedback against the background of their results.)

Criteria for lecturer participants included the following:

- Current lecturers of Hellenistic Greek at the UFS.
- Previous lecturers of Hellenistic Greek at the UFS.
- Lecturers at the UFS involved with New Testament studies in general and New Testament exegesis specifically.

- The Hebrew lecturer who presents Hebrew to the same students as those involved with Greek.

Criteria for participants from the ministry included the following:

- Ministers from the Dutch Reformed Church (study of Greek was compulsory for them to be legitimated).
- Ministers who have been in ministry for at least two years.

2.3.1.3 *Convenience (accidental) sampling*

Convenience sampling – or, as it is sometimes called, accidental or opportunity sampling – involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained or those who happen to be available and accessible at the time. (Cohen *et al.* 2007:113-114)

As lecturer, I have access to especially the different groups of students and lecturers mentioned at 2.3.1.2 above. I lecture the compulsory Greek modules to theology students at the UFS and was therefore able to use available students from the different modules in my samples. I was also able to speak to available Greek and New Testament lecturers at regular intervals.

The samples I selected through maximum variation, stratified purposive and convenient sampling from students, lecturers and ministers yielded valuable information and insights regarding the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek. (This information and expressed views were used as evidence where relevant in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.)

2.3.2 Data collection

Data collection is a disciplined and focused exercise which Whitehead and McNiff (2006:64) compare to journalism. According to them, “[a]s a journalist your aim is to find out about a topic and present the facts as your own analysis”. Within action research, the aim of data collection can be described as the generation of *evidence* in order to support the claim of knowledge a researcher is making (Whitehead and

McNiff 2006:64, 72). In this study, I set out to collect data that were related to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (topic) and then used the acquired information (facts/evidence) to address the specified research problem, questions and objectives.

Non-empirical as well as empirical data were collected during this study. Non-empirical data collection was done through an extensive literature review. The aim was to obtain theoretical perspectives on the relevance and teaching and learning practices of Hellenistic Greek, and to explore a variety of innovative practices. Empirical data were collected from participants during semi-structured interviews, focus-group discussions and informal conversational interviews, as well as derived from my reflective journal entries. These methods are discussed subsequently.

2.3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions

A semi-structured interview is one of three types of interviews distinguished by Norton (2009:98) to be used with individuals or groups during action research. The other two types are structured (questions are predetermined – like a verbal form of questionnaire) and unstructured (a few general questions followed by a fundamental question in order to get information from participants about their world and lived experience).

According to Norton (2009:98), the purpose of research plays a vital role in the type of interview being used. Semi-structured interviews are “useful in their own right as a way of gathering data on your respondents’ thoughts and perceptions of the topic in question” (Norton 2009:99). Since one of the purposes of this study was to gain insight in the views and perspectives of selected students and lecturers on the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek, semi-structured interviews seemed an appropriate method of data collection. During this interview type, a set of predetermined questions was used – as is the case in structured interviews. Two important deviations from the structured interview, however, made the semi-structured interview more applicable to my study. The conducting of a semi-structured interview is more flexible and a researcher can make use of probes in addition to the open-ended questions to elicit further information, when necessary (Norton 2009:99).

Interviews are extremely time-consuming to carry out *and* to analyse. Norton (2009:98), therefore, suggests that a researcher “either choose to interview a manageable sample of her students on a one-to-one basis or conduct focus groups which are group interviews”.

Focus-group discussions are group interviews with selected participants who have certain characteristics relating to the topic in common. Data (perceptions on the defined area of interest), emerge from participants’ interaction with one another during discussions in a non-threatening environment. A large amount of interaction on a topic and the shaping and reshaping of opinions can be observed by a researcher in a limited period of time. The collected data yield evidence about similarities and differences in participants’ experiences and insights and are useful for capturing a whole range of opinions rather than a consensus (Norton 2009:98; Cohen *et al.* 2007:376-7; Krueger in Greeff 2005:299-300; Morgan, in Babbie and Mouton 2001:292).

“Careful planning with respect to participants, the environment and questions to be asked is crucial to conduct effective focus groups.” (Greeff 2005:303) Cohen *et al.* (2007:377) describe sampling as a major key to the success of focus-group discussions since the participants need to be the bearers of relevant information. Norton (2009:98) is of the opinion that a focus group should consist of between six to twelve people and Morgan (in Babbie and Mouton 2001:292) suggests a researcher should involve three to five groups. However, a researcher should choose enough participants to allow room for some of them being silent or to prevent individual dynamics outweighing the dynamics of the group (Morgan, in Babbie and Mouton 2001:292). For Greeff (2005:303) the provision of a well-focused environment in which the participants can deliberate on well-thought-out and open-ended questions is necessary to ensure the success of the focus-group discussion.

A combination of semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions was used to collect data from selected student participants. These students were directly involved in my research and I am trying to influence their learning. McNiff and Whitehead (2009:61) refer to them as *research participants*. A common procedure,

as described by Norton (2009:101), was employed during the interviews. At the beginning of the interviews/discussions, the participants (interviewees) were put at ease and the nature of the research and the reason for involving them were explained. I gave them a brief indication of how the collected data would be used and emphasised the fact that they were under no obligation to take part. I then proceeded to ask a set of (primarily open-ended) predetermined questions (the list of questions is presented just before 2.3.2.2) in a conversational manner and facilitated the discussions relating to these questions. With their permission I made notes during the interviews/discussions and also asked them to write down important remarks for referencing purposes if they felt comfortable to do that (Norton 2009:101; Greeff 2005:303; Babbie and Mouton 2001:293).

The student participants in this study were organised into the following four groups in accordance with the sampling strategies discussed in 2.3.1. All the groups were involved in semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions during 2010.

- i. Students who were registered for the first-year compulsory module of Hellenistic Greek. Twelve (out of a possible eighteen) students were part of this discussion towards the end of the year, i.e. towards the end of their second semester of Greek.
- ii. Students who were registered for the second-year compulsory module of Hellenistic Greek. Sixteen (out of a possible twenty-eight) students were involved in this discussion.
- iii. Twenty-eight third- to fifth-year theology students (out of a possible forty) in a combined New Testament exegesis module (the majority of these students had already completed their compulsory Greek modules).
- iv. Eleven (out of a possible twelve) theology students in their final year. The discussion was held during their last contact session prior to their final examination.

Discussions with the first three groups were conducted in Afrikaans. The fourth focus-group discussion was conducted in Afrikaans and English to afford five Sesotho-speaking students the opportunity to respond in English (even though they also felt at ease with Afrikaans).

The following set of predetermined questions was used to facilitate conversation during the interviews/discussions:

- Do you think knowledge of Hellenistic Greek is relevant/necessary/important for theology studies? Yes/No. Motivate.
- Do you have any comments and/or suggestions on the course content or format of study material?
- Do you have any comments and/or suggestions on the teaching method/s?
- What can change to enhance the teaching of Greek or to make it easier and more enjoyable? (current first- and second-year students)
- What would have made the learning of Greek easier and more enjoyable? (students who have completed their compulsory Greek)
- What was your experience(s) (positive and/or negative) of 'Greek 2010'?
- Do you make use of any auxiliary tools (computer programmes) when you work with Greek texts? Which tools/programmes?

(Findings relating to relevance are discussed in 3.3.2 and findings relating to shortcomings in 3.4.2. Suggestions relating to the enhancement of the teaching context are discussed in 4.5.)

2.3.2.2 *Informal conversational interviews*

In addition to the research participants (the students) referred to in the previous paragraph, McNiff and Whitehead (2009:61) also identify *critical friends and validation groups* as participants in action research. Researchers should invite their professional colleagues and people whose opinions they value, as critical friends. The constructive feedback and critical insights from these participants throughout the research process might help researchers to develop their practice and thinking about future practices (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:11, 18).

During my action research, I engaged in informal conversational interviews with 12 critical friends – seven lecturers (three teaching Greek, three New Testament and one Hebrew) and five ministers (see sampling at 2.3.1). Patton (in Cohen *et al.* 2007:352) describes an informal conversational interview as a type of interview where “[q]uestions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things; there is no predetermination of question topics or wording” (in

Cohen *et al.* 2007:353). The aim of my engagement with critical friends (interviewees) was to get their unique views on the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek. In spite of its informal nature, these interviews yielded valuable insights and evidence (see 3.3.3 for a discussion of their perspectives on the relevance of Greek).

According to McNiff and Whitehead (2005:11, 18), critical friends can also act as validators who scrutinise progress reports and evidence during action research on a continuous basis or when they are included in validation groups. The data I collected from lecturers and ministers could therefore also be used to ensure the credibility (internal validity) of this study, as discussed in 2.3.5.1. These participants were also involved in a final validation meeting where the compiled directives and action plan to address the need for an innovative approach were validated by role players (see 5.4.2).

2.3.2.3 *Continuous reflection on practice*

Rather than focus on an end point, you are more interested in what is happening here and now, primarily in the learning that is influencing what is happening. You need to record that action on a regular basis. (Whitehead and McNiff 2006:72)

This recording can be done through *reflection* that has to be part of any pedagogical action research cycle. Norton (2009:23) describes reflection as “essential if any enduring change is to be effected, because it involves some transformation from previously held assumptions to adopting a new framework”. Reflection provides information regarding a researcher’s own action and learning and participants’ reaction to adapted teaching. When reflecting, a researcher therefore focuses on his/her own actions (self-reflection) to indicate how learning has developed, as well as on episodes in practice where new learning might influence the learning of participants (Whitehead and McNiff 2006:64; McNiff 2002a:5). Norton (2009:55-56) attributes this dual reflection on the self and others to the interpretivist stance of action research and claims that “action researchers must be transparently reflective about their own practice and the implications for that practice that their research has shown”.

The keeping of a reflective journal on how action research evolves seems to be crucial during action research, according to Norton (2009:220). She views such a journal as a source of data during research and an aid in group settings where further insights are triggered and stimulated. In this study, reflection (aided by a frequent written record) and especially self-reflection (also called *reflexive critique*) compelled me to think carefully about my teaching, especially *why* and *how* I am teaching (McNiff and Whitehead 2009:39; Whitehead and McNiff 2006:68, 72).

2.3.3 Data analysis

Literature, semi-structured interviews, focus-group discussions and informal conversational interviews yielded huge amounts of information. A variety of perspectives held by authors and participants (students, lecturers and ministers) on aspects regarding the current and future teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek were revealed. A thorough analysis of all the data was needed before any conclusions could be drawn or recommendations be made. Norton (2009:116) emphasises the fact that a researcher plays a subjective part during the collection, analysis and interpretation of data and that this subjectivity must be acknowledged and not discarded. She also suggests the use of *qualitative analysis* in studies where “a richer understanding of the perspective of the person being researched is sought ... [or] ... more in-depth information is needed ..., such as the richer detail that can be obtained from open-ended questions” (Norton 2009:116). One method of qualitative analysis employed (and suggested) by Norton (2009:128) during action research, is *thematic analysis* – also described as *searching for patterns*. Thematic analysis provides a rich understanding of the topic being researched from the participant’s point of view.

The process of thematic analysis has variations, but in essence the important principles of reiteration and careful coding apply while it guides a researcher through seven stages (Norton 2009:117-123). A summary of these stages is presented in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Summary of the seven stages in Norton’s thematic analysis

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5	STAGE 6	STAGE 7
Immersion	Generating categories	Deleting categories	Merging categories	Checking themes	Linking themes	Presenting your findings
<p>Read through original notes made during data collection.</p> <p>Look for any general themes in the data.</p>	<p>Closer reading of notes and transcripts.</p> <p>Generate as many categories as possible from the collected information.</p> <p>Decide on the best description for each identified category and label it accordingly.</p> <p><i>(Categories and labels are affected by the values and belief system of the researcher).</i></p>	<p>Reduce the number of labelled categories to a manageable number (10-15).</p> <p>Delete/combine categories that overlap considerably with others.</p> <p>Delete/retain categories with only one or two examples in them.</p>	<p>Scrutinise the identified categories further.</p> <p>Collapse and/or merge as many of the categories as possible.</p> <p>Relabeling categories as themes.</p> <p><i>(Relabeling includes a refining or more accurate description of the original tentative themes that emerged during stage 1).</i></p>	<p>Read through original notes and transcripts again.</p> <p>Revise the themes if necessary.</p> <p><i>(Revision includes the use of more precise terminology or the addition of illustrative quotes as examples).</i></p>	<p>Make notes of any links or relationships between themes.</p> <p>Look for patterns that make sense and relate to the original research aim.</p> <p><i>(The links and relationships enable a researcher to give a convincing and coherent account of the information derived from the data).</i></p>	<p>Present an analytical narrative – a reasoned case in response to your original research question.</p> <p>Select examples from the data that relate to the different themes and strengthens the argument or case that is made in answering the research question/s.</p>

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

The method of thematic analysis summarised in Table 2.3 was slightly adapted and then employed to analyse the data collected during this study. A brief description of how the analysis was carried out is presented subsequently.

Stage 1: Initial themes

The first reading of the transcripts that were made during the different phases of empirical and non-empirical data collection was done with the formulated research questions (see 1.3) in mind. The following general themes with regard to Hellenistic Greek and its teaching were therefore self-evident: relevance (or irrelevance); current teaching and learning methods; possible shortcomings; innovative teaching and learning approaches; and, significant learning. All the collected data were initially sorted into tables according to these general themes. Niewenhuis (2007c:99) describes the sorting of data into predetermined themes (themes formulated in advance) as a *deductive* approach to data analysis. A discussion of the analysed data relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek and possible shortcomings in its teaching and learning context is presented in Chapter 3. Analysed data relating to innovative teaching and learning approaches are presented in Chapter 4.

Stage 2 to 4: Categories

The sorted data were read a few times in order to generate categories (related information and responses) within the predetermined themes. The categories were labelled by using keywords from the documented information and responses. Labels were added to the existing tables with responses. The final process in these stages was the merging (or deleting) of categories. This process of generating and labelling categories was of a more *inductive* nature with new categories emerging from the data (Niewenhuis 2007c:99).

Stage 5 to 6: Finalised themes

This is where the original process of thematic analysis was adapted slightly. The checking and linking of themes during stages 5 and 6, respectively, were supposed to be a revision of the themes identified during stage 1 after a first reading of the transcripts. In this study, where the initial themes were already related to the research questions, the *themes* in stages 5 and 6 referred to the grouping of the labelled categories within the initial themes. The different categories were studied

and evidence was derived from the collected data to support the claims of knowledge presented in stage 7.

Stage 7: Evidence

The presentation of the selected evidence (claims of knowledge) is part of stage 7 and concludes the thematic analysis of the data in this study. The analysed data are presented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 as evidence where applicable.

2.3.4 Ethical considerations

According to Kelly (in Cohen *et al.* 2007:69), action research is the area in qualitative studies where one's ethical antenna needs to be especially sensitive. Researchers have to observe ethical conduct at all times by respecting themselves (ensuring that they are competent to undertake the research) and by treating participants in their study in such a way as to preserve their dignity as human beings (McNiff and Whitehead 2009:95; Cohen *et al.* 2007:58).

In this study, ethical conduct was observed by adhering to three fundamental principles of ethical research as identified by Norton (2009:181) and complemented by other authors, i.e. informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and protection from harm (McNiff and Whitehead 2009:95).

2.3.4.1 Informed consent

Diener and Crandall (in Cohen *et al.* 2007:52) define informed consent as “the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions”. Norton (2009:181) states that this principle of informed consent consists of two equally important elements: “‘consent’, which means asking people to agree to take part without any coercion; and ‘informed’, which means giving them sufficient information on which to make a realistic judgement [sic] on the possible consequences of taking part”. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:65), consent can either be ensured in writing or implied through affirmative responses, completion of questionnaires and participation in interviews. One benefit of implied consent is the absence of any record of the participants' names.

Students, lecturers and ministers were not coerced to participate in this study. They were provided with the necessary information to make a realistic and knowledgeable decision whether to take part or not. The participants were not requested to sign a consent form but were able to *imply* their consent (give their permission) through voluntary participation and affirmative responses.

2.3.4.2 *Privacy (anonymity and confidentiality)*

Singleton (in Strydom 2005:61) explains the right to privacy as “the individual’s right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour will be revealed”. Both *anonymity* and *confidentiality* provide ways of protecting privacy.

In a literal sense, *anonymity* implies that participants remain nameless. A researcher conceals their identity in all research findings by not using their names or any other personal means of identification. Since all the participants who gave their consent to take part in this study were known to me, anonymity was virtually non-existent. Their right to privacy was therefore secured through confidentiality (Norton 2009:185; Cohen *et al.* 2007:64; Babbie and Mouton 2001:65).

Confidentiality implies that “although researchers know who has provided the information or are able to identify participants from the information given, they will in no way make the connection known publicly” (Cohen *et al.* 2007:65). To ensure the confidentiality of participants, the findings of this study were presented in such a way that specific perceptions and/or critique could not be traced to their source.

2.3.4.3 *Protection from harm*

Norton (2009:187-188) highlights the fact that an inevitable tension exists in educational research between researching students’ learning in order to improve it and actually interfering with this learning without any guarantees of improvement. Researchers therefore have to protect their participants from psychological harm relating to any effects on self-esteem and academic confidence due to this tension. Protection from harm also implies not giving in to deception, i.e. lying to participants about their involvement in research (Cohen *et al.* 2007:66). In order not to compromise good relationships, I was open and frank with all the participants about

my research. They were continuously informed of the fact that they form part of my research and I ensured that teaching and learning still took place.

From this discussion on ethical issues, it is clear that so-called 'procedural ethics' are not enough in action research. Ethical considerations have to be evident throughout the entire research process. A researcher has to consider how to approach research objectives, contents, methods, reporting and outcomes in an ethically correct manner (Cohen *et al.* 2007:51; Strydom 2005:63).

2.3.5 Quality assurance of the study: trustworthiness

Evaluating your research is to do with establishing its validity, that is, the extent to which what you say is credible and trustworthy. It is about establishing the reasons why people should believe you. (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:91)

According to Niewenhuis (2007c:113), "[a]ssessing trustworthiness is the acid test of your data analysis, findings and conclusion". Lincoln and Guba (in Babbie and Mouton 2001:276; De Vos 2005:346) identify *trustworthiness* as the key criterion of sound qualitative research. They include credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in their exposition of trustworthiness and match these aspects to the conventional positivist paradigm – internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity, respectively. As researcher, I want people to trust my account of the findings in this research and therefore I deliberately applied a series of quality assurance measures in the study. According to Lincoln and Guba (in Babbie and Mouton 2001:276), the measures were based on the four elements of trustworthiness

2.3.5.1 Credibility (internal validity)

Credibility relates to internal validity and refers to the following question: "Is there compatibility between the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the respondents and those that are attributed to them?" (Babbie and Mouton 2001:277).

Credibility in this study is ensured through the following 'procedures':

- Prolonged engagement – the interviews and focus-group discussions continued until data saturation regarding the specific topic occurred.
- Peer debriefing – I engaged in frequent critical conversations with professional colleagues (critical friends, as discussed in 2.3.2.2). Although my colleague

responsible for the compulsory Hebrew modules was not directly involved with this study, he had a very good understanding of the nature of the research. He experienced similar problems when lecturing Hebrew to the same students who were participants in this study. I used him (and my other critical friends) at regular intervals as a soundboard to discuss and reflect on my research.

- Member checks – summarised feedback was given to the participants after analysing the data from the interviews and focus-group discussions. The aim of this action was to reveal possible errors in my interpretation and to provide participants with an opportunity to add additional information (Babbie and Mouton 2001:277).
- Reflection – a regular written record (reflective journal) and especially self-reflection (reflexive critique), yielded evidence of my nearly five-year-long involvement as a tutor and lecturer in the environment (the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek) that was researched.

In addition to the abovementioned remarks on credibility McNiff and Whitehead (2009:26) also emphasise personal validity. According to them the “validity of your claim is in the extent to which you have realised your values, or at least tried”. The claims to knowledge made in Chapter 5 (compiled directives and action plan for the implementation of an innovative approach) were evaluated against my own values regarding teaching and learning and the outcomes of this study mentioned in 1.2.

2.3.5.2 Transferability (external validity)

Transferability relates to the application (or non-application) of specific findings to other contexts or with other participants (Babbie and Mouton 2001:277). Regarding qualitative studies, Babbie and Mouton (2001:277) further state that “the obligation for demonstrating transferability rests on those who wish to apply it to the receiving context (the reader of the study)”. The observations made in this study were defined by the specific teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek. It can therefore not be assumed that knowledge and results derived from this study have automatic relevance to other teaching contexts or modules. (The responsibility to apply findings to another context lies with the researcher/lecturer who makes the transfer and not with the initial researcher.) I do however believe that the findings of this study are

transferable to other classical and/or ancient languages such as Latin and Hebrew – if the relevant lecturers adapt it for their specific circumstances.

2.3.5.3 *Dependability (reliability)*

According to Niewenhuis (2007c:113), a researcher has confidence in his/her results if data from the different sources that were consulted, point to the same (or similar) conclusions. To ensure dependability researchers have to present evidence that if their research “were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents (subjects) in the same (or a similar) context, its findings would be similar” (Babbie and Mouton 2001:278). In addition to this view, Cohen *et al.* (2007:149) regard reliability in qualitative research as “a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched, i.e. a degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage”.

One way to contribute to the dependability of a study, according to Lincoln and Guba (in Babbie and Mouton 2001:278), is through an inquiry audit. According to them, an auditor can attest to the dependability of an inquiry after examining “documentation of critical incidents (documents and interview notes) and a running account of the process of the inquiry (such as the investigator’s daily journal)”. Instead of having one independent inquiry auditor at the end, I used my critical friends as ‘auditors’ throughout the research process. I discussed some of my findings from literature with them, but mainly used them as soundboards during my reflection on interviews. This gave them the opportunity to ‘examine’ my interview notes and the responses from interviewees.

The inquiry auditor also examines the product – the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations – and attests that it is supported by data and is internally coherent ... (Guba and Lincoln, in Babbie and Mouton 2001:278)

This process also establishes the confirmability of an inquiry. Again, instead of using an independent auditor, I involved my critical friends and other role players in a validation meeting at the end of my study. I presented my data, findings and

recommendations to them for validation. The results of this validation meeting are presented in 5.4.3.

According to Guba and Lincoln (in Babbie and Mouton 2001:278), a study cannot be credible unless it is dependable. They feel that if a researcher can present evidence of credibility, this evidence will also be sufficient to prove dependability. A thorough claim of credibility in this study was made in 2.3.5.1. In addition, a properly managed inquiry audit can be used to determine dependability and confirmability simultaneously (Guba and Lincoln, in Babbie and Mouton 2001:278).

2.3.5.4 *Confirmability (objectivity)*

In qualitative research, and especially in studies with a strong interpretive character (like this study), the potential danger exists that a researcher can allow his/her own preconceptions, preferences and agenda to direct the study (Cohen *et al.* 2007:469). Maykut and Morehouse (1994:20) are of the opinion that a researcher in a qualitative study should be a perspectival observer of the world. According to them, “[p]erspectival [observance] has the added advantage of being inclusive of differing perspectives, including but not limited to the researchers’ perspective”. According to De Vos (2005:347):

Lincoln and Guba stress the need to ask whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another. By doing so, they remove evaluation from some inherent characteristic of the researcher (objectivity) and place it squarely on the data.

The confirmability of a study is therefore determined by the extent to which specific findings (and not the biases of the researcher) can be viewed as the product of the study’s focus (Babbie and Mouton 2001:278).

Chenail (1995:1 of 8) advocates a *spirit of openness* when researchers present their findings. Researchers have to be open about what they are going to do and have to make details available about their design and research process, when requested. According to Chenail (1995:2 of 8), “openness entails involving ‘the other’ in your research. The other can be participants in your study and they can also be your colleagues who comment on and who read your work”. In this study, the participants and colleagues referred to by Chenail were the students and critical friends,

respectively. Babbie and Mouton (2001:278) again refer to the notion of an inquiry audit introduced by Lincoln and Guba. During confirmability an adequate audit trail including different types of data must be available for an auditor to determine if the conclusions, interpretations, and recommendations can be traced to their specific sources.

As researcher, I ensured confirmability by adhering to the principle of openness and allowing an inquiry audit of my research findings. The rationale behind this study and the methodology employed during the research was discussed earlier in this chapter. When I involved participants, I made sure they understood the aim of the study and the purpose for their involvement by explaining it to them at the beginning of the focus-group discussions (see reference to *common procedure* in 2.3.2.1). Critical friends were also involved during informal conversational interviews at regular intervals. I shared information with them and allowed them to comment on aspects relating to my study. The students, critical friends and other role players were involved in a final validation meeting (see discussion in previous paragraph and also in 5.4.2).

2.4 CONCLUSION

The research design, theoretical framework and methodology that directed the study were presented in this chapter. Subsequent chapters, organised according to the design summarised in Tables 2.1 and 2.2, address the specified research problem, questions and objectives (see 1.3 and 1.4). Throughout the study the principles of sampling, data collection and analysis, ethical consideration and quality assurance, described in this chapter, were adhered to.

The need for an innovative approach to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek, and the concerns that resulted in this need (as presented in 1.2 and 1.3), can now be addressed. Evidence relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek and possible shortcomings in its teaching and learning context is presented in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF HELLENISTIC GREEK AS CLASSICAL LANGUAGE: HISTORY, RELEVANCE AND POSSIBLE SHORTCOMINGS RELATING TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTEXT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The *context* in which the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek takes place is explored in this chapter (see Table 2.1 and phase 2 of the research design in 2.2.3.2). The aim of this exploration is to address the third question of Whitehead relating to educational action research – *What kind of evidence can be gathered to show my interest in the issue* – the ‘issue’ being the need for an innovative approach to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.

The chapter comprises three main sections. A historical overview of Hellenistic Greek is presented in the first, while subsequent sections address the first two research questions of this study, respectively. The first question (second section) relates to the importance and relevance of Hellenistic Greek for theology studies and the second question (third section) to possible shortcomings in respect of the teaching and learning context of the language.

3.2 THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF HELLENISTIC GREEK

Wenham (1965:16) describes Greek as a “living language with an immensely long history”. An overview of this extended history is presented in this section. The history and development of the original Greek language, the Greek of the Koiné period and the Greek of the New Testament are discussed briefly.

3.2.1 Historical overview

The history of this language, which became unified and universalised several centuries before the Christian era, extends back to about 1 500 B.C. (Dana and Mantey 1957:5). The Greek language is one of the best-documented languages of the world with direct knowledge thereof over a time span of some 3 000 years

(Palmer 1980:3). In the course of this long history, the language endured many natural changes, but has recognisably been one language for this entire period. Modern Greek is still written and spoken by millions of people today in Greece itself and across the world (Duff 2008:9; Countryman 1993:1; Wenham 1965:16).

Languages are divided into families and the Greek language belongs to the Indo-European family due to certain peculiarities it shares with other languages of the family. The Indo-European family comprises languages from seven branches, stretching from Celtic in Western Europe to the Indo-Aryan languages of present-day India. Greek is the second-oldest branch within this language family, after the Indian branch with Sanskrit as its chief known dialect (Dana and Mantey 1957:1-3; Palmer 1980:3-4). Greek is, according to Jay (1979:1), “the language spoken and written in ancient times by the Hellenes, the inhabitants of that part of the Balkan Peninsula which is modern Greece, and by Greek settlers in other parts of the Mediterranean area”. This ancient Indo-European language of the Hellenes was preserved in the form of a number of dialects from which a hypothetical ancestral form, ‘Proto-Greek’, was devised (Palmer 1980:3).

According to Palmer (1980:27), an alphabetic inscription written on an Attic jug (dated to c. 725 B.C.) was believed to be the oldest written record in the Greek language. In 1952, however, Michael Ventris and John Chadwick deciphered the Linear B script identified by Evans and showed that the clay tablets thus inscribed were written in an early form of Greek (Palmer 1980:27). During the last decade of the nineteenth century, Evans discovered and described a family of scripts that was in use during the second millennium B.C. Evans set up an Aegean system of hieroglyphs that could be distinguished from the Egyptian and the Hittite. The conventionalised pictographs (hieroglyphs) of the Aegean system were complemented by two stages of a linear script, i.e. *Linear A* and *Linear B*. These linear scripts were characterised by the reduction of the ‘pictures’ to simple linear outlines with quasi-alphabetic values. Linear B was long thought to have been confined to the site of Knossos, whilst hieroglyphs and the Linear A stages are widely diffused through Crete and attest specifically in the earliest palace at Phaistos. However, excavation campaigns early in the twentieth century confirmed that Linear B was widespread in the Mycenaean Greek mainland. These excavation campaigns

yielded specimens with Linear B inscriptions in Orchomenos (in Boeotia), Mycenae and Tiryns and later (1921) also in a storeroom at Thebes. Linear B tablets were also found by Blegen in 1939 on a Greek mainland site at Pylos in the western Peloponnese (Palmer 1980:27-28, 54).

Dana and Mantey (1957:6-8) divide the development of Greek into the following five periods: i) the *Formative Period* (earliest stage of 'Linear B') – from the prehistoric origin of the race to the time of Homer (c. 900 B.C.); ii) the *Classical Period* – the centuries from Homer to the Alexandrian conquests (c. 330 B.C.); iii) the *Koiné Period* – from 330 B.C. to A.D. 330; iv) the *Byzantine Period* – from A.D. 330 to 1453; and, v) the *Modern Period* – from 1453 to the present.

This study focuses on the Greek of the *Koiné* period. Dana and Mantey (1957:6) describe it as the period of the 'common or universal Greek' – a period during which the Greek language was used freely and understood by people throughout the civilised world.

3.2.2 The Greek of the Koiné period

"But for the conquests of Alexander there might have been no κοινή [koiné] in the sense of a world-speech" (Robertson 1919:53). The campaigns of Alexander the Great (334-323 B.C.) therefore mark the beginning of the Koiné period. He expanded his father's Macedonian power base and united Greek and Persian, east and west, into one common world empire. Alexander, who had tutored under the famous Aristotle, had a wholesome regard for the Greek culture and wanted to expand the influence of the Greek language through his new empire. As a result, Greek gradually became the regular means of communication among the various nations surrounding the Eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. The use of Greek by non-Greeks, however, transformed the ancient Greek dialects and the once sophisticated Attic Greek into a more *common* language. The language of this period (the Koiné period) was consequently also known as 'common Greek' – the Greek word for 'common' is κοινή (koine). The Attic dialect and admixtures of Ionic, Doric, Aeolic and Northwest Greek formed the basic elements of this koiné dialect (Duff 2008:9; Stevens 1997:1; Caldwell and Gyles 1967:341; Nunn 1969:25; Chamberlain 1961:viii; Robertson 1919:53-4).

During the spreading of the Greek/Hellenistic language and culture (known as 'hellenisation') through his new empire, Alexander still respected the language and customs of all the conquered nations. Although the Greeks were drawn together by their religion, art and ever-present artistic and dramatic festivals, the elements from the Greek and oriental cultures mingled and acted upon one another. According to Palmer (1980:174), speech is acquired when people imitate those with whom they come into contact and intense communication tends to produce uniformity in their language. The intermingling of the soldiers from all parts of the Greek world in the armies of Alexander the Great contributed to a new vernacular at large. It was thus inevitable that the common or koiné dialect (ἡ κοινὴ διάλεκτος) – the spoken language of the common man – also became the international language or *lingua franca* of the civilised world (Duff 2008:9; Stevens 1997:1; Caldwell and Gyles 1967:358; Wenham 1965:17; Robertson 1919:53-54).

This common or koiné dialect, the new international *lingua franca*, was also referred to as 'Hellenistic' Greek (Moule 1959:2). According to Smyth (1920:4), Hellenistic Greek was viewed by some as a *form* of Koiné. The word 'Hellenistic', a name restricted to the language of the New Testament and of the Septuagint, is derived from the Greek word – Ἑλληνιστής – a term applied to people not of Greek birth but who had learned Greek ('Ἑλληνιστής relates to ἑλληνίζω – to speak Greek). However, Smyth (1920:4) also states that no accurate distinction can be drawn between Koiné and Hellenistic Greek. According to Moule (1959:1), both these labels (Koiné and Hellenistic) are habitually applied to the *lingua franca* of the civilised world during the rise of Alexander the Great and according to Duff (2008:9), 'Hellenistic Greek' is sometimes used by modern scholars when they refer to Koiné Greek. It is not the aim of this study to explore the exact meaning of 'Koiné' and 'Hellenistic', respectively or to confirm whether they should be used as synonyms or not. However, I do agree with the stated views of Moule and Duff. Therefore, when the term 'Hellenistic' is used, Koiné *and* Hellenistic Greek are implied.

Van Rensburg (1969:242) describes the Greek New Testament as one of the greatest literary works of the Hellenistic Age. The grammar and text of the New

Testament was also subjected to scrutiny in this study and for that reason, it is necessary to define the Greek (language) of the New Testament.

3.2.3 The Greek of the New Testament

“Het Grieks waarin de Bijbel (de uit het Hebreeuws vertaalde Septuaginta en het Nieuwe Testament) geschreven was verschilt hemelsbreed van dat uit de klassieke periode.” (Bartelink 1986:47) This difference, according to Bartelink (1986:47), can be attributed to the fact that the Greek language developed over a long period of time. Because of this development, the Attic language (with strong Ionic elements) that was used in contemporary (ancient) literature is not as evident in biblical writings. Other possible reasons for the difference between classical and biblical Greek relate to the influence of the Hebrew language and elements of eastern/Semitic origin and the fact that the authors of the New Testament also added their own style to the writings (Bartelink 1986:47, 48).

There was a time when the scholars who dealt with the original text of the New Testament regarded its Greek as a special Holy Ghost language, prepared under divine direction for the Scripture writers. (Dana and Mantey 1957:9)

Winer, however, made the supposition that the Greek of the New Testament was not a special Holy Ghost language, but the ordinary vernacular of the day, spoken throughout the Greco-Roman world (Dana and Mantey 1957:iv-v). Scholars such as Deissman (Germany), Moulton (England) and Robertson (America), built on the work of Winer, and also concluded that the Greek New Testament was written in the ordinary language of the masses. The language of the masses was, in fact, the common dialect of the time, i.e. Koiné/Hellenistic Greek (Duff 2008:9; Nunn 1969:26; Dana and Mantey 1957:9-10).

According to Palmer (1980:194), scholars also regarded the language of the New Testament as *sui generis*, a religious language that had evolved separately from the secular Koiné. This view is probably ascribed to the fact that the New Testament included literary Greek (the Gospels especially were unique in their literary form), as well as unusual forms due to Semitic influence. The new religion (Christianity), however, used the everyday language and not an artificial literary language to spread

its message. Studies of contemporary inscriptions and New Testament words found in papyri confirm the relation between the language of the New Testament and the language of the Greco-Roman world of the first century A.D. (Stevens 1997:1; Palmer 1980:194; Chamberlain 1961:viii).

This short exposition of the Greek language's development provides clear evidence that Greek is a language with a comprehensive history and in the words of Duff (2008:9), "a remarkable language". The question remains, however, whether the study of this language is still relevant today. The following section examines this question of relevance.

3.3 RELEVANCE OF HELLENISTIC GREEK

From my own experience as a lecturer, I know that students who have to register for Hellenistic Greek nowadays want to know *if* and especially *why* it is necessary to study this ancient language. Evidence to address these questions (and the first research question of the study – see 1.3) was collected from literature and selected student participants, lecturers and ministers (see sampling in 2.3.1). The collected evidence is presented in the first part of this section. This section concludes with a reflection on all the evidence relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek.

3.3.1 Evidence from literature

"To translate Plato by the language of later philosophers falsifies Plato's writings." (Ruck 1968:111) Dobson (1997:vii) echoes this sentiment of Ruck and states, "[i]f you wish to study the New Testament, it helps greatly if you are able to read it in the original language". In my opinion, these words of Dobson and Ruck can also be applied to Greek studies in general. If a lecturer or student wishes to study ancient Greek texts, it will be to their advantage if they can read it in the original language. Languages are all different communication systems and readers will only be able to determine the original intention and message of the author when they keep these differences in mind. Therefore, without exposure and a thorough introduction to the original text of the New Testament, the theology and Greek student will not be able to derive sensible information from the richness contained in these writings (Steyn 2001:381). Black (1998:11) confirms the relevance of Greek studies when he states,

“the depth of your preaching or teaching from the New Testament depends in large part on how well you handle the original Greek”. To be effective in their work (ministry), ministers need a solid understanding of New Testament Greek in order to simplify without becoming simplistic when they communicate the Word of God.

The relevance of Hellenistic Greek is closely related to the different needs and purposes for learning and using Greek. Steyn (2001:376-377) identifies the following needs in preparing students to work with this ancient language:

- The need to be able to handle theological reference works which contain Greek words and which base their explanations on the Greek text itself. Reference works include commentaries, dictionaries and computer resources.
- The need to be able to actually read, analyse and do exegesis of the Greek text of the Bible.
- The need to be able to read a range of Greek texts on different themes while searching for theological and ethical reflections.
- The need to be able to translate from Greek into a specific receptor language effectively.

In my opinion, these needs not only underline the relevance of Hellenistic Greek, but also stress the importance of a sound knowledge of basic Greek grammar and linguistics. From the elementary use of a reference work to the more complex task of analysing texts, knowledge of Greek (and especially Greek grammar) is evident. Goodwin (1963:iv) provides support for this view when he states that “there has been no change of opinion among classical scholars about the importance of grammar as a basis of all sound classical scholarship; the only change concerns the time and manner of studying grammar and the importance to be given to different parts of the subject”.

The relevance of teaching and learning Hellenistic Greek is clear from the range of evidence derived from literature and referred to in the preceding paragraphs. It is, however, doubtful that literature about Hellenistic Greek will argue against its relevance. The views of other participants in this study (see sampling at 2.3.1) on the relevance (or irrelevance) of Hellenistic Greek were therefore also important.

3.3.2 Evidence from interviews and focus-group discussions with students

Students were asked during the semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions to reflect, among other things, on the question if Greek (the study of Greek) is relevant and/or necessary for theology studies. I documented the responses the students made during the focus-group discussions and analysed them according to the method (thematic analysis) discussed in 2.3.3. The categories that were generated during this analysis and selected responses illustrating and accentuating the different views held and expressed by student participants are presented in the tables below. (I translated the categories and responses from Afrikaans for this purpose.) Tables 3.1 and 3.2 reflect the evidence (expressed views) from focus group 1 (FG 1) and 2 (FG 2) that consisted of first- and second-year theology students, respectively. Focus group 3 (FG 3) consisted of third-, fourth- and fifth-year students and final-year students were members of focus group 4 (FG 4). The views of these two groups are presented in Tables 3.3 and 3.4, respectively. A discussion of the evidence (students' expressed views) relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek follows the tables.

Table 3.1 Selected responses from FG 1 relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek

Categories	Selected positive responses illustrative of the specific category
authentic text	. . . it is necessary to understand the original meaning of the authentic text
	. . . the ancient language brings another dimension to the text
knowledge and comprehension	. . . it enables you to make an in-depth study of the Bible
	. . . it assists you in the field of textual criticism
	. . . the knowledge of theology is embedded in classical Greek texts
exegesis and interpretation	. . . it is imperative to know authentic texts to make authoritative interpretations
	. . . it helps with exegesis
translations	. . . there are too many translations these days, and knowledge of Greek allows you to ask HOW and WHY texts were translated and also to give the correct meaning of texts
	. . . it enables you to think deeper and evaluate/compare different Bible translations and not only use a dictionary while translating

Categories	Selected negative responses illustrative of the specific category
preaching and application	. . . it is not really necessary for preaching

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

Table 3.2 Selected responses from FG 2 relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek

Categories	Selected positive responses illustrative of the specific category
authentic text	. . . it assists you in determining the true meaning of a text
knowledge and comprehension	. . . it helps with the reading of the Bible/Greek texts
	. . . enhances/broadens your knowledge and/or understanding of theology and the Bible
exegesis and interpretation	. . . it helps with exegesis since you can refer to the original texts in sermons
translations	. . . it enables you to translate and to explain words and grammatical/syntactical constructions
	. . . it equips you to differentiate between translations developed over years
	. . . it elicits differences in translation due to repeated/frequent rewriting/copying
Categories	Selected negative responses illustrative of the specific category
knowledge and comprehension	. . . the reading of Patristic literature does not make sense
preaching and application	. . . it will not help me with sermon preparation

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

Table 3.3 Selected responses from FG 3 relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek

Categories	Selected positive responses illustrative of the specific category
authentic text	. . . translations are interpretations of original texts and the amount of translations available in stores indicate that a single interpretation is not possible – a thorough knowledge of Greek is needed to evaluate different interpretations
knowledge and comprehension	. . . you work with the Bible and ancient texts in Greek and consequently need a knowledge of Greek
	. . . you cannot do thorough reading or have a profound understanding of the New Testament without good knowledge of the original text ('grondteks')

	<p>... it adds depth to the understanding of the New Testament and other early ecclesiastical texts</p> <p>... knowledge of semantics enables you to determine and use alternative meanings of words</p> <p>... a reader/translator of the text must be able to parse and explain words in order to get a correct/meaningful translation</p> <p>... you need a basic knowledge on how to use and understand resources – not to ‘just’ believe what other people say about text</p>
exegesis and interpretation	<p>... it unlocks/develops new insights for the correct interpretation of detail in texts</p> <p>... the knowledge of Greek is important for exegesis of the New Testament – especially deeper knowledge of style (figures of speech) and metaphors</p> <p>... it is necessary for the scholar in New Testament – I wish I could have used it in New Testament modules today</p> <p>... you cannot read commentaries nor do exegesis without knowledge of Greek and for that reason you cannot preach</p>
preaching and application	<p>... a minister can apply his knowledge of Greek in sermons</p> <p>... you cannot preach without Greek – period</p>
translations	<p>... it enables a minister to compare translations with the original text in order to see when and where they differ – this is important for sermon preparation</p> <p>... it helps to understand the original intention of the author since translations do not always convey this essential meaning</p>
Categories	Selected negative responses illustrative of the specific category
knowledge and comprehension	<p>... it only resulted in rote knowledge (‘kopkennis’) and not something I really understood</p> <p>... it is stupid to memorise paradigms, etc., if you forget them anyway</p> <p>... intensive Greek study is not needed, since students can use computer programmes and other resources to acquire detail information about a specific text</p> <p>... students in any case use computer programmes to acquire detail information, i.e. regarding morphological parsing (therefore ‘intensive’ Greek study is not needed)</p>
exegesis and interpretation	<p>... (but) it could have helped if I knew from my first year HOW I would use it in the future – in other words, WHY it is important</p>

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

Table 3.4 Selected responses from FG 4 relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek

Categories	Selected positive responses illustrative of the specific category
authentic text	. . . comprehension of the original text is important for ministry
knowledge and comprehension	. . . it is necessary for a better understanding of the text you are working with
	. . . comprehension of the Greek text of the Bible is important to determine the original meaning of a text
exegesis and interpretation	. . . it enables a minister to do good exegesis
	. . . important but I missed the link between Greek and theology studies when I was registered for Greek
preaching and application	. . . you use Greek during sermon preparation
translations	. . . it enables a minister to know the original translation of New Testament texts

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

3.3.2.1 *Unlocks the authentic text*

Students accentuated the importance of being able to read and comprehend the authentic text of the Bible (New Testament). They claimed that the ability to read the text in its original form enhances (will enhance) their understanding of the author’s original intention and the text’s true meaning or core message. These views were expressed during all the focus-group discussions. According to my interpretation, however, the reasons behind these views of students from the different groups were not the same. The students from FG 1 who were registered for their first year of compulsory Greek probably based their responses more on what they had heard and believed to be true, than on own experience (see Table 3.1). On the other hand, a final-year student from FG 4 specifically stated, “the comprehension of the original text is important for ministry” (see Table 3.4), and a student from FG 3 that “translations are interpretations of original texts and the amount of translations available in stores indicate that a single interpretation is not possible”. These latter responses imply reasoning based on personal experience.

3.3.2.2 *Enhances knowledge and comprehension*

The enhancement of knowledge and comprehension (understanding) was mentioned at regular intervals during all the interviews. Knowledge and comprehension of *what*, however, differed among the groups. Students from FG 1 and FG 2 were more

inclined to refer to knowledge regarding theology or the Bible in general (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2, respectively). Students from FG 3 and FG 4, however, were at a stage in their studies where they realised that knowledge regarding Greek and other aspects of the language itself are the key to a deeper understanding of the Bible and other theological subjects (see Tables 3.3 and 3.4, respectively). The collected responses provided evidence that the study of Greek was perceived as necessary to enhance students' knowledge of the following aspects: Greek grammar, authentic texts, style and syntax, semantics, textual criticism, translations, different resources and general history of the language.

A few negative responses were also received about the need and enhancement of knowledge relating to Hellenistic Greek. One student from FG 3 said the study of Hellenistic Greek was irrelevant because "it only resulted in 'kopkennis' and not something I really understood". A few other students, from the same focus group, argued (in the words of one of the interviewees) that "intensive Greek study is not needed, since students can use computer programmes and other resources to acquire detail information about a specific text" (see Table 3.3 for these two responses). These negative responses represent two important arguments (frequently) used by students against the relevance of Hellenistic Greek. I heard these arguments when I was a student of Greek myself, and I still hear them in my current position as lecturer. I reflect on these responses in 3.3.4.

3.3.2.3 Improves exegesis and interpretation

I believe the views expressed in this paragraph are closely connected to those relating to the authentic text and presented in 3.3.2.1. Students from all groups mentioned that the ability to read the authentic text has to be complemented by an in-depth study of the Bible through exegesis and interpretation. (Reading alone does not yield comprehension of the content being read.) Since the interviews were semi-structured, I added probes to the initial question of relevance and asked them to define or explain the process of exegesis. These probes yet again revealed some differences in the reasoning behind the expressed views. Students from FG 1 were not really able to explain the process of exegesis. According to them, they just heard from senior students that "Greek helps with exegesis". On the other hand, a student from FG 3 said the following: "It (exegesis) unlocks or develops new insights for the

correct interpretation of detail in texts” (see Table 3.3). The latter response (and similar responses from the same group) is much more focused. These responses attest to the fact that students from this group were already involved in the actual process of exegesis in their respective New Testament modules.

The following (key) responses by students from FG 3 underlined the relevance and the need for at least a basic knowledge of Greek for exegesis and interpretation: “the knowledge of Greek is important for exegesis of the New Testament – especially deeper knowledge of style (figures of speech) and metaphors” and “you cannot read commentaries nor do exegesis without knowledge of Greek and for that reason you cannot preach” (see Table 3.3).

3.3.2.4 *Enriches preaching and application*

The only negative responses in connection with preaching were made by one first- and one second-year student from FG 1 and FG 2, respectively (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). The students were of the opinion that the study of Greek was not really necessary for sermon preparation and/or preaching. When asked to elaborate on this view, both argued that an abundance of resources is available in English and they felt that the use of these resources would be sufficient during sermon preparation. In my opinion, the views of these two students were most probably isolated. The absence (in these two groups) of responses supporting the relevance of Greek for preaching, can almost certainly be viewed as a more natural and representative view, since these students were not yet involved in practical theology modules or requested to prepare sermons.

I referred to these negative responses during my interviews with FG 3 and FG 4. The students from these groups strongly disagreed with the perception that Greek is not necessary for preaching. A remark by one student in FG 3 justifies the use of ‘strongly’ in this statement. When responding to the question whether Greek is relevant for theology studies, the student simply answered: “you cannot preach without Greek – period” (see Table 3.3). In addition to this brief (but loaded) response, reference can again be made to a response already cited in the previous paragraph, i.e. “you cannot read commentaries or do exegesis without knowledge of Greek *and for that reason you cannot preach*” (emphasis added by the researcher).

3.3.2.5 *Underpins critical evaluation of translations*

During the focus-group discussion, a student from FG 3 said that “translations are interpretations of original texts and the amount of translations available in stores indicate that a single interpretation is not possible – a thorough knowledge of Greek is needed to evaluate different interpretations” (see Table 3.3 – *authentic text*). The view of this student might not represent a scientific view or formal definition of translation studies, but I believe it gives an indication of the challenge theology students (and future ministers) face. Members from their congregation would most likely ask them at some stage which translation is more correct or closer to the original text and they would need an answer based on facts and not only on personal preference.

Students from FG 2 highlighted the fact that numerous translations developed over the years and that differences in these translations might be due to frequent rewriting and/or copying of the original texts (see Table 3.2). A response from FG 1 not only refers to the abundance of available translations, but also provides a solution – “there are too many translations these days, and knowledge of Greek allows you to ask *how* and *why* texts were translated and also to give the correct meaning of the texts” (see Table 3.1). Thus, according to the student participants in this study, a sound knowledge of Greek provides assistance in the critical evaluation of existing translations and interpretations in order to compare them to the original text of the Greek New Testament.

3.3.3 Evidence from informal conversational interviews with lecturers and ministers

All the lecturers and ministers who were involved in the informal conversational interviews regarded the study of Greek as relevant to theology studies and the ministry. Their positive responses, however, came from different perspectives – two from an academic (scholarly) and one from a more practical (actual practice) perspective.

The Greek and New Testament lecturers responded from an academic point of view, but expressed slightly different outcomes for the teaching and learning of Hellenistic

Greek. As classicists, the lecturers involved with the teaching of Greek itself regard the learning of huge quantities of foundational knowledge (grammar, paradigms, syntax and vocabulary) as very important and they put a high premium on the reading of large portions of Greek texts. The New Testament lecturers deemed the study of Hellenistic Greek as equally important. However, their focus was on the *application* of Greek knowledge in order to interpret and discuss texts from the Greek New Testament during exegesis critically.

The ministers in no way disregarded the scholarly importance of Hellenistic Greek, but emphasised the fact that their (academic) knowledge of Greek was not the only (or main) 'resource' they employed in practice. They indicated that they consulted several resources such as dictionaries, lexicons, commentaries and computer programmes during sermon preparation and the interpretation of Biblical (and other theological) texts. There is however, a very subtle relation between the use of only Greek knowledge and the use of various other resources. Ministers also indicated that they rely on their basic and general knowledge of Greek grammar, linguistic, vocabulary, etc. to assist them when they consult other resources. Even though they were not able to recite paradigms or specific rules anymore, they were able to understand references relating to Greek aspects in resources. This perspective from someone in practice came as a proverbial punch line. In my opinion, it confirms the need for *balance* between overemphasising academic knowledge and learning how to apply necessary (minimum/basic) knowledge during the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.

I reflect on all the evidence relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek in the following paragraph before I present evidence relating to the teaching and learning context of the language.

3.3.4 Reflection on presented evidence relating to the relevance (or irrelevance) of Hellenistic Greek for theology studies

To conclude at this stage by stating that the study of Hellenistic Greek is irrelevant for theology studies will not be a true reflection of the evidence presented in the previous paragraphs. An important question to be answered regarding the relevance of Hellenistic Greek is *why* do we learn the language? According to Steyn (2001:367),

languages are learnt for a particular purpose such as communication with people and/or literature from a specific culture. Perspectives from literature (see 3.3.1) and the variety of responses from students, lecturers and ministers (see 3.3.2 and 3.3.3, respectively) in this study, however, provided additional answers and largely confirmed the relevance and necessity of Hellenistic Greek for theology studies and for a better understanding of the New Testament.

Even the students who agreed with a response made during FG 4 – “I missed the link between Greek and theology studies when I was registered for Greek” (see Table 3.4) – did not doubt the relevance of Hellenistic Greek. In my opinion, a student who states, “I wish I could have used it in New Testament exegesis today,” or, “It could have helped if I knew from my first year WHY it is important” (see Table 3.3 for both responses) acknowledges the relevance of Hellenistic Greek, while admitting a lack of ability to apply and integrate their knowledge of the language efficiently to other fields of study.

The importance of being able to read and derive meaning from the Biblical texts in the original (authentic) language was pointed out in literature and echoed by participants. The Greek language has a comprehensive history of some 3 000 years (see 3.2). A thorough understanding of the context and circumstances in which this language (and especially the language of the New Testament – the koiné) originated, assists students in the interpretation of authentic texts. Confirmation from literature for the importance of knowledge relating to authentic texts came from Dobson (1997:viii). According to Dobson, “[i]f you wish to study the New Testament, it helps greatly if you are able to read it in the original language”.

The summary of responses in Table 3.4 clearly indicates that the more senior students evaluated the relevance of Hellenistic Greek from the viewpoint of the ministry. They emphasised how vital the correct understanding and interpretation of texts are for good exegesis and sermon preparation. Towards the end of their theology studies, and especially during modules on New Testament exegesis, they progressively came under the impression that a thorough study of Hellenistic Greek is the key to the unlocking of much-needed comprehension. There is a strong concordance between the perspectives of the students and the view expressed by

Black (1998:11), and referred to in 3.3.1, where he states that “the depth of your preaching or teaching from the New Testament depends in large part on how well you handle the original Greek”.

The range of evidence supporting the relevance of Hellenistic Greek also emphasises the importance of acquiring a basic knowledge of Greek and the skills to apply this knowledge. Students and ministers contributed to a shared view that a better understanding of grammar results in better translations and interpretation of texts, the efficient use of resources, and eventually influences exegesis and sermon preparation. The literature review also provided confirmation of the importance of foundational knowledge of Greek. According to Goodwin (1963:iv), “there has been no change of opinion among classical scholars about the importance of grammar as a basis of all sound classical scholarship; the only change concerns the time and manner of studying grammar and the importance to be given to different parts of the subject”. The latter part of this citation suggests that the contents of modules and the way in which Hellenistic Greek is taught to students (methodology) must also enhance their notion of its relevance.

Therefore, even though literature and participants provide strong support for arguments in favour of the relevance of the study of Hellenistic Greek for theology studies and ministry, an evaluation of its teaching context is necessary to identify possible shortcomings.

3.4 POSSIBLE SHORTCOMINGS RELATING TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTEXT OF HELLENISTIC GREEK

Evidence relating to possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek was needed to address the second research question (see 1.3) and to confirm the need for an innovative teaching approach. The literature review, interviews and focus-group discussions yielded important evidence, which is presented in this section. A reflection on all the relevant findings concludes the section.

3.4.1 Evidence from literature

A review of literature revealed some shortcomings with regard to Hellenistic Greek and its teaching context. These shortcomings are presented under the following headings: *An ancient and foreign language*; *Current teaching and learning approaches*; *Different objectives of teaching and learning approaches*; *Textbooks and auxiliary tools*; and *Context and time*.

3.4.1.1 An ancient and foreign language

According to Gorry (2006/2007:155), “the obstacles to understanding Greek were not only its complex forms and convoluted syntax, but also a separation of nature and spirit between us and the Greeks of ancient times”. Even though people across the world are still writing and speaking Greek, it is not exactly the same as the language written down during the Koiné period, more than 2 000 years ago.

“The mingling of representatives from all the Greek tribes in Alexander’s army matured the development of a common Greek, and the wide introduction of Greek culture under his direction distributed the common tongue throughout the Macedonian empire.” (Dana and Mantey 1957:8) The language of the Koiné period was the common tongue at that point in history and did not represent only one culture and/or dialect. The New Testament was written in this common and ordinary Greek that was also used by the inhabitants of Palestine (Palmer 1980:194; Nunn 1969:27). Consequently, there are more than a few centuries and one culture between the current readers of the texts and the speakers/writers who composed the texts.

Students must be able to relate to what they read. They must be able to understand the relevance and draw meaning from the texts for their own lives (Masciantonio 1985:29). Thus, students have to overcome the unique grammatical difficulties of this ancient language and, in addition, have to bridge the cultural and linguistic gap in order to interpret a text according to its specific context.

Hellenistic Greek is not only an ancient language – it is also a foreign language, especially in our South African context. Students at tertiary level have no prior grammatical knowledge of the language and are overwhelmed by its general orthography and style. According to Jordaan (2004:234), students have to cope with

a new alphabet and terminology as well as a strange vocabulary and syntax. To add to this, they sometimes have to master this new and foreign language in another tongue than their mother tongue. Even if Greek is taught to Afrikaans students in Afrikaans, they are still faced with the fact that by far the majority of resources (commentaries and computer programmes) are only available in English (see also 3.4.1.4).

3.4.1.2 *Current teaching and learning approaches*

During the literature review for this study, it became clear that different teaching and learning methods or approaches are currently in use at tertiary institutions. Two approaches and some of the shortcomings experienced by lecturers and students when involved in them are presented and illuminated succinctly in this paragraph.

Steyn (2001:375), in my opinion, reaches the core of the problem regarding *deductive and inductive approaches* when he asks, “Where should we start? Should we follow the ways of the past and teach Greek in Africa [today] mainly by means of a deductive approach? Or should we follow some of the more recent trends, turning towards an inductive approach? What should follow first – the structure, syntax and grammar of the language or exposure to the reading and (limited) comprehension of the texts?” According to Whale (1994:596), deductive methods aim to teach almost the entire language before the student is introduced to the reading of actual New Testament texts. On the other hand, by means of inductive methods the student works directly from the Greek text from the very beginning.

Inductive and deductive approaches have been on the two ends of the teaching continuum for decades. Bennett and Bristol (1917:240) referred to these approaches as early as 1917 when they said that books for beginners in Greek represented two distinct methods. The first, a deductive method, aims at presenting significant grammar material during the first part of a year, but the *use* of the selected grammar is delayed. The grammar is taught to prepare students for the reading of an authentic text (the *Anabasis*) later, towards the end of the year. The second, and more inductive method, involves the use of grammar from the outset. The lessons contain all the vocabulary and grammar required for the reading and translation of Greek sentences in the specific lesson (Bennett and Bristol 1917:240-241).

More recently, Jordaan (2004:234) has also identified these methods as two of the systems used at tertiary institutions. He refers to them as the 'traditional grammar education system' (deductive) and the 'learning by experience approach' (inductive). In the former approach, the emphasis is placed on the teaching of grammar and paradigms by a competent lecturer or 'expert', before the focus eventually shifts to the reading of New Testament Greek passages. This deductive approach postpones the application of grammar by students until they begin to read Greek texts. Students experience this approach as de-motivating. They learn endless lists of vocabulary and paradigms, but feel as if they are never going to get to the reading and understanding of texts (Bennett and Bristol 1917:241; Whale 1994:596). In the 'learning by experience approach', the students start to read almost as soon as they know the alphabet. The focus is therefore on reading *and* learning while students are reading texts (Jordaan 2004:234).

With regard to the debate surrounding these methods, Whale (1994:596-597) presents the following two questions to the teacher of Greek: "firstly, where is the point of balance between starting to read the New Testament text too early, and leaving it too late; and secondly, how should the syntax teaching be staged so that what is more helpful for reading is included in a course before less essential material?" Steyn (2001:376) argues that there should be a constant interaction between these deductive and inductive approaches. In my opinion, student learning is not enhanced if a lecturer primarily uses only one of these methods during the teaching of Greek. Students need to read the original text as early as possible but with maximum understanding and less frustration (Whale 1994:596; Steyn 2001:375-376).

3.4.1.3 Different objectives of teaching and learning approaches

The following comments of three authors (Ruck 1968, Anhalt 2006 and Anderson 2004) reflect possible shortcomings relating to the different objectives for the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.

According to Ruck (1968:iii, v),

[t]here is enough Greek literature written by Greek authors. What we want is not to translate or decipher it, but to read it, to let it speak to us directly ... Without this exposure to extensive passages of real Greek, the student would be in the same position as the high-school student who, although he speaks English, cannot read Shakespeare.

It is clear that 'reading' here implies the ability to comprehend the meaning of the text in the same way as when you read a text in your mother tongue. In Ruck's approach to the teaching of Greek, students will not be asked to give English for Greek or Greek for English or merely to translate texts. They have to complete comprehension exercises by answering Greek questions in Greek. He believes that a student can better display his understanding by reacting in Greek and that this action isolate and reinforce the basic patterns and vocabulary of the language (Ruck 1968:iv-v).

I find it difficult to share the abovementioned view of Ruck. The objective of the teaching of Hellenistic Greek (especially to theology students) cannot be to answer Greek comprehension questions in Greek. The students have to interpret the meaning of texts and critically evaluate differences in translations. In order to do this, they need skills in the morphological, syntactical and semantic analysis of texts.

On the other hand, problems may also arise when the main objective of Greek study is to translate. Anderson (2004:433) confirms this when he states, "[a]lthough the students were translating well, few could describe the function of any word or clause in a sentence they had just translated (flawlessly!)". Anhalt (2006:45) shares this view of Anderson. If translation is the only aim, students will write out fluid Afrikaans/English translations of the assigned passages, or even worse, they will work from corrected translations obtained from previous students. These translations are frequently nothing more than paraphrases with insufficient attention to word formations or grammatical rules. To aggravate the situation even further, the students use their *translations* and not an analysis of the Greek text, when they complete assignments or do revision for tests. It is not possible to discuss any textual issues in this manner, since the translations often only reflect what the students expected the

text to say and not an in-depth consideration of what it actually does say (Anhalt 2006:45; Anderson 2004:433).

In my opinion, objectives for the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek have to include reference to the ability to read, translate *and* analyse the texts, to avoid similar shortcomings as those mentioned by Anderson and Anhalt in this paragraph.

3.4.1.4 *Textbooks and auxiliary tools*

The textbook in itself should not be an obstacle to overcome before learning of Greek can take place, but should assist the lecturer in eliciting the student's desire to understand its content right from the start (Ruck 1968:iv). Choosing the correct textbook is consequently an important decision to make. According to Jay (1979:ix), "there is a gap between those (textbooks) which are so elementary that they do not adequately equip the student to deal with the text of the New Testament itself, and those which take too much for granted in the reader". Textbooks can follow either a deductive or an inductive approach, with a few textbooks combining these approaches. Despite the gap mentioned by Jay, both kinds of textbooks can be used effectively as long as the textbook supports the needs and purposes for teaching or learning Greek.

Another potential shortcoming regarding the textbooks of Hellenistic Greek according to Jordaan (2004:237-238), is the fact that the majority are in English and written from a European/North American perspective. At this stage, no textbooks are available in any of the other South African indigenous languages except English and a bare minimum in Afrikaans. This means that the unique culture and context of potential learners are not taken into account.

Auxiliary tools include the more traditional (hard copy) reference books such as interlinear Greek English Bibles, commentaries, dictionaries, lexicons, additional grammar books for referencing, as well as the more contemporary electronic tools such as *BibleWorks*, *Libronix*, *e-sword* and the *Perseus digital library*.

Students need to be able to handle theological reference works, which means they have to learn *how* to use them effectively (Steyn 2001:376). If students are

introduced to auxiliary tools, especially the electronic tools, too early, they might lose their own analytical capabilities, since the computer is actually doing the analysis of the text (Jordaan 2004:238). I share this view of Jordaan that the use of auxiliary tools in the teaching process can be challenging. Students have to learn how to *interpret* the information derived from resources before resources can be integrated efficiently into the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (see values in 1.2).

3.4.1.5 *Context and time*

“Greek might not have changed much, but students had.” (Duff 2008:xi) Duff probably hits the proverbial nail on the head with this comment. Ancient Greek developed into a modern language, but it is still the *ancient* language being taught to modern students. Ruck (1968:iii) claims that contemporary students will not react to a new language with the same naïveté as a child. Students want to understand the language. Understanding alone, however, will not lead to performance and as Ruck (1968:iii) indicates, “[t]he goal of language learning is not intellectualisation but performance. We do not know a language until we automatically manipulate it”. This view of Ruck gives a clear indication of the shift towards focusing on the functionality of the learning content and a more pragmatic approach.

Greek is taught to adult learners, most of whom are theological students with minimal (if any) prior knowledge of the biblical languages before coming to University (Countryman 1993:xiv). In general, adult learners want to make sense of things and want to see and experience the relevance of what they are doing (Duff 2008:2; Steyn 2001:365-367). As researcher and lecturer, I agree with Black (1998:11) when he states, “I don’t think it’s a good policy to make adults feel as if they’re back in third grade ... make sure the topics are relevant to adults, in particular to adults whose business is the ministry of the Word of God.” (See values in 1.2.)

In the current higher education situation, lecturers are expected to cope with ever-decreasing class contact hours while the student/staff ratios increase annually (Cowan 2006:137). Gorry (2006/2007:156) and Countryman (1993:xiii) also confirm that limited time is available in seminaries and consequently prolonged exposure to Greek is far less common than in the past.

The teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek explored in this study revealed a similar problem regarding time. Theology programmes advocate only two years of compulsory Greek. This is not enough time to do an extensive study of the basic grammar, syntax and linguistic principles of an ancient and foreign language first and only learn to apply the acquired knowledge and skills to texts and other fields of study through higher cognitive skills afterwards. An innovative and integrated teaching approach is needed to ensure maximum and quality teaching and learning in the limited time available.

3.4.2 Evidence from interviews and focus-group discussions

Empirical data relating to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek were collected during the interviews and focus-group discussions. The participants were asked to reflect on curriculum content, teaching methods, study material and assessment in particular or any other aspects they wanted to comment on in general. The aim of this reflection was to identify possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek.

The ministers, Hebrew lecturer, New Testament lecturers and other Greek lecturers were not directly involved with the teaching of the compulsory Greek modules and for that reason I feel they were not able to evaluate the current teaching and learning context in which these modules are taught critically. During the informal conversational interviews, they did however share some general remarks relating to the teaching and learning of Greek, from their own experience as students in the past, or from their experience as lecturers working with the same group of students to whom Greek is lectured. Reference to their remarks is made in 3.4.3 during a reflection on all the evidence relating to possible shortcomings.

Since the student participants in this study were actively involved in the learning of Hellenistic Greek, I regard their views (positive or negative) on its teaching context as equally important to evidence derived from the literature review. The evaluative remarks and/or suggestions made by different students during each of the focus-group discussions were analysed according to the process explained in 2.3.3. The results from this thematic analysis are presented in Tables 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7 and the discussion that follow the tables.

The tables comprise the generated categories and selected responses illustrative of these categories. (I translated the categories and responses from Afrikaans for this purpose.) Tables 3.5 and 3.6 reflect the evidence (expressed views) from focus group 1 (FG 1) and 2 (FG 2) that consisted of first- and second-year theology students, respectively. Focus group 3 (FG 3) consisted of third-, fourth- and fifth-year students and final-year students were members of focus group 4 (FG 4). Table 3.7 reflects the expressed views from students in these two groups.

Table 3.5 Selected responses from FG 1 relating to possible shortcomings in the current teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek

Categories	Selected responses illustrative of the specific category
contents/curriculum	. . . want more information on why different translations of the Bible exist
methodology	. . . want more summaries of work – easier to learn
	. . . want to do more assignments with unseen passages (translation not in GMB)
	. . . homework was too much – cannot spend 2-3 hours a day on Greek – I was therefore not prepared in class and fell behind
	. . . tempo/pace is fast, BUT sometimes we (the students) are just asleep
assessment	. . . lack of class tests, especially during second semester – more class tests to force us to study vocabulary
	. . . give memo of passages after dealt with it in class – some students learn incorrect answers for tests and exams – BUT this may lead to many students NOT doing their part
organisation	. . . not enough class time – more time will force us to work more and understand better
	. . . blow ‘warning trumpet’ even harder at beginning to warn students NOT to fall behind

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

Table 3.6 Selected responses from FG 2 relating to possible shortcomings in the current teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek

Categories	Selected responses illustrative of the specific category
contents/curriculum	. . . keep ‘basics’ (lectures, assignments, tests) in the first year, BUT change the second year to be more practical (teach us computer programmes we can/will use in ministry)

	. . . do work that is part of New Testament, not Didache, Polycarp and Diognetum
	. . . add semantics to the third year – not in the second year
	. . . not enough time spent on differences between existing translations
methodology	. . . time spent on vocabulary and the ability to make translations is not enough
	. . . want more group work – it is constructive when everyone is working together
	. . . read more texts in class and translate directly in class
assessment	. . . must be allowed to write open-book exams – why must we rote learn now if we are going to use all your resources later when you prepare sermon
	. . . more class assignments/tests to improve semester mark
resources	. . . must be allowed to use resources with translation/parsing in tests and exams
	. . . teach students to work with computer programmes

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

Table 3.7 Selected responses from FG 3 and FG 4 relating to possible shortcomings in the current teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek

Categories	Selected responses illustrative of the specific category
contents/curriculum	. . . want more background information on Greek – how did language develop – and at what point was the New Testament written
	. . . emphasis was placed on grammar instead of application – computer programmes give that information – focus more on reading and interpreting texts
methodology	. . . boring and inefficient if work is presented by lectures only
	. . . learn nothing if lecturer only reads through chapter
	. . . no or little interaction with lecturer and other students (group work)
	. . . lack of detail feedback on assignments/homework
	. . . difficult to learn foreign language in other language than mother tongue
	. . . lack of exercises
assessment	. . . does not help if you only learn translations by heart
	. . . I can still recite a chapter from Acts in Afrikaans, but I have no clue of Greek constructions
resources	. . . does not help if you only learn translations by heart
resources	. . . were not taught how to use other resources
organisation	. . . not always able to do the preparation/homework for class

	. . . frustrating if there is no schedule to know when we are doing what
	. . . frustrating if there is no study guide or structured learning material

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

3.4.2.1 *Prescribed contents (curriculum)*

The lack of more general (background) information about the language they were studying was identified by students from all the focus groups as a shortcoming in the curriculum of Greek. A student from FG 3 said they learnt the alphabet and basic grammar principles without knowing how the language developed and at what stage the actual Greek New Testament was written (see Table 3.7). In addition to information relating to the history of the language, students from FG 1 and FG 2 expressed their desire to know why different translations of the Bible exist and also mentioned that sufficient time is not spent on explaining differences between existing translations (see Tables 3.5 and 3.6, respectively).

A student from FG 2 voiced the need to learn how to use resources by stating, “Keep ‘basics’ (lectures, assignments, tests) in the first year, *but* change the second year to be more practical – teach us computer programmes we can/will use in ministry.” (see Table 3.6) Responses from the senior students (FG 3 and FG 4) confirmed this need. They also criticised the emphasis on grammar teaching instead of learning how to read and interpret texts by applying basic knowledge or using other resources (see Table 3.7).

A student from FG 2 experienced the reading of Patristic texts (Didache, Polycarp and Diognetum) as irrelevant for theology studies and therefore requested its removal from the curriculum. The student would prefer it if only New Testament texts are read. A student from the same group also suggested that *semantics* should be studied in the third instead of the second year (see Table 3.6 for these responses).

3.4.2.2 *Previous and current teaching methodology*

A number of negative comments (and suggestions) relating to the employed teaching methods were made during the interviews. In my view, suggestions were made as an acknowledgement of a possible problem. If the different aspects of this ancient

language was only taught through lectures, or if the lecturer only read the work from the textbook, students experienced the classes as “boring and inefficient”, as one student from FG 3 confirmed (see Table 3.7). Students also experienced the lack of interaction with the lecturer and other students as a serious shortcoming in the teaching and learning context of Greek. During the interviews with FG 2 and FG 3 more group work was suggested as a constructive aid to lectures (see Tables 3.6 and 3.7, respectively).

The pace at which students have to learn the different aspects of the language was criticised by the first-year students in FG 1 (see Table 3.5). Even though one of them admitted that, “we (the students) are just asleep”, the group in general expressed the need for more time and exercises to process information before new work is presented. They also suggested the reading of more texts in class and/or more assignments with unseen passages to enhance their ability to apply new knowledge. This appeal for more time and exercises was also echoed by FG 2. One student stated, “The time spent on vocabulary and on improving the ability to make translations is not enough” (see Table 3.6). During the interviews I reminded these students that they were already receiving regular homework (which includes translation *and* revision exercises). One student from FG 1 responded to this probe and declared, “The homework was too much – I cannot spend 2-3 hours a day on Greek. I was therefore not prepared in class and fell behind.” (see Table 3.5) As lecturer, I am therefore challenged to give enough and relevant homework to complete within a reasonable time, but also to motivate the students to do a little bit of work each day.

3.4.2.3 *Assessment*

The fact that assessment will always be important to students was confirmed during the interviews and focus-group discussions. Students from FG 2 (see Table 3.6) requested regular assessment opportunities (more class tests and assignments) to improve their semester marks, while students from FG 1 (see Table 3.5) felt more class tests would force them to study vocabulary on a regular basis. Despite the reason for assessment, students also commented on the outcome and method of assessment.

According to students from FG 3 and FG 4, they were only tested on their ability to memorise and do translations of Greek texts. A final-year student said, “I can still recite a chapter from Acts in Afrikaans, but I have no clue of Greek constructions.” (see Table 3.7) Students have to be assessed according to the outcome of the modules. This relates strongly to remarks made by students from FG 2 (see Table 3.6). They knew they had to study Greek in order to make interpretations of New Testament texts during exegesis and sermon preparation later. They also knew that they would be able to use resources when they do that. Therefore they criticised the fact that they were not allowed to use any resources (open-book exams) when they did translations or parsing in tests and exams.

3.4.2.4 Resources

Remarks relating to resources were already made in the previous paragraphs where possible shortcomings concerning the content, methodology and assessment of Hellenistic Greek were discussed. Students from FG 3 and FG 4 viewed the fact that they were not taught how to use a variety of resources as a shortcoming (see Table 3.7). At the same time, students from FG 2 requested the inclusion of teaching about *and* teaching from computer programmes and other resources in their modules (see Table 3.6). It became abundantly clear from all the interviews that students were already using different resources at home during their homework assignments and preparation of sermons. The shortcoming they expressed, however, is the fact that they do not always know how to use the resources with maximum effect or how to interpret the information they derive from these resources.

3.4.2.5 General organisation and study material

A few general comments from students elicited negative aspects relating to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek that increased their frustration levels and consequently their negative perception of the language. Students want a schedule to know when they are doing what. They feel the lack of such a schedule hampered their preparation and progress. The same applies to a lack of structured study material or study letters without indicating the outcomes or giving an outline of the curriculum. They are left in the dark and do not know what to expect. A final comment relates to the language of instruction and the language of the textbook being used. Students from FG 3 had to study Greek from an English book and they

said it is “difficult to learn a foreign language in another language than your mother tongue” (see Table 3.7).

I reflect on all the evidence relating to possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek in the next paragraph.

3.4.3 Reflection on presented evidence relating to possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek

In my reflection on the evidence relating to possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek, I found some concordance between the evidence from the literature review and the empirical investigation.

Evidence from literature (see 3.4.1.1) emphasised the fact that Greek is an ancient and foreign language and students might find it difficult to relate to what they read, even if they were able to analyse the Greek. Gorry (2006/2007:155) describes this obstacle to the understanding of Greek as a combination between its complex forms and convoluted syntax and the separation of nature and spirit between the Greeks of ancient times and us. During the interviews, the students expressed the need to know more about the history and development of the language they were learning. They regard the curriculum as incomplete without this extra information (see 3.4.2.1).

Concerning teaching methods and resources, the main question to be answered is *How* do we learn a language in order to know *and* use it effectively? Steyn (2001:367) declares that we learn it through use and practice, but then the question remains what *method* must be central to this usage and practice. Two principles are important when a decision is made about methodology. According to Steyn (2001:376), it would be naïve to use an ancient tool (outdated teaching method) to do a piece of modern day work (teach contemporary students) and, according to Jay (1979:ix), “[e]ven the most modern methods of learning a language do not enable the student to avoid the task of learning a great many things by heart”.

Two main approaches to teaching (deductive and inductive) are discussed and evaluated by different authors in literature. The advantages and disadvantages of both were highlighted during the discussion in 3.4.1.2. In the end, however, I agree

with Steyn (2001:376) that there should be a constant interaction between these methods. Even though the participants in this study did not refer to deductive or inductive approaches directly, they criticised the overemphasis of grammar when the outcome is to translate texts and interpret translations. They requested a more integrated approach where they learn how to use grammar and resources. Students also suggested an approach characterised by more interaction with the lecturer and other students (see 3.4.2.2 for discussion of student responses).

If, in my view, Steyn (2001:366) is correct in his assumption that different needs might lead to different approaches to the teaching and learning of Greek, it is important to determine the objectives for the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek before decisions are made about the methods.

Different objectives for the teaching of Hellenistic Greek were identified in literature and discussed in 3.4.1.3. These objectives ranged from the ability to answer Greek comprehension questions in Greek to the ability to translate a text only – which, according to Anderson (2004:433), can be done without real knowledge of Greek. The discussion in 3.4.1.3 made it clear that the objective cannot be to answer Greek comprehension questions in Greek, as proposed by Ruck (1968:iv-v). Agreement is rather shared with Whale (1994:596) who states that, “[w]e must therefore ask how we can most efficiently help students to read widely with understanding and enjoyment, without sacrificing their opportunity to achieve a final command of the language at whatever level is appropriate for them”. This view concurs with my earlier conclusion that a balance between a deductive and inductive approach is needed for the effective teaching of Greek. In my opinion, the main objectives must be to teach students grammar *as well as* reading, application and translation skills.

These objectives were confirmed by the students during the focus-group discussions to an extent. They mentioned the fact that it did not help if one only learnt translations by heart without being able to discuss the meaning of the text as well. They also confirmed the need to learn the basics of the language but added that more group work and exercise in the use of resources would enhance their ability to interpret and/or critically discuss a text (see Table 3.6). This mindset of the students helps to

bridge the gap between knowledge of grammatical facts and its application to exegesis. Chamberlain (1961:vii) has identified this gap from classroom experience.

However, no teaching or learning can take place without teaching material. As identified during the literature review, textbooks and other auxiliary tools can also be the cause of problems in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek (see 3.4.1.4). Jordaan (2004:237-238) refers to the fact that the majority of Greek textbooks are in English and that Afrikaans students might find it difficult to understand the basic concepts and grammar if it is not in their mother tongue (the same applies to Sesotho students). Steyn (2001:376) emphasises that students must learn *how* to use resources effectively during their study of Greek, since they are going to use them in ministry one day. The challenge, therefore, is to make sure that the selected textbook/s and resources *support* the chosen objectives and method of teaching. I share the opinion of Dana and Mantey (1957: iii-iv) that we do not need an exhaustive treatise on the grammar of the Greek, but rather a practical and adaptable textbook that presents, with clarity, the essential elements needed for a working knowledge of the language. According to them, such a textbook will present primary principles and will use terminology easily apprehended by the average student.

Students from all the focus groups regarded the general exclusion of resources from the curriculum of Greek modules as a huge disadvantage. They seek information about available resources and they want to learn how to use them. Students also requested the use of resources during assessment (see 3.4.2.3 and 3.4.2.4 for student responses). The need for a textbook in their mother tongue (Afrikaans in this case) was also expressed. However, as mentioned in 3.4.1.4, Afrikaans textbooks are not readily available or suitable for teaching purposes. This might lead to another challenge – to select the best English textbook and present its contents to the students in an innovative (practical and understandable) way.

This section will not be complete without some deliberation on the issue regarding the use of electronic resources (computer programmes). As lecturer, I was not very eager to introduce the use of electronic resources in the teaching process when I started lecturing a few years ago. This was partly because students were relying *only* on these resources at that stage. According to them, they did not need any grammar

training at all, since the programmes gave them what they needed. However, it is clear from the students' responses during the focus-group discussions that even though they still requested training in the use of electronic resources, they recognised the need for basic grammar training as well (see Table 3.6).

The ability to use a resource does not automatically include the ability to interpret a text. Therefore, even if a complete morphological analysis or semantic discussion of a word is given by a computer programme or dictionary, a student still needs basic knowledge of the language itself in order to interpret the information from the resources. Again, the challenge will be to find the balance between teaching the selected foundational knowledge in such a way that the students know it by heart, and teaching the students to apply and integrate this knowledge while they are using the resources.

The reflection on the different shortcomings identified in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek during this study confirmed the need to explore innovative approaches for addressing the shortcomings in the most appropriate way.

3.5 CONCLUSION

If we assume then that the teaching of Greek is not negotiable for the future involvement in the Biblical sciences ... then we ought to ask ourselves about the manner in which a working knowledge of Greek should be acquired. (Steyn 2001:365)

Against the background of the evidence presented in this chapter, I agree with this opinion of Steyn. The investigation of the history, development and relevance of Hellenistic Greek underlined the fact that the teaching (and future teaching) of Greek to theology students is not negotiable. In addition, the evaluation of the teaching and learning context in which this language is taught exposed important shortcomings that might prevent students from excelling in their study of Greek.

One of the objectives for this study is to compile a set of directives for the development of an innovative approach to enhance the teaching and learning of

Hellenistic Greek (see objective 4 in 1.4). The reflection on relevance and shortcomings in this chapter provided important food for thought. Aspects from this reflection need to be considered when the directives are formulated. These aspects must, however, be supplemented by applicable features from existing innovative approaches. Innovation relating to teaching in general and specifically to the teaching of classical languages is therefore explored before the final directives are formulated. The results of this exploration are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

INNOVATION IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HELLENISTIC GREEK: EXPLORING FINK'S TAXONOMY, SELECTED INNOVATIVE APPROACHES AND STUDENT SUGGESTIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to address the third, fourth and fifth research questions identified in Chapter 1, i.e. *3. How can the integrated components of Fink's taxonomy for significant learning contribute to enhancing the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek? 4. What elements from other innovative approaches can contribute to enhancing the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek? 5. What, according to students, are necessary to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?*

The first section of this chapter presents the general meaning of innovative teaching and learning. Reference is made to some general perspectives on innovation, the paradigm shift towards a learning-centred approach and the use of integrated course design. This section is followed by an exploration of Fink's taxonomy and selected innovative approaches to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek. The chapter concludes with suggestions made by student participants on how to improve the teaching of Hellenistic Greek.

4.2 WHAT IS INNOVATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING?

A creative teacher is seen as the one who is consistently curious and constantly seeks out new ways to improve her or his teaching abilities. In addition to improving their skills, teachers must also increase their understanding of student needs and preferences and constantly seek out new ways for transmitting knowledge. (Jaskyte *et al.* 2009:111)

In my opinion, this definition of a creative teacher by Jaskyte *et al.* can also be used to define *innovative teaching* and an *innovative lecturer*. I derived the following features of innovation from the cited definition:

- Innovation improves teaching abilities and skills.
- Innovation increases lecturers' understanding of student needs.
- Innovation unlocks new ways for transmitting learning contents.
- Innovation stimulates continuous curiosity relating to the teaching context.

According to Smyth (in Cowan 2006:146), open-mindedness to innovation increases university teachers' (lecturers') awareness of innovative teaching possibilities. It can therefore be expected of them to keep up to date with new developments and the claims made for innovation and new practices. Innovative teaching and learning in this study, therefore, does not only refer to the use of the latest technology in the classroom. The aim of this section is to confirm the need among lecturers for open-mindedness about innovation.

Some general perspectives on innovation and the reasons that necessitate change are presented in the following paragraph and then followed by a concise description of the paradigm shift from content-centred to learning-centred teaching. To conclude this section, reference is made to the model of integrated course design developed by Fink (2003a).

4.2.1 General perspectives

Cowan (2006:135) considers a variety of factors in the current higher education situation, which call on lecturers to be engaged with innovation in their teaching. According to him (2006:137), "teachers in higher education should now be dealing predominantly with learning outcomes at higher levels, and in areas which have not traditionally featured strongly in curricula". There is a need to develop learners in respect of affective outcomes and interpersonal abilities in addition to general curriculum goals, learning experiences and assessment skills (Cowan 2006:136). Factors relating to resources and student abilities are also mentioned by Cowan (2006:137-139). Lecturers have to cope with the increasing student/staff ratios while the class contact hours are decreasing at the same time. This means that a reduced number of lecturers have to teach the same content to larger groups of students and often within limited time. Bligh (in Cowan 2006:137) stresses the need for innovation when he states, "heavy timetables and large numbers of lectures are not the ideal recipe for educational effectiveness". Contemporary students who apply for study at

higher education institutions have a wide range of abilities and prior experiences. Lecturers, therefore, are confronted with challenges (different learning styles and needs) that have not been part of the teaching environment in the past (Cowan 2006:139).

Lynch (2001:177) studied the entries for a teaching award in innovation at the University of Dundee. The respective entries were not necessarily unique, but were regarded as innovative in their specific contexts. He identified humility, courage, open-mindedness, empathy and enthusiasm as some of the traits characterising innovative lecturers. From this study, Lynch (2001:179) also deduced that: “Good innovators (at the University of Dundee) should enhance:

- the quality of student learning by promoting deep rather than surface learning;
- student achievement and/or progression;
- efficiency;
- provision and opportunities for students with special needs;
- the reputation of the institution; and,
- good practice by providing teaching which is replicable throughout the institution.”

In my opinion, the same traits and features are needed at other higher education institutions in general when lecturers want to change and/or enhance their teaching through innovation.

Another interesting study was undertaken by Jaskyte *et al.* (2009:111-112). Respondents were interviewed and asked to free-list characteristics and descriptors of innovative teaching. The aim of these in-depth interviews was to capture students’ and faculties’ perception on innovative teaching. The two sets of responses were then grouped according to similarities and sorted from the highest- to the lowest-ranked items. “The results of this study provide important practical implications. Although what is being rewarded in terms of innovative teaching is use of technology and new teaching methods/strategies, the results of this study indicate that many more factors have to be considered in seeking to become an innovative instructor” (Jaskyte *et al.* 2009:115). A few interesting findings are referred to succinctly.

The use of technology was among the lowest ranked on the lists of both groups (Jaskyte *et al.* 2009:113). Considering the fact that “[t]oday’s students are more technologically capable ... (and) ... current technological developments are changing the learning process” (Jaskyte *et al.* 2009:111), the low ranking of technology is indeed an interesting finding. The highest-ranked item on the list of faculty was: *get students to learn how to construct knowledge themselves*, while a similar item – *facilitates students’ discovery of material on their own* – was the lowest on the students’ list (Jaskyte *et al.* 2009:113). According to the study, students place a much higher premium on engagement and interaction between them and the lecturers and on the lecturers’ responses to their feedback. Similar items, such as *encouraging student feedback and responding to it* and *being interested in what students have to offer when they are involved in course design*, however, were lower on the faculty list (Jaskyte *et al.* 2009:113).

Jaskyte *et al.* (2009:115) describe innovative teaching as a “process that encompasses the interplay of a number of factors, including the instructor’s personality, classroom culture, student-faculty communications, and means of knowledge transfer/teaching techniques as well as outcomes”. According to them, the potential for innovative teaching will only be maximised if educators account for all of these factors and not only when they use technology or introduce new methods or techniques. Both students and faculty can benefit from innovation and creativity. It can help to “sustain interest and professional growth of faculty, broaden student engagement in the curriculum, increase students’ sense of efficacy, and help faculty and students overcome structured habits of mind, and increase student understanding and retention of the course content” (Jaskyte *et al.* 2009:111). Simplicio (in Jaskyte *et al.* 2009:111) also states that, “teachers must be willing to utilise different strategies, methodologies, and approaches to instruction, and they must be willing to change their methods and criteria of evaluation”. Students are therefore doing more than learning curriculum content in creative classrooms.

The general perspectives expressed in this section confirm the fact that innovative teaching includes a paradigm shift from a teaching approach characterised by

information dumping by lecturers and content learning by students (content-centred) to a more learning-centred approach.

4.2.2 Paradigm shift: content-centred to learning-centred

Fink (2003a:56-57) raises an important question:

If we include lots of content but students end up neither caring about the subject nor learning how to keep on learning, what are the chances that students will either retain what they have learned or make the effort to keep on learning?

These words of Fink describe a content-centred approach to teaching, and according to him, it is not the ideal teaching option for the higher education environment. Within the content-centred paradigm, the *content* of what should be taught during a course is the primary focus of lecturers. They are more concerned with *what* the students should learn and *how much* they will be able to teach in the available time, than with the outcomes of the teaching process or *how* students should learn (Fink 2003a:55).

According to Barr and Tagg (2004:1 of 19), the aim of an institution should be 'to produce learning'. "(The) mission is not instruction but rather that of producing *learning* with every student by *whatever* means work best". Their view coincides with Fink's view that students need to have significant learning experiences during their tertiary training (Fink 2003a:6). Lecturers should explore and implement new and different kinds of learning in their efforts to convey module content to students. The creation of significant learning experiences is therefore required to engage students in a learning-centred approach and this approach is an alternative for the traditional subject- or content-centred approach (Fink 2003a:55, 61).

Fink (2003a:61, 245) has developed a model of *integrated course design* and considers it a tool for the improvement of significant learning. This model can also be viewed as a form of teaching innovation.

4.2.3 Integrated course design

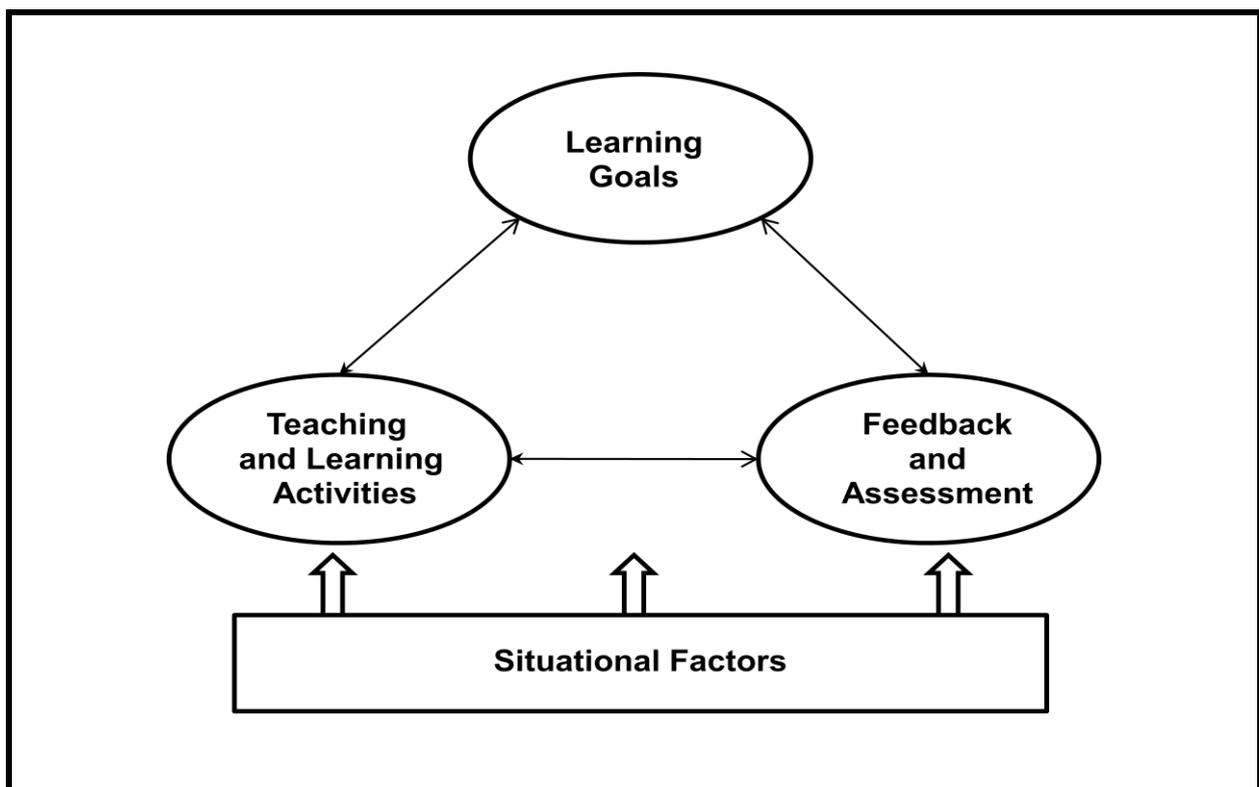
... if professors want to create courses in which students have significant learning experiences, they must learn how to *design that quality into their*

courses. Unless a course is designed properly, all the other components of effective teaching will have only limited impact. (Fink 2003a:60)

The model of *integrated course design* was therefore developed by Fink to assist lecturers in planning and designing their courses.

4.2.3.1 Key components

Fink (2003a:62) includes four key components in his model of integrated course design, i.e. situational factors, learning goals, feedback and assessment, and teaching and learning activities (see Figure 4.1). He describes the relationship between these components as relational rather than linear (hence the use of *integrated* in the name). He also ascribes the following features to his model: simple, holistic, practical integrative and normative. A short explanation of the components is given after Figure 4.1.



Source: Fink (2003a:60).

Figure 4.1: Key components of integrated course design

The circles represent the different decisions lecturers need to make during course design (these decisions are discussed in the following paragraph as part of the sub-

steps – see 4.2.3.2). Information that needs to be gathered prior to the design process and used during the process is referred to by the diagonal box and arrows pointing towards the circles. The components within the circles must be connected to and support one another. This mutual connection is indicated by the arrows between the circles (Fink 2003a:62-63).

4.2.3.2 Phases and sub-steps

Fink's model of integrated course design includes the following three phases with twelve sub-steps (Fink 2003a:67):

1. Initial phase: build strong primary components
2. Intermediate phase: assemble the components into a coherent whole
3. Final phase: finish important remaining tasks

The first phase with its five sub-steps is applicable to this study and is presented in the rest of this paragraph.

The initial phase of the design process calls for the teacher to build strong primary components. These components must be built properly because they form the basis for the rest of the design process. (Fink 2003a:67)

Five sub-steps form part of this phase.

i) Situational factors

According to Fink, it is important to gather information about the following situational factors:

- Specific context: number of students in course; undergraduate or postgraduate level; frequency and duration of class meetings; mode of delivery (Fink 2003a:69; 2003b:4-5).
- Expectations of external groups: how does the course fit into the larger curricular context; what do the students and various departments expect of the course (Fink 2003a:69; 2003b:4-5).

- Characteristics of the learners: any prior knowledge and/or relevant experiences; levels of anxiety, anticipation or excitement towards the course; learning style – visually, verbally, through movement or through a combination of these; deep or surface learners (Fink 2003a:71; 2003b:4-5).
- Characteristic of the lecturer: take time to review own characteristics; assess current level of teaching, interaction and management skills; reaffirm teaching philosophy – underlying values and beliefs (Fink 2003a:71).
- Special pedagogical challenge – any special situation that challenges both students and lecturer to make this a meaningful and important learning experience (Fink 2003a:72).

ii) Learning goals

Lecturers also need to decide about the learning goals for their courses. These goals should go beyond ‘understand and remember’ learning or making lists of topics to deal with. The challenge is to follow a learning-centred approach, to think more expansively and rather ask *what should students learn and retain during the course that will still be with them two to three years after the course is over* (Fink 2003b:4-5, 73).

By framing the questions in terms of what you want to be true about students a year or so after the course is over, you focus on the lasting impact of the course on students... (and) only then will you be able to select the kinds of teaching and learning activities and the feedback and assessment activities needed to support this kind of learning. (Fink 2003a:74)

iii) Feedback and assessment

This step of the integrated course design involves decisions on what students will have to do to demonstrate their achievement of the set learning goals. Lecturers have to think about ways in which they can help students to learn, and which will give them the necessary guidelines for issuing grades (Fink 2003b:4-5).

iv) Teaching and learning activities

Fink emphasises the fact that lecturers should think creatively about ways of involving students in appropriate and necessary kinds of active learning during the teaching process. They should ask *what would have to happen during the course for students to do well on the feedback and assessment* (Fink 2003b:4-5).

v) Integration of steps

The final step in this integrated course design is to check whether all the steps and components are consistent or in alignment and support one another (Fink 2003b:4-5).

A few years after developing this integrated course design, Fink (2009b:98) revised his model and added a 'step' at the beginning of the design process. He realised the value of identifying the *big purpose* of the course prior to planning the course. He describes this step as:

... standing back from the course and looking at where the students are coming from and how they might use the ideas from the course in their personal, professional, social, and civic lives after graduation. Once the teacher has a clearer, richer sense of the big purpose of the course, then she or he can go on to develop specific learning goals. (Fink 2009b:98)

Fink holds a corresponding view with Spence (in Fink 2003a:1) that the needs for more and better higher education will only be met if lecturers become designers of learning experiences and not only teachers. He consequently advocates the use of his taxonomy of significant learning in the process of course design.

4.3 FINK'S TAXONOMY OF SIGNIFICANT LEARNING

Fink's taxonomy of significant learning probably holds benefits for tertiary institutions and lecturers, who would like to engage their students in deep and significant learning through a learning-centred approach. He describes his taxonomy as "a road map to a variety of significant kinds of learning that goes beyond understand-and-remember and even beyond application learning" (Fink 2003a:xii). This section

commences with an explanation of the rationale behind this taxonomy before the different components and their use in the formulation of learning goals are discussed.

4.3.1 Introduction/rationale

According to Fink (2003a:55), his taxonomy represents a major shift in the way we think about teaching and learning. He defines learning in terms of *change*. In other words, if there is no change in a learner after the teaching process, no learning has occurred. In addition, some kind of lasting change in terms of a learner's life provides evidence that *significant* learning has taken place (Fink 2003a:30). This perspective on learning compelled Fink (2003b:8) to ask two important questions:

- *What would I like the impact of this course to be on students, two to three years after the course has been completed?*
- *What would distinguish students who have taken this course from students who have not?*

Not all the students involved in a learning process have the same approach to learning (Biggs and Tang 2007:20). Some students skid along the surface, memorising facts and making sure that they are able to reproduce the necessary content during assessment. This is referred to as surface learning. Other students undertake an active search for a personal understanding of what they have to learn and focus on the underlying meaning of the content to seek integration between different components. The latter group engages in deep learning (Biggs and Tang 2007:22-24; Fink 2003a:18). In my opinion, lecturers must be aware of the respective surface and deep approaches to learning and they have to exert themselves to create significant learning experiences during their courses.

According to Fink (2003a:6), learning should result in something that is truly significant in terms of the students' lives. When lecturers want students to have such an experience, Fink (2009a:1) suggests they start by asking the following questions:

- *What might we mean by a 'significant learning experience'?*
- *How can we intentionally teach in a way that gives students that kind of experience more often?*

In order to define a significant learning experience, lecturers have to acknowledge the fact that a proper definition has both a process and an outcome (product) dimension (Fink 2003a:6). Students need to be engaged during the course, during either pre-class homework assignments, or participation in class activities. However, this process has to lead to a product towards the end of the course. Students have to learn something that will last and that will add value to their lives. Significant learning should enhance their individual life, enable them to contribute to the community and environment around them and prepare them for the world of work (Fink 2003a:6). In summary, three elements characterise a significant learning experience, i.e. students are engaged, students' efforts result in significant and lasting learning, and the learning adds value to their lives (Fink 2009a:1-2). Two widespread problems at tertiary institutions can, nevertheless, prevent significant learning (Fink 2003a:xi). The first relates to lecturers who do 'information dumping' – generally they collect the content of a given topic only to dump this knowledge onto and (hopefully) into the heads of the students. This problem should be addressed by revisiting the learning goals and making sure that they go beyond an understand-and-remember type of learning (Fink 2003b:8). The second problem relates to the difficulty some lecturers experience when they have to decide on any teaching activities they might use besides lecturing and leading discussions. They need to be able to incorporate different kinds of learning in their teaching.

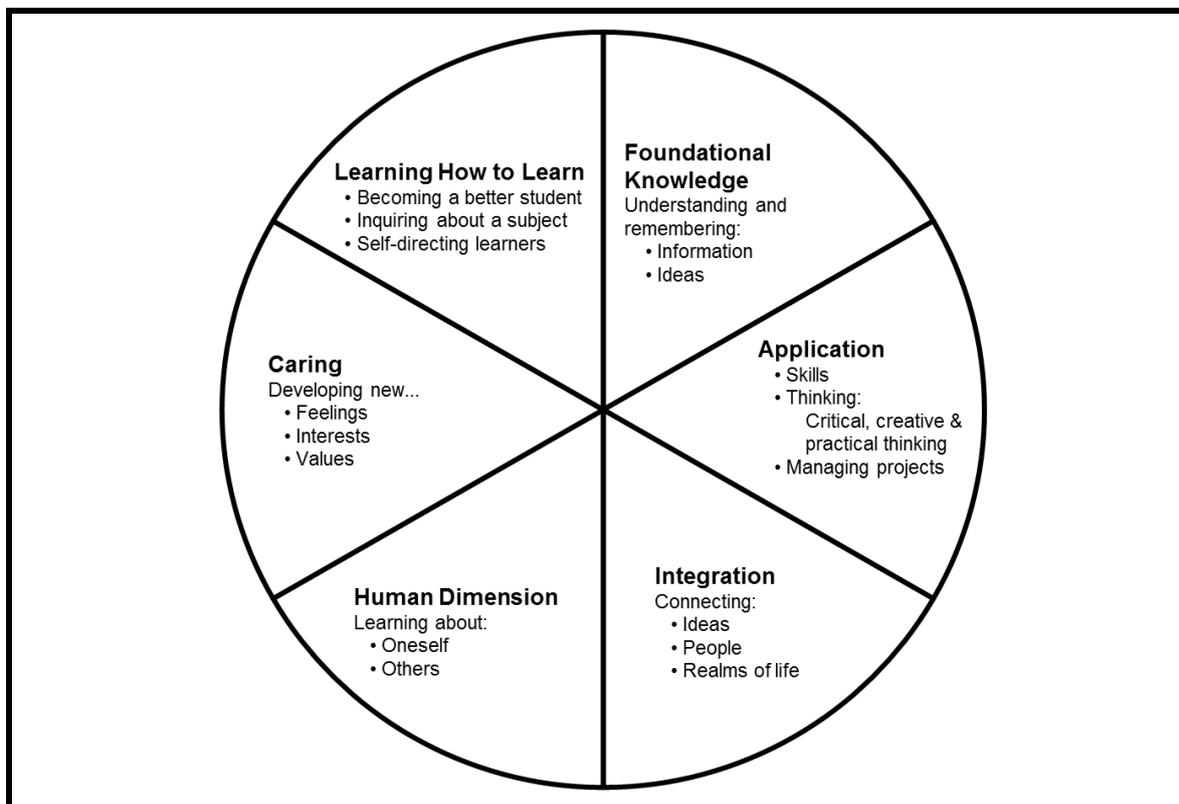
Fink developed the taxonomy of significant learning in the hope that it will address these problems and enhance the learning experience of students. This taxonomy is discussed in the following paragraph.

4.3.2 Taxonomy of significant learning

This taxonomy consists of six integrated components – *Foundational Knowledge, Application, Integration, Human Dimension, Caring, and Learning How to Learn* – with some sub-categories (a visual representation of this taxonomy is presented in Figure 4.2). An important feature of this taxonomy lies in the fact that its components and/or categories are not hierarchical, but rather relational (even interactive) and add distinct value to the learning process of the students (Fink 2003a:31-32; 2003b:8). This characteristic of the taxonomy implies that “teachers don't automatically have to give up one kind of learning to achieve another. Instead, when a teacher finds a way

to help students achieve one kind of learning, this can in fact enhance, not decrease, student achievement in the other kinds of learning” (Fink 2003a:32).

A discussion of the six integrated components is presented subsequently in 4.3.2.1-4.3.2.6. Each paragraph commences with the meaning of the specific component and a short description of the distinct value it holds for learners, according to Fink (2003a:31-32). The second part of each paragraph includes my view of the application of these components to the teaching process of Hellenistic Greek and the impact (value) of this application on student learning. An adapted version of Fink’s taxonomy is presented in Figure 4.3 (after 4.3.2.6) and reflects a possible application of the components to Hellenistic Greek.



Source: Fink (2003a:30).

Figure 4.2: Fink’s taxonomy of significant learning

4.3.2.1 Foundational Knowledge

Fink (2003a:31) states, “[a]t the base of most other kinds of learning is the need for students to know something. *Knowing*, as used here, refers to students’ ability to understand and remember specific information and ideas”. He therefore describes

foundational knowledge as “understand-and-remember” learning (Fink 2003b:9). Students need a thorough comprehension of facts, terms, formulae, principles and/or concepts that constitute a specific module and they have to be able to remember this information for future use (Fink 2003b:11). The value of foundational knowledge is evident in the fact that it provides a basic understanding, which is necessary for other kinds of learning. In formulating learning goals relating to foundational knowledge, the lecturer has to realise that not ‘everything’ is extremely important (Fink 2003a:31). “The key here is to limit yourself to identify only what is really important for students to have in long-term memory one to three years later.” (Fink 2003a:79)

“Even the most modern methods of learning a language do not enable the student to avoid the task of learning a great many things by heart.” (Jay 1979:ix) When applied to Hellenistic Greek, foundational knowledge (the *things* learnt by heart) forms the *essential building blocks* for a sound knowledge and understanding of the language. Students need an introduction to the history of the language – why and how did it develop, who were the original speakers and writers and where did the language of the New Testament come from? Without knowing the Greek alphabet and basic grammar paradigms and principles, it will be impossible to learn about and work with this language. A basic vocabulary consisting of the words with the highest frequency in the New Testament is also necessary. Students need to understand certain concepts (e.g. reading, translating) and terminology (e.g. case, mood, parse, explain) within the context of Hellenistic Greek. Comprehension of these concepts and terminology will provide the necessary understanding also to involve other kinds of learning in the teaching and learning process. In following this line of argumentation, I refer to this segment in Fink’s taxonomy (*Foundational Knowledge*) as *Essential Building Blocks* (see Figure 4.3).

4.3.2.2 Application

The value of application learning for teaching lies in the fact that it allows other kinds of learning and actions to become *useful* (Fink 2003a:31). Students might need to engage in intellectual, social or physical action at some point in order to master the content of a module or to manage complex projects. Lecturers therefore have to determine which skills are required to enable students to perform the relevant actions effectively. Required skills can include communication skills and the ability to utilise

technology, as well as various kinds of thinking skills such as critical (analyse and evaluate), creative (imagine and create) and practical thinking (problem-solving and decision-making) (Fink 2003a:31; Fink 2003b:9, 11). Lecturers have to ask the following questions when they formulate learning goals (Fink 2003a:80):

- What is it you want students to be able to do in relation to this subject, one to three years after the course is over?
- What situations are students likely to be in, where the learning of this course will be relevant?
- In those situations, what would you like them to be able to do?

Students studying Hellenistic Greek need skills and practice in how to *use* the acquired building blocks in order to reach the objectives of the course. One objective, for example, is to read, translate and analyse Greek texts. When students read and/or translate Greek texts, they are required to use their knowledge of grammar, paradigms and vocabulary. Students also need some thinking skills, especially critical and practical skills to analyse and evaluate the original text and their translation. Communication skills can assist students when they discuss textual issues with one another or when they have to answer questions regarding text interpretations as ministers in future. During the interviews (see 3.4.2.4), students specifically requested more information and training relating to available resources and electronic tools. The use of resources is therefore an important skill to include in application learning. In acquiring all the skills mentioned in this paragraph, students have to apply their basic knowledge of the language. In the case of Hellenistic Greek, it is consequently suggested that the *Application* segment in Fink's taxonomy is referred to as *Practice Learning* (see Figure 4.3).

4.3.2.3 *Integration*

An important kind of learning occurs when students are able to make and understand connections among different things (Fink 2003a:31). They have to recognise connections, similarities and/or interactions among ideas and perspectives within a specific course and between different courses. Students must also integrate the material they have learnt during a course into their own personal, social, and/or work life. The value of integration lies in Fink's belief that this act of making new connections gives students *power*, especially a new form of intellectual power (Fink

2003a:31). Lecturers have to determine what kind of connections they want students to make in their courses. Their learning goals consequently have to reflect how these connections are going to be integrated into the everyday life of the students and/or to other closely related subjects (Fink 2003b:9, 11).

The aim of studying Greek is not confined to the Greek classroom where students have to write vocabulary tests or do translation exercises. It is necessary for them to recognise and understand the connections between Hellenistic Greek and other disciplines or realms. If they know and understand the purpose for studying Greek from the start, they will probably be more motivated to study it. Three connections are highlighted for the purpose of this discussion.

Students need to see the link between the (compulsory) study of Greek and their theology studies in general. They have to understand *why* the study of the language is necessary. The connection between Hellenistic Greek and New Testament exegesis in particular is also very important. Since students only start with exegesis in their third year of theology studies, but complete the compulsory Greek in their second, they need to be made aware of this connection as early as possible. A third connection is between the study of Greek and the everyday life of the students and the world they are going to work in. *Making Connections* (see Figure 4.3) may thus be a very appropriate description of what *Integration* means in Hellenistic Greek.

4.3.2.4 *Human Dimension*

Another way in which lecturers can add value to their students' learning experiences is by informing them about *the human significance* of what they are learning (Fink 2003a:32). If they learn something important about themselves or about others and then discover the personal and social implications of what they have learned, it enables them to function and interact more effectively (Fink 2003a:31). When formulating learning goals, it is therefore important for a lecturer to ask *what* students should learn about themselves and others (Fink 2003b:9, 12). What students learn and/or the way in which they learn, give them a new understanding of themselves (self-image) and a new vision of what they want to become (self-ideal). On the other hand, they also gain a new understanding of how the acquired theories and content

will affect their interaction with other people in relation to this subject (Fink 2003a:31, 80).

Significant learning of Hellenistic Greek also requires interaction with other people during the learning process. Students need to learn the content of a course, but they also have to discuss this content with other students in the classroom or with people in their future world of work. They have to learn how to share information with different kinds of people in specific contexts – teenagers and elderly people, for example, obviously demand different kinds of attention and approaches. Involvement in group work and projects that reflect various authentic situations enhances the learning within this human dimension category. Within the context of Hellenistic Greek, this segment (*Human Dimension*) is referred to as *Interaction with Others* (see Figure 4.3).

4.3.2.5 *Caring*

When students care about something, they then have the *energy* they need for learning more about it and making it a part of their lives. Without the energy for learning, nothing significant happens. (Fink 2003a:32)

The value of this caring component of the taxonomy is evident from this quotation. If learning experiences lead to the adoption of more positive feelings, interests and values towards a module, it can change the degree to which students care about the subject for the better (Fink 2003a:32). In order to formulate learning goals, lecturers have to identify the changes or values they want the students to adopt during the learning experience and then specify these changes in the outcomes of the module (Fink 2003b:9, 12).

It was concluded in Chapter 3 that the study of Hellenistic Greek is relevant, especially for theology students. However, this does not (automatically) mean that all the students are positive about studying this ancient and rather difficult language. The challenge for lecturers is to stimulate the interests of the students. They have to create significant learning experiences through which the students can realise, for themselves, the value of Greek for their studies and future work in ministry. This realisation will lead to a more positive attitude towards the study of the language. The

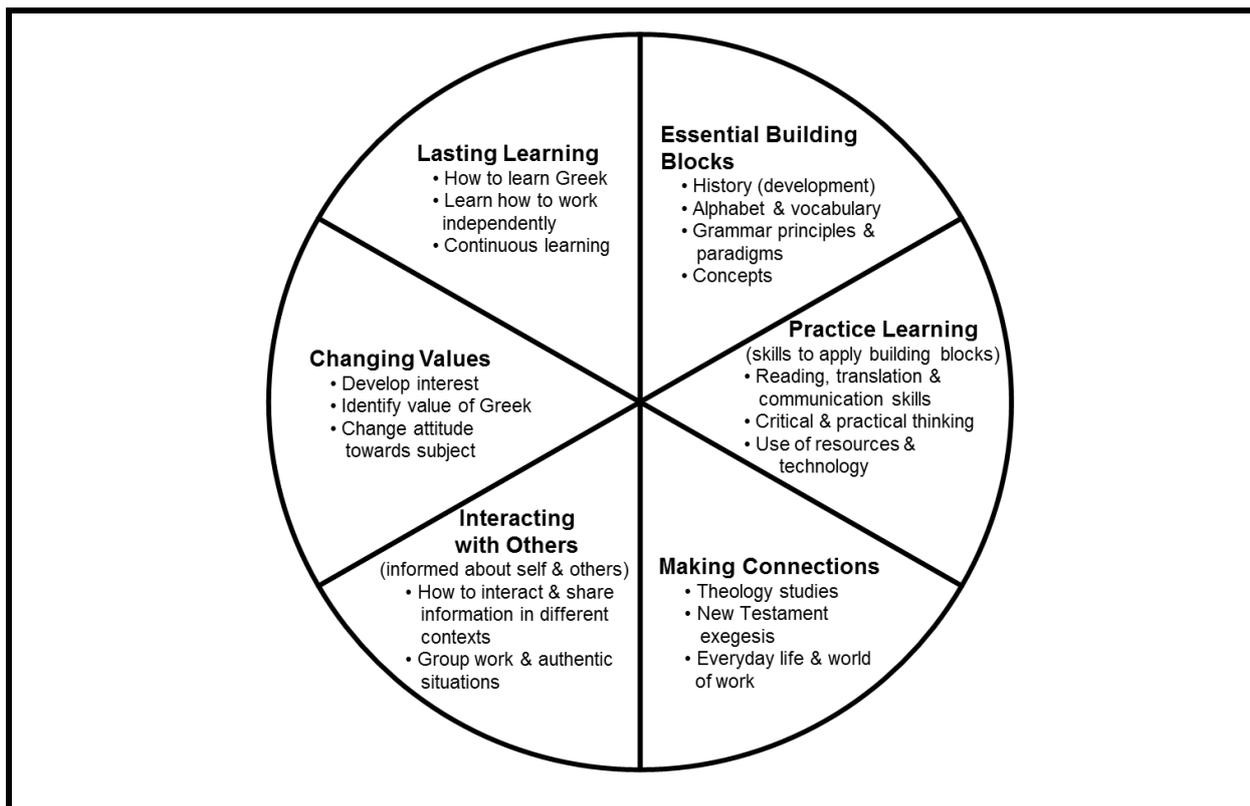
same level of intrinsic motivation is not reached if they are learning just because they need the credits or because they are told to do it. *Changing Values* is therefore suggested for the *Caring* segment in the case of Hellenistic Greek (see Figure 4.3).

4.3.2.6 *Learning How to Learn*

During their studies, students also have to learn something about the process of learning itself. This kind of learning, according to Fink (2003a:32), “enables students to *continue* learning in the future and to do so with effectiveness”. In helping the students to achieve this goal, lecturers have to teach students how to be good students, how to learn about a particular subject and how to become self-directed learners (Fink 2003a:32; 2003b:9, 12). According to Fink (2003a:56), the only option for addressing these issues is to take a long-term view to learning. Such a view implies that lecturers need to identify the most relevant and important topics in their courses and present them through different kinds of learning. Fink believes such an approach increases the possibility that students will keep on learning, even after the course has ended.

The required foundational knowledge and the ability to apply and integrate this knowledge can be sufficient to pass the compulsory modules of Hellenistic Greek. However, it will not be enough preparation for students to analyse every text or answer every potential question relating to the interpretation of texts for future purposes. Teaching methods should encourage students to work independently and more importantly, to work thoroughly. The aim of teaching should not be to help the students to pass, but rather to equip them with the necessary skills to become lasting (life-long) learners of Greek. Consequently, I refer to this segment as *Lasting Learning* (see Figure 4.3) instead of as *Learning How to Learn*.

The discussion and reasoning in 4.3.2.1-4.3.2.6 substantiate the development of the amended taxonomy presented in Figure 4.3. This taxonomy can be used to evaluate my own values (see 1.2) relating to the teaching of Hellenistic Greek. My values need to include reference to all six of the integrated components. (See 5.3.2 where I discussed this revision as part of my action plan for the future implementation of an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.)



Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

Figure 4.3: Fink's taxonomy of significant learning applied to Hellenistic Greek

Fink's taxonomy, like other taxonomies of learning, can be used when formulating learning goals and seeking ways to assess different kinds of learning (Fink 2009a:2). The following discussion of significant learning goals illuminates this view of Fink. I also used the amended taxonomy (see Figure 4.3) to formulate learning goals for Hellenistic Greek.

4.3.3 Significant learning goals

Lecturers often take a content-centred approach to the formulation of learning goals. It is easy to state, "I want students to learn topic X, Y or Z", but this approach will not necessarily lead to higher cognitive kinds of learning (Fink 2003b:8).

The taxonomy of significant learning has two distinct implications for lecturers if they want to use it when they formulate learning goals (Fink 2003a:33), i.e.:

- Learning goals should include specific content to be mastered, but should also go beyond the relation to foundational knowledge alone.

- A combination of significant learning goals might lead to the creation of interaction and synergy that will enhance students' achievement of significant learning.

Fink (2003a:34; 2009a:2) has formulated the following general set of learning goals that reflect the six kinds of significant learning in his taxonomy:

“By the end of this course, students will ...

1. *understand and remember* the key concepts, terms, principles, facts, and so forth;
2. be able to *use* the content;
3. be able to *relate* this subject to other subjects;
4. identify and understand the *personal and social implications* of knowing about this subject;
5. *care* about this subject – as well as value further learning about the subject; and
6. know *how to keep on learning* about this subject after the course is over.

According to Fink (2003a:81), the aim of lecturers should be to include as many kinds of significant learning as possible when they formulate specific goals for their courses. The taxonomy is interactive in nature and therefore the more kinds of significant learning they include as goals the better each kind of learning will happen. In addition, learning goals should also be linked to the vision and teaching philosophy of the lecturers (Fink 2003a:31).

I adapted the abovementioned general learning goals for Hellenistic Greek. These goals are directly related to the six kinds of significant learning reflected in the segments of the adapted taxonomy (see Figure 4.3) and discussed in 4.3.2.

By the end of their Greek studies, students will ...

1. understand and remember the essential building blocks of Hellenistic Greek, i.e. history (development), alphabet, prescribed vocabulary, basic grammar principles, paradigms and important concepts;

2. be able to apply the essential building blocks to practice, i.e. use building blocks mentioned at 1 in grammar, reading and translation exercises, use communication skills in authentic situations, use critical and/or practical thinking skills during assignments and analytical discussions of texts, and use resources and technology effectively while working with texts;
3. be able to make necessary connections between Hellenistic Greek and theology studies, New Testament exegesis and authentic situations relating to their world of work;
4. know how to interact with others and how to share information in different contexts by being informed about themselves and other people (students and people in world of work) and by interacting with others during group work and in authentic situations;
5. have changed values and attitudes towards Hellenistic Greek if they developed an interest for the language and realised its value for theology studies and future ministry; and
6. keep on learning about Hellenistic Greek (lasting learning) if they know how to learn and how to work independently.

Earlier in this paragraph, I referred to two implications the use of Fink's taxonomy have for lecturers if they use it when they formulate learning goals (Fink 2003a:33). The six formulated learning goals for Hellenistic Greek also reflect the notion of the implications. The learning of the specified content goes beyond foundational knowledge alone and extends to application and integration and eventually to lasting learning. This interaction and synergy will most likely enhance students' achievements in this language.

A variety of innovative approaches to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek is presented in the following section and then compared to Fink's taxonomy and the amended taxonomy for Hellenistic Greek (see Table 4.2).

4.4 SELECTED INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HELLENISTIC GREEK

An exploration of six different approaches to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek is presented in this section. In my opinion, the selected approaches all reflect one or more aspects of innovation relating to the teaching of a classical language. The discussion commences with an overview of the *multisensory approach* suggested by Masciantonio (1969) and an approach suggested by Winters (2003), which is characterised by the use of *inscriptions* (see 4.4.1 and 4.4.2, respectively). This is followed by Anhalt's (2006) suggestion for *essay assignments* (see 4.4.3), and a description of Anderson's (2004) *model for second-year college Latin* (see 4.4.4). The final two approaches include the use of *electronic resources* as proposed by various authors (see 4.4.5) and Countryman's (1993) suggestions that emphasise *reading and exegesis* (see 4.4.6).

This exploration is supplemented by a comparison of the selected innovative approaches to Fink's taxonomy and a discussion in which this comparison is evaluated (see 4.4.7).

4.4.1 Multisensory approach (Masciantonio)

It is obvious, however, that if our plans for Classical Greek in the city public schools are to succeed, innovative instructional materials are a *sine qua non*.

(Masciantonio 1969:322)

According to him, textbooks and the more traditional grammar-translation approaches to the Greek language take little or no cognisance of exciting new developments in language instruction in recent years. He therefore suggests a multisensory approach for the Greek instructional system. This suggestion is made within the context of secondary school education but I believe his approach can also be applied to the teaching of Hellenistic Greek at tertiary institutions, since it is the students' first encounter with the language.

Masciantonio (1969:322) proposes a strictly aural-oral approach to the initial teaching of Greek. This aural-oral approach involves the teaching of proverbs, famous

quotations and simple greetings to students at the beginning of their first course in Greek. Students learn to control the alphabet and other lexical and structural items aurally and orally before seeing them in written form or reading them. According to Masciantonio (1969:322), many lecturers believe that a sound oral foundation will ultimately lead to a more natural reading ability and serves to heighten student interest. In this approach, the writing of Greek is introduced only after reading of the language is mastered.

In addition to this aural-oral approach, Masciantonio (1969:322) states that “[m]odern American boys and girls have come to expect tapes, filmstrips, records, films, charts, etc., as an integral part of foreign-language instruction. Let’s not disappoint them. Let’s bring Greek instruction into the Space Age”. Support for such a multisensory approach is found in Silzer and Finley’s (2004:215-219) discussion of *learning style preferences*. According to them, these learning styles are “based on the way we prefer to receive information. We can each learn in more than one way, and we often learn better by using more than one of these strategies”. Learners can give preference to their visual, auditory or tactile senses and an innovative approach to teaching has to incorporate these different learning styles.

4.4.2 Inscriptions (Winters)

Winters (2003:291) is of the opinion that “the more exposure students have to unaltered texts from the very beginning of their language instruction, the better off they will be when it comes time to make that jump to connected passages of ‘real’ Greek”. If lecturers only use adapted sentences or texts during the teaching process (or use them for too long), the students will find it difficult to read the ‘real’ Greek later. Bridging this gap between factitious sentences or texts and unadulterated passages, therefore, is one of the many challenges of teaching Greek and one that might benefit from innovation (Winters 2003:291).

Winters (2003:289) describes inscriptions (epigraphy) as a powerful teaching tool since it presents the students with first-hand texts from the ancient world and also serves as a useful link to the culture and language of that world. One example of epigraphy is memorial stones – a familiar concept to contemporary students (Winters 2003:290). The Athenians cut the names of the fallen soldiers into pieces of marble

and erected the marble in designated places. Winters (2003:291) agrees that it might be difficult to comprehend how a list of ancient names can be meaningfully integrated with the teaching of Greek, but then explains: “Their very simplicity is the key, for I use them during the opening week of class when students are struggling to decipher the alphabet and learn pronunciation. A simple list of names demands no grammatical explanation and provides abundant variety of letter combinations for the students to practise reading aloud.” Students therefore gain practice in deciphering the alphabet and pronouncing letters and words even before they have learned any grammar at all.

Inscriptions such as the following example can also be used in the teaching of elementary grammar.

ΠΕΙΚΟΝ ΕΥΧΣΑΜΕΝΟΣ ΚΕΡΑΜΕΥΣ ΔΕΚΑΤΕΝ ΑΝΕΘΕΚΕΝ ΤΑΘΕΝΑΙΑΙ

Peikon the potter dedicated in prayer a tenth to Athena.

This example provides the opportunity to explain the meaning of cases since it contains a subject in the nominative, a direct object in the accusative and an indirect object in the dative. The lecturer will also be able to explain the agreement between verb and subject, apposition and one of the basic uses of the participle from this example (Winters 2003:293). An analysis of the inscription is provided in Table 4.1.

Contrary to what people may believe, inscriptions are not difficult to find and do not always use difficult Greek (Winters 2003:289). Some inscriptions may have peculiar formula or legal terminology, but not all texts are equally challenging. Lecturers can choose from a wide variety of inscriptions, ranging from simple lists of names to complex treaties, which vary in their degree of difficulty. The standard corpus, *Inscriptiones Graecae*, and two other collections (*Greek Historical Inscriptions* and *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*) provide plenty of material for use at various levels. Lecturers can also find inscriptions from a website maintained by the American Society of Greek and Latin Epigraphy (ASGLE) (Winters 2003:289, 290).

Table 4.1 Analysis of the inscription:

ΠΕΙΚΟΝ ΕΥΧΣΑΜΕΝΟΣ ΚΕΡΑΜΕΥΣ ΔΕΚΑΤΕΝ ΑΝΕΘΕΚΕΝ ΤΑΘΕΝΑΙΑΙ

GREEK	MEANING	EXPLANATION
ΠΕΙΚΟΝ	Peikon	nominative as subject
ΕΥΧΣΑΜΕΝΟΣ	in prayer	participle – modify subject
ΚΕΡΑΜΕΥΣ	the potter	nominative noun in apposition to subject
ΔΕΚΑΤΕΝ	a tenth	accusative as direct object
ΑΝΕΘΕΚΕΝ	dedicated	verb – third singular to agree with subject
ΤΑΘΕΝΑΙΑΙ	to Athena	dative as indirect object

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

4.4.3 Essay assignments (Anhalt)

According to Anhalt (2006:45), students will make running lists of parsed words and words they find difficult to identify and they will even include summaries of grammatical functions they are unsure of when they are working with texts. These lists assist students in reading the text and making literal translations. Reading and translation may be useful when they have to discuss the content of a text or consider some stylistic and thematic effects. According to Anhalt (2006:45, 46), however, it is not possible to discuss complex textual issues if students only read and translate a text without any in-depth consideration of what the text actually says. To reach the whole objective of being able to read, translate *and* analyse the Greek texts, Anhalt (2006:46) proposes the use of essay assignments, especially for intermediate and advanced students.

Students start with this essay assignment by making their own literal translation of a given text. During this part of the assignment, they can use the word-list approach discussed above. Afterwards, however, they have to consider the process of translation and the decisions translators have to make by comparing two translations of the given passage with the original text (and with their own literal translation). The aim of the comparison is to examine the vocabulary, style, syntax and tone of the translations. They then have to decide whether the translators stayed close to the literal meaning of the original text or made their own interpretations. Students have to present their findings in an essay. According to Anhalt (2006:47), students will realise

that fidelity to one aspect of a text inevitably entails faithlessness to another. During the examination of diverse passages and translations, students not only have to read and translate, but they have to analyse the text (and translations) as well.

If lecturers experience some problems in selecting appropriate texts to use in these essay assignments, a suggestion by Masciantonio (1985:29) may be helpful. He suggests that lecturers compile their own anthologies for their students. Material can be selected according to the needs and abilities of the students and since the anthology will be flexible, the lecturer can add or remove material at any time.

4.4.4 Model for second-year college Latin (Anderson)

It was confirmed in 3.4.1.3 that problems might arise when the main (or only) objective for Greek study is to produce translations. Anderson (2004:433) is one of the authors who have identified the shortcomings of a system where (flawless) translations are more important than critical reflection on textual issues. Some of the students in his second-year Latin course were ready for reading, but others needed intensive and very basic review. “I faced the danger of numbing the better students with what was to them trivial detail and equally of eroding the confidence (no small part of the process of learning) and interest of the others by presenting them only with opportunities to fail.” (Anderson 2004:433) To address this problem, Anderson developed a model for teaching Latin to second-year college students. Since I experience similar problems (flawless translation without deep/significant learning) in Greek, I believe this model of Anderson can also be applied to the teaching of Greek.

Anderson (2004:434-435) administered a diagnostic test at the beginning of the semester and used the results to divide his class of 26 into eight groups. The groups had to work together and each group had students from the upper third, the middle third, and the lower third of the class. He posted an unaltered Latin text online to the entire class at the end of a week. He then made different portions of the text available to each group on their respective discussion boards using the university’s online learning tool. The groups all ended up with two or three sentences of grammatically contained Latin and had to produce a *grammatical commentary* for their peers. Anderson played the part of an ‘extra’ member in the groups and monitored discussions and answered questions with questions.

Time was allocated during the first two periods of a week (Monday and Tuesday) for groups to work together on their commentaries. They could use the online dictionary and other information provided by Anderson in class. Formal grammar review also took place in the first two periods. The groups had to submit electronic versions of their respective sections of the commentary by Tuesday at midnight. Anderson then consolidated the commentary and posted it online again by mid-morning Wednesday. Students could then use the compiled commentary to prepare the initial text for reading and discussion during the next two periods (Wednesday and Thursday). Anderson emphasises that discussions concentrated on points of grammar, semantics, style and historical context and not only on 'producing the translation'. Later in the semester commentaries were produced much more rapidly and Anderson gave the students fewer and less detailed hints. The students began to know certain grammar entries by heart and could refer back to good comments on similar problems. In the end, the students spent less time on the mechanics of a sentence and more on style and meaning (Anderson 2004:434-435).

Anderson (2004:436-437) does not regard his model as a "picture perfect system", but has still identified a number of immediate pedagogical benefits:

- A lecturer's preparation time was concentrated on Wednesday mornings, but minimal at other times.
- An equal balance between acquisition and maturation of syntax knowledge and reading of unedited texts was maintained.
- Technology was introduced into the learning process.
- A lecturer could control the selection and posting of passages – giving more difficult passages to the groups which had 'got it together', without obviously benefiting any single group.
- A lecturer could manage the support and additional information given to each group in order to encourage students to look for solutions on their own first.
- Superior students were put in the position of being tutors to weaker students in the groups – they were forced to re-evaluate their own knowledge while trying to explain the work to others.

- Students were actively engaged in identifying problems, in finding and assessing possible solutions, and in presenting their solutions to their classmates.

Anderson (2004:438) concludes the evaluation of his model by stating,

... I feel that this is a highly adaptable and transferable model for teaching second-year Latin (perhaps even beyond), useful for a range of student abilities and interests. ... all [the students] improved both in their ability to read the texts and in their ability to observe the grammar.

4.4.5 Electronic auxiliary tools (various authors)

Some teachers, according to Culley (1984:3), only use electronic tools for testing and evaluation without the expectation that instruction has to come from it. This involves “testing the student on the computer at frequent intervals and having the machine prescribe additional or remedial work based on performance”. The computer is, however, also used to teach in a more direct way, “either by imparting new information (tutorial), building skill in using information already acquired (drill and practice), or integrating skills into a larger context and applying them (problem solving or simulation)” (Culley 1984:4).

According to Jordaan (2004:238), Greek professors on all continents find it difficult to decide if Greek ought to be taught with or without electronic auxiliary tools. Lecturers also differ on when these tools should be introduced to students *if* they decide on their inclusion in the curriculum. Jordaan (2004:238) also cautions against an over-emphasis on electronic auxiliary tools and states, “The outcome: ‘Learners should be able to interpret any New Testament Greek passage with the auxiliary tools’ poses certain problems.” He is of the opinion that students lose their analytical capabilities because the computer programme is doing the analysis for them. Consequently, they struggle to analyse or interpret a text without their tools.

Electronic auxiliary tools are part of the approach followed by the North West University in teaching New Testament Greek (Jordaan 2004:237). The basics of the Greek language are taught to students during the first semester. The *basics* include the alphabet, nouns, certain cases, verbs and vocabulary, with emphasis on

syntaxes where students should know the function of each word in a sentence. Students are introduced to electronic auxiliary tools like *BibleWorks* and *Libronix* during the second semester. At the end of the year, students write a twenty-four hour open book examination on an unknown Greek passage and they may use any auxiliary tools at home to complete the examination. The aim is to simulate an authentic situation where a minister prepares a sermon from a Greek text.

In principle, I agree with this approach where the auxiliary tools are introduced *after* the basics of the Greek language were taught. However, I do have doubts if one semester of 'basic' training is enough. If they learn to use the tools too early, they might feel it is not necessary to learn a fair amount of foundational knowledge – which is needed to interpret the information derived by means of the tools.

I found support for my concerns in an article by Gorry (2006/2007) in which he reflects on his own learning of Greek. Apart from traditional materials (texts, commentaries, dictionaries, lexicons) he made use of the *Perseus Digital Library (Perseus)* – a repository containing hypertext versions of Greek texts. A single click on any word opens up a list of possible forms and meanings or comprehensive dictionary entries. English translations are just another click away. At some stage, Gorry regarded the use of Perseus as “an ‘efficient’ approach to Greek, quite in keeping with the accelerated pace of modern life”. However, Gorry (2006/2007:157) also admits that his intense use of Perseus has contributed to the ‘labour and difficulty’ of learning Greek when he states,

For earlier students of Greek, to know vocabulary meant to commit it to memory ... (but) [f]or me, with the meaning of a word only a click away, it was tempting to get just enough of a word’s meaning to move on with my translation ... Again and again I encountered words whose meaning I had previously retrieved, but had not really learned.

According to Gorry (2006/2007:157), there are two ways to approach Greek – one, where the emphasis is on speed and information retrieval and which responds to demands of the Information Age, and another, which facilitates ‘knowing Greek’ through emphasis on patience and care. He concludes that the use of the internet (electronic auxiliary tools) is important in the study of Greek, but that it should be

used judiciously by taking time to “add thin layers of understanding to older ones” (Gorry 2006/2007:158).

In my opinion, the challenge lies in finding the fine balance between teaching students to use electronic auxiliary tools in an integrated manner and creating the opportunity for them to rely too heavily or solely on the tools instead of their knowledge of Greek.

4.4.6 Reading and exegesis (Countryman)

In his book, *The New Testament is in Greek. A short course for exegetes*, Countryman (1993:xiii) offers a one-semester introduction to the use of Hellenistic Greek in the New Testament. The aim of the book is not to teach students skills or facility with the language that can only be the result of years of reading and working with the language, or to convey a year’s worth of Greek in one semester. Countryman (1993:xiii) describes the rationale behind his book and this approach to Greek teaching as follows:

If a single semester of Greek is to be of any value to the student, it needs to be a complete entity in its own right, resulting in usable skills ... (with) the limited goal of giving students with limited time for the language some ability to look behind the facade of modern-language translations, to deal at an elementary level with the Greek text, and to follow discussions in good commentaries and other scholarly works.

The following four basic principles outline his approach (Countryman 1993:xiii-xiv):

1. Emphasis is on reading rather than on learning grammar and syntax rules as if they were a kind of secret code by which the language can be deciphered.
2. Students learn more by habituation than by memorisation – rote memorisation is used only in limited ways to accelerate the learning process.
3. A ‘quick and dirty’ transition from English to Greek grammar is used – a detailed and precise account of the latter is not given according to any particular school of thought.
4. Exegetical use of Greek is integrated into the language course itself rather than leaving exploration of exegesis entirely for the future.

Countryman (1993:xiv-xv) has designed this approach to introduce students to the reading of New Testament Greek. Concentrated study in grammar and syntax is included, though without much memorisation of paradigms. According to him, “[t]he method stresses the large picture and various ‘rules of thumb’, rather than encouraging a fastidious precision from the beginning. Those students who go on to further Greek courses will find it easy enough to refine the general concepts received here”. A disadvantage, however, can be the fact that students are thrown into the midst of a strange medium of communication which can be very disorienting (Countryman 1993:xv).

4.4.7 Selected innovative approaches, Fink’s taxonomy and the amended taxonomy for Hellenistic Greek: comparison and discussion

During the presentation of Fink’s taxonomy in section 4.3, I referred to the fact that he describes his own taxonomy as a “road map to a variety of significant kinds of learning that goes beyond understand-and-remember and even beyond application learning” (Fink 2003a:xii). In my opinion, an innovative teaching approach (teaching that improves teaching abilities and unlocks new ways of delivering knowledge – as described in 4.2) should include as many components of Fink’s taxonomy as possible.

The selected innovative approaches presented in 4.4.1-4.4.6 were therefore compared to Fink’s taxonomy and the amended taxonomy for Hellenistic Greek. The result of this comparison is presented in Table 4.2. Key features of the selected approaches were plotted under the related components of the taxonomies. The table therefore provides a bird’s eye view of two perspectives: the extent to which the approaches include components of significant learning as described by Fink (or relate to the amended components applied to Hellenistic Greek); and the extent to which the integrated components of the taxonomies are applicable to other innovative approaches.

A brief discussion of this comparison is presented after Table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2 Comparison of innovative approaches against Fink’s taxonomy

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES <i>(as discussed in par. 4.4)</i>	COMPONENTS OF FINK’S TAXONOMY (with adapted components for Hellenistic Greek)					
	Foundational knowledge <i>(Essential building blocks)</i>	Application <i>(Practice learning)</i>	Integration <i>(Making connections)</i>	Human dimension <i>(Interaction with others)</i>	Caring <i>(Changing values)</i>	Learning how to learn <i>(Lasting Learning)</i>
Multisensory (Masciantonio)	... aural-oral approach to the initial teaching of Greek	... teaching of proverbs, famous quotations and simple greetings	... sound oral foundation will ultimately lead to a more natural reading ability*		... also serves to heighten student interest ... visual, auditory or tactile senses*	
Inscriptions (Winters)	... decipher the alphabet ... learn pronunciation and letter combinations ... teaching of elementary grammar	... explain the meaning of cases ... explain verb/subject agreement ... explain use of participle	... first-hand texts from the ancient world ... link to the culture and language of that world	<i>(inscriptions are familiar concepts and applicable to contemporary world)</i>	<i>(inscriptions had a purpose – understanding the purpose enhances the value)</i>	
Essay assignments (Anhalt)	... examine vocabulary, style, syntax and tone of translations	... make own translations ... comparing translations with original text ... read and analyse texts and translations	... consider process of translation ... consider decisions relating to different translations	<i>(evaluation of translations relates to authentic situation)</i>	... present findings in essay	

<p>Model for second-year college Latin (Anderson)</p>	<p>... formal grammar review took place</p>	<p>... used unaltered Latin texts ... improve ability to read texts <i>and</i> observe grammar</p>	<p>... lecturer posted texts online ... students accessed online learning tool ... students could use online dictionary and other information</p>	<p>... groups had to work together ... discussions on grammar, semantics, historical context and translations*</p>	<p>... had to produce grammatical commentary for peers* ...lecturer monitored discussions</p>	<p>... in the end students spent less time on mechanics and more on style and meaning* ... adaptable and transferable model</p>
<p>Electronic auxiliary tools (various authors)</p>	<p>... basics of Greek language is taught in first semester</p>	<p>... students should know the function of each word</p>	<p>... twenty-four-hour open-book exam ... stimulates authentic situation ... uses traditional materials and electronic tools*</p>			
<p>Reading and exegesis (Countryman)</p>	<p>... study of grammar and syntax but without much memorisation</p>	<p>... result in usable skills</p>	<p>... students who continue with Greek find it easy to refine general concepts</p>		<p>... complete entity in own right ... exegetical use of Greek is integrated in language course</p>	

* feature can also be added to preceding components

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

Three interesting findings are derived from the comparison presented in Table 4.2.

- Except for Anderson's *Model for second-year college Latin*, no approach reflected any aspects to plot under *Learning how to learn* with conviction.
- The use of electronic auxiliary resources only included three of the taxonomy's components. Although application and integration (two of those included) are important, I am concerned about the learning that might be lost as a result of the exclusion of the *Human dimension*, *Caring* and *Learning how to learn*.
- I was surprised by the fact that an approach as 'elementary' as the use of ancient *inscriptions* actually included five of the six kinds of learning.

A brief discussion of the comparison of each approach with the components of the taxonomy is presented in the rest of this paragraph.

Multisensory and Inscriptions: These approaches provide opportunity for learning basic foundational knowledge from authentic texts. They also provide a natural link between the world of the authentic text and the world of the student, since inscriptions and quotations are familiar concepts. Students realise that Greek had a purpose in the ancient context and this might change their own feeling about the language and why they have to learn it. Although the approaches have ample opportunity for application and integration of foundational knowledge (using different senses and learning styles), students are not necessarily taught how to learn and keep on learning.

Essay assignments: Students have to do their own translations (applying foundational knowledge) before they compare their translations with the original text and other translations of the same text (integration). As ministers, students will have to work from the original texts and compare different translations during preparation for sermons, or when they have to answer questions by members of the congregation. This approach provides practice in a skill they need and will definitely use in future. This might help the students to identify the value of Greek study.

Model for second-year college Latin: This is a very well-balanced approach. The nature of the assignment the students receive requires knowledge and/or skills from the majority of Fink's components. To compile a grammatical commentary, they need

knowledge about grammar and resources (foundational knowledge) and how to use these (application). They are working in groups (human dimension) and with online tools (integration). The fact that students eventually spent less time on mechanics and more on style, might be an indication that deep learning takes place. They are applying and integrating knowledge (they have acquired when working with one text) to other texts.

Electronic auxiliary tools: Students learn the basics of Greek as well as the basics about resources. They also get the opportunity to apply and integrate their knowledge when they use the resources during preparation or exercises. The main concern I have with this approach is the fact that future learning of the language is substituted with speed and information retrieval. By this, I mean that students will rather keep on using their tools instead of committing foundational knowledge to memory, because they think it is faster. Ironically, their basic knowledge will only fade over time. Incorporation of tools can be very innovative, but the identified pitfalls must be kept in mind.

Reading and exegesis: The great value of this approach lies in the fact that exegetical use of Greek is integrated with the language teaching itself. Since exegesis forms a major part of theology students' New Testament studies and their work in ministry, this approach may be effective. The students learn a process (a skill) they are going to use. Even though Countryman (1993:xv) feels that students who continue with Greek find it easy to refine general concepts, I have my doubts if they will be able to analyse complex texts if the focus was on the process of exegesis and not on a solid grammatical foundation as well. If the components of foundational knowledge and application can be extended, this can be a very successful innovative approach.

The comparison and discussion in this paragraph substantiate my original excitement about Fink's taxonomy and its possible applicability to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (see values in 1.2). It was also very interesting to note how many of the suggestions student participants made during the focus-group discussions, related to aspects and/or problems discussed after the comparison between the taxonomies and selected innovative approaches. Suggestions from student

participants on how to improve the teaching of Hellenistic Greek are therefore presented in the next section.

4.5 STUDENT SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE TEACHING OF HELLENISTIC GREEK

In paragraph 4.2, two features of innovative teaching were mentioned, i.e. *improving teaching abilities and skills* and *unlocking new ways for transmitting learning content*. With these features in mind, I asked the student participants during the four focus-group discussions (semi-structured interviews) to make suggestions on how the teaching of Hellenistic Greek could be improved. Focus group 1 and 2 consisted of first- and second-year theology students, respectively. Group 3 consisted of third-, fourth- and fifth-year students and group 4 of final-year students. By applying the process of thematic analysis explained in 2.3.3, I analysed the suggestions from each group. The categories that were generated during this analysis and selected suggestions illustrative of the specific categories are presented in Tables 4.3-4.5. A discussion of the students' suggestions is given after the tables.

Table 4.3 Selected suggestions from FG 1 to improve the teaching of Hellenistic Greek

Categories	Selected suggestions illustrative of the specific category
methodology	. . . format made Greek very 'user-friendly' from beginning – everything happened step-by-step – had time to master each 'step'
	. . . do not hesitate to repeat basic principles regularly – students 'grasp' many things only after the fifth or sixth repetition!
relevance	. . . it will be nice to know what is expected of us at the beginning of a semester
group work and exercises	. . . want to do more assignments with unseen passages (translation not in GMB)
	. . . include more group work – helping one another is good
	. . . reading work and exercises make learning easier
translations	. . . provide more information on why different translations of the Bible exist

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

Table 4.4 Selected suggestions from FG 2 to improve the teaching of Hellenistic Greek

Categories	Selected suggestions illustrative of the specific category
methodology	. . . keep 'basics' (lectures, assignments, tests) in the first year, BUT change the second year to be more practical (teach us computer programmes we can/will use in ministry)
	. . . concentrate more on vocabulary and the ability to translate
	. . . must translate more non-Biblical texts/sources
	. . . read and translate smaller parts (shorter passages) of certain text types but include a larger variety of texts/chapters
relevance	. . . would have been nice if texts were the same as for New Testament exegesis
	. . . incorporate piece of exegesis or sermon at beginning of Greek studies to show relevance
	. . . integrate theological meaning of texts into reading of passages
group work and exercises	. . . want more group work – it is constructive when everyone works together
resources and assessment	. . . must be allowed to use resources with translation/parsing in tests and exams
	. . . teach us to work with computer programmes
	. . . must be allowed to write open-book exams – why must we rote learn now if we are going to use all our resources later when preparing sermons?
translations	. . . give practical examples of HOW Greek differ from Afrikaans translation and explain why
	. . . explain differences between the 1933 (more literal) and 1983 (new) Afrikaans translations

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

Table 4.5 Selected suggestions from FG 3 and FG 4 to improve the teaching of Hellenistic Greek

Categories	Selected suggestions illustrative of the specific category
methodology	. . . tutorials were meaningful – tutor could help when needed
	. . . non-Biblical texts help to enhance vocabulary; to read and understand better
	. . . fixed schedule might help and 'force' us to work continuously – can prepare in advance – can ask questions in class – be part of discussions in class
	. . . like variation/variety of methods – not the same every day
	. . . focus less on information a computer programme can give

	. . . students must prepare texts in advance and discuss it in class – not only grammar, but also more practical exegesis
	. . . do not present Greek and Hebrew simultaneously
	. . . try to make Greek a less intimidating experience for first-year students – fear of not passing forced them to use shortcuts and that does not enhance learning
relevance	. . . add elementary form of exegesis in the first year to emphasise relevance of Greek
	. . . provide more guidance in terms of why certain subjects are necessary
	. . . integrate study of Greek more with rest of theology studies, especially New Testament
	. . . dedicate a class or two to indicate <i>how</i> Greek can be used in sermon preparation/Bible study
group work and exercises	. . . group work – learn from one another and students at the same level
	. . . do more practical work with language, i.e. frequent exercises and group work – it promoted better comprehension
	. . . more exercises and tests to enhance long-term memory
resources and assessment	. . . introduce us to other resources and teach us how to use them effectively
	. . . use and teach us to use commentaries in class – must be ‘comm-literate’
	. . . teach us how to use dictionaries and commentaries and computer resources
	. . . give/allow more open-book tests/assignments/exams
	. . . more exercises and tests to enhance long-term memory
translations	. . . focus more on reading, translation and vocabulary – in order to read texts easier – not to focus on parsing and textual criticism – a computer programme can give that

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

4.5.1 Methodology

A student from FG 3 suggested that lecturers “[t]ry to make Greek a less intimidating experience for first-year students – fear of not passing forced them to use short cuts and that does not enhance learning” (see Table 4.5). After this remark was made, I asked the rest of the group if they agreed with the student’s view and suggestion. There was general agreement among the interviewees who felt the stigma that ‘Greek is difficult and not relevant’ preceded students’ registration for the module. A student from FG 4 suggested Greek and Hebrew should not be presented simultaneously to first-year students (see Table 4.5).

Other suggestions in this category related to the teaching approach and content of the module being taught. A student from FG 1 described the step-by-step approach that was followed in their module, as very 'user-friendly' and suggested similar future approaches. The approach allowed time to master a specific portion of work before advancing to new work (see Table 4.3). In addition to this view, a student from FG 3 suggested that the lecturer followed a fixed schedule. According to the student, a schedule will allow them to prepare in advance and the preparation will enable them to take part in discussions or raise questions in class (see Table 4.4). The implementation of tutorials was suggested by a student from FG 4 (see Table 4.5) and the use of various teaching methods, with enough opportunity for repetition by students from FG 1 and FG 3, respectively (see Tables 4.3 and 4.5). A greater emphasis on vocabulary and the ability to translate were suggested by a student from FG 2 (see Table 4.4). Two other students supported this by stating, "Focus more on reading, translation and vocabulary and not on parsing and textual criticism" (see Table 4.5), and "read and translate smaller parts (shorter passages) of certain text types but include a larger variety of texts/chapters" (see Table 4.4). A suggestion was also made to change the second year of Greek to be more practical – a student from FG 2 said, "Teach us computer programmes we can and will use in ministry." (see Table 4.4)

Some aspects regarding methodology (especially relating to translation, resources and group work) are also discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

4.5.2 Relevance (bigger picture)

Two suggestions provide an introduction for this category: "It will be nice to know at the beginning of a semester what is expected of us" (student from FG 1 – see Table 4.3) and "Give more guidance in terms of why certain subjects are necessary." (student from FG 3 – see Table 4.5) Students not only expressed the need to understand the relevance of studying Greek; they also made suggestions on how to improve this awareness among future students. Students from FG 2 and FG 3 suggested that the study of Greek should be integrated more with theology studies, and especially with New Testament modules (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5). When the students made these suggestions, I asked them if they had specific suggestions on

how the integration could be accomplished. The following (very practical and simple) suggestions were made in response:

- Incorporate a piece of exegesis or sermon at the beginning of Greek studies to show relevance (see Table 4.4).
- Add an elementary form of exegesis in the first year to emphasise the relevance of Greek (see Table 4.5).
- Dedicate a class or more to indicate *how* Greek can be used in sermon preparation and/or Bible study (see Table 4.5).

4.5.3 Group work and exercises

Suggestions on doing more group work and exercises as a way of improving the teaching (and learning) of Hellenistic Greek came from all the focus groups. One student from FG 1 found that “reading work and exercises make learning easier” and another one from the same group implied that group work provided students with an opportunity to help one another (see Table 4.3). A student from FG 2 regarded group work as constructive since everyone works together (see Table 4.4). Students from FG 3 were of the opinion that more practical work with Greek enhanced their long-term memory and helped them to understand the language better (see Table 4.5).

4.5.4 Resources and assessment

Several of the suggestions in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 are labelled as ‘resources’, and probably emphasise the importance of this aspect to students. Students from FG 2, FG 3 *and* FG 4 suggested that lecturers should introduce students to different resources (i.e. dictionaries, commentaries and electronic resources) and teach them how to use the resources effectively when working with Greek texts. Remarks about resources were generally closely linked with remarks about assessment. Students from FG 2, FG 3 *and* FG 4 suggested that they should be allowed to write open-book examinations and use resources when they do translation and/or parsing in tests and exams (see Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5). A student from FG 2 (see Table 4.4) motivated the use of resources with the following remark: “Why must we rote learn now if we are going to use all our resources later when preparing sermons?”

4.5.5 Translations

According to a student from FG 1, more information should be given on why different translations of the Bible (especially the New Testament) exist (see Table 4.3). A student from FG 2 had a similar request: “Explain differences between the 1933 (more literal) and 1983 (new) Afrikaans translations.” (see Table 4.4) Lecturers should also include more practical examples and explanations of how and why the Greek text differs from Afrikaans translations (see Table 4.4). (Since the Greek text is closer to the original text of the New Testament, I assume the student meant, “Why the Afrikaans translations differ from the Greek text”.)

Students based their suggestions on how to improve the teaching of Hellenistic Greek on previous and/or current experiences relating to the teaching of Greek. Therefore, I am of the opinion that a teaching and learning approach based on a combination of all these suggestions may probably be viewed as an (integrated) innovative approach for the teaching of Greek. The abovementioned suggestions can be viewed as features (directives) of such an innovative approach (see 5.2). If this approach is to be evaluated against Fink’s taxonomy, I believe correspondence will be found with all six the components. Correspondence will probably also be found with aspects from selected innovative approaches discussed in 4.4.

4.6 CONCLUSION

According to Fink (2003a:171), innovative teaching may represent a major departure from lecturers’ current practice and that means making major changes and taking some risks. Avoiding innovation, however, condemns lecturers to stagnation, which leads to an inability to improve and grow professionally as a teacher. Fink (2003a:171) identifies two key challenges in this decision to be innovative, i.e. “accepting the risk of doing something new, and maintaining a positive self-image throughout the change process”.

Lecturers should therefore aim to change continually if they want to improve their teaching. According to Fink (2003a:174) this change involves major restructuring in the way a lecturer thinks about teaching and about him-/herself as a teacher. Fink (2003a:57) also states,

If students learn how to apply the content, can see how it connects with other knowledge, understand the human implications of what they have learned, and come to care about the subject and about learning how to keep on learning, it seems much likelier that they will both retain what they have learned and continue to enlarge their knowledge after the course is over.

I believe this should be the aim of teaching and especially of innovative teaching of Hellenistic Greek. Therefore, my aim with this study was to investigate the most appropriate features/directives that could lead to a validated action plan for the implementation of an innovative approach (see 1.4). The directives and action plan are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DIRECTIVES AND AN ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HELLENISTIC GREEK

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I continue to address the second part of Whitehead's fourth question relating to educational action research – *What will I do?* This question led to the final research question of the study (see 1.3) – *What directives characterise an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?* Therefore, the aim of the chapter is to compile directives and draft an action plan for the implementation of an innovative approach, and to have the directives *and* action plan validated by role players and experts in the field of study (see objectives 4 and 5 in 1.4).

Chapter 5 comprises three main sections. The first section commences with an exposition of the proposed set of directives (see 5.2.1). This is followed by a proposed actualisation of an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (see 5.2.2) and an illustrative example of this approach (see 5.2.3). In subsequent sections a possible action plan for implementing this innovative approach is outlined (see 5.3) and the validation of the directives and action plan is discussed (see 5.4).

5.2 DIRECTIVES FOR AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HELLENISTIC GREEK

Evidence relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek for theology studies and possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context of the language emerged from Chapter 3, while evidence relating to innovation and the improvement of the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek emerged from Chapter 4. This evidence led to the compilation of a set of directives for an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.

5.2.1 Directives relating to specific areas within the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek where innovation was needed

Specific areas, relating to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek in which innovation was needed, were identified. The proposed directives were therefore grouped according to these areas, resulting in *seven sets* of directives. These sets, with a number of directives included in each, are presented in this paragraph. Although some logic may be visible in the order in which the directives are presented, it is important to note that the sets of directives are relational and not linear (see Figure 5.1 in 5.2.2). (In avoiding the unnecessary repetition of ‘the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek’, I refer to *the course* in subsequent paragraphs.)

5.2.1.1 *Situational factors*

The following directives relating to situational factors are proposed.

- Take note of the **specific context** in which the course is presented.
Possible guiding questions: Is it an undergraduate or postgraduate course? At what level of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is the course presented? What is the frequency and duration of contact sessions?
- Identify **external expectations** that might have an influence on the course.
Possible guiding questions: What is the larger curricular context and field of study of the course – Language studies and/or theology studies? What are the expectations of the Faculty of Theology at the UFS (and specifically the department of New Testament studies) of this course?
- Determine the characteristics and profile of **learners** (students) registering for the course.
Possible guiding questions: What is their prior knowledge of Hellenistic Greek, if any? What are their preconceived ideas and/or levels of anxiety? Do they follow a deep or surface approach to learning? What is their learning styles – visual, oral, aural and/or a combination?
- Determine the characteristics of the **lecturer** presenting the course.
Possible guiding questions: What are the teaching values (philosophy) of the lecturer and how will these possibly influence his/her approach to and teaching of this course?

5.2.1.2 *Relevance*

The following directives relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek are proposed.

- Help (contemporary) students to realise the relevance of studying this ancient language by giving them the **bigger picture** of where the study of Hellenistic Greek fits into their theology studies (see 3.4.1.5).
- Help students to **bridge the cultural and linguistic gap** to interpret a text according to its specific context by exposing them to unaltered texts, e.g. inscriptions or quotes (see 3.4.1.1 and 4.4.2).
- Give them an **introduction on the value** and usefulness of the course by emphasising the benefits it has to offer for their theology studies and work in future. One way in which this can be done is by asking a lecturer from New Testament studies to present a short introduction on exegesis (see 4.5.2).
- Explain the **aim** and **objectives** of the course to students in good time (as early as possible). Objectives have to include reference to the fact that they must be able to read, translate *and* analyse Greek texts (see 3.4.1.3).

5.2.1.3 *Content*

The following directives relating to the content of Hellenistic Greek are proposed.

- Include content relating to the **history** of Hellenistic Greek (see 3.4.2.1).
The following aspects should be covered: the general history and development of the Greek language (see 3.2.1); the development of the common or koiné dialect – also referred to as Hellenistic Greek (see 3.2.2); the special nature of New Testament Greek and the reasons why this Greek differs from ancient Greek (see 3.2.3).
- Include essential building blocks relating to **grammar**.
The following aspects should be covered: Greek alphabet; basic grammar paradigms and principles; basic vocabulary consisting of the words with the highest frequency in the New Testament; explanation of concepts (e.g. reading, translating) and terminology (e.g. case, mood, parsing, explaining) within the context of Hellenistic Greek.
- Include **New Testament and Patristic texts** in the content (not only New Testament texts).
- Include a study of **translations** and translation principles.

The following aspects should be covered: information on available translations – reasons *why* different translations of the Bible (especially the New Testament) exist, and *how* (to what extent) they differ; skills to evaluate the differences between translations and the implications of these differences for the interpretation of the text; basic translation principles to adhere to when translating and or evaluating translations (see 4.5.5).

5.2.1.4 Teaching approach

The following directives relating to the teaching approach are proposed.

- Follow a teaching approach characterised by a **balance between an inductive and a deductive approach**.
Avoid using *only* an approach where students have to learn a significant portion of grammar (or almost the entire language) before they are introduced to the reading of actual New Testament texts where they can apply their knowledge during translation (deductive). Also avoid an approach where students start reading and working directly from the Greek text without any “tools” (knowledge/comprehension of grammar) to analyse the text (see 3.4.1.2).
- Follow a **multisensory approach**.
Be aware of the different learning styles and ways in which students prefer to receive information – through visual, auditory and/or tactile senses (see 4.4.1).
- Make use of **variation** in the approach to teaching Hellenistic Greek.
Students experienced teaching as negative when lecturing was the only mode of delivery and requested more interaction from the lecturer and with one another (group work). Students also suggested more exercises/assignments to prepare for and discuss in class (individually or in groups) (see 3.4.2.2, 4.5.1 and 4.5.3).
- Follow an approach that includes **application and integration** of knowledge.
Students requested and/or suggested the following: more assignments with unseen passages to enhance their ability to apply new knowledge; frequent exercises and vocabulary tests (see 3.4.2.2). Essay assignments (see 4.4.3) can also be used to enhance students’ ability to apply and integrate their knowledge in order to reflect on different translations.

5.2.1.5 Assessment

The following directives relating to assessment are proposed.

- Assess students according to the **outcomes** of the course.
Students knew they had to study Greek in order to make interpretations of New Testament texts during exegesis and sermon preparation, but according to them they were only tested on their ability to memorise facts (grammar principles) and give translations (which they also memorised) (see 3.4.2.3).
- Assessment has to reflect **authentic situations**.
This directive also relates to the abovementioned one. In addition, students also knew that they would be able to use resources when they analysed/interpreted texts in future. Therefore, they requested open-book assessment opportunities where they were allowed to use different resources (see 3.4.2.1 and 4.5.4).
- Include **formative and summative** assessment in the course.
Students requested regular assessment opportunities (class tests and assignments) to improve their semester mark (see 3.4.2.3).
- Include assessment on **higher cognitive levels**.
This can be done by asking students to evaluate different translations of a text critically, instead of only making their own translation.

5.2.1.6 Study material

The following directives relating to study material are proposed.

- The prescribed **text book** (and supplementary material) has to support the needs and purposes for teaching Hellenistic Greek and assist the lecturer in reaching his/her teaching goals (see 3.4.1.4).
- The **methodology** of a textbook and supplementary material has to accommodate the balance between an inductive and deductive teaching approach (see 3.4.1.4).
- The textbook and supplementary material have to be available to students in their mother tongue, whenever possible (see 3.4.1.4 and 3.4.2.5). Although students requested a textbook in their mother tongue, **language** cannot be the only deciding factor. Preference should be given to the organisation and methodology of a textbook.

5.2.1.7 Resources

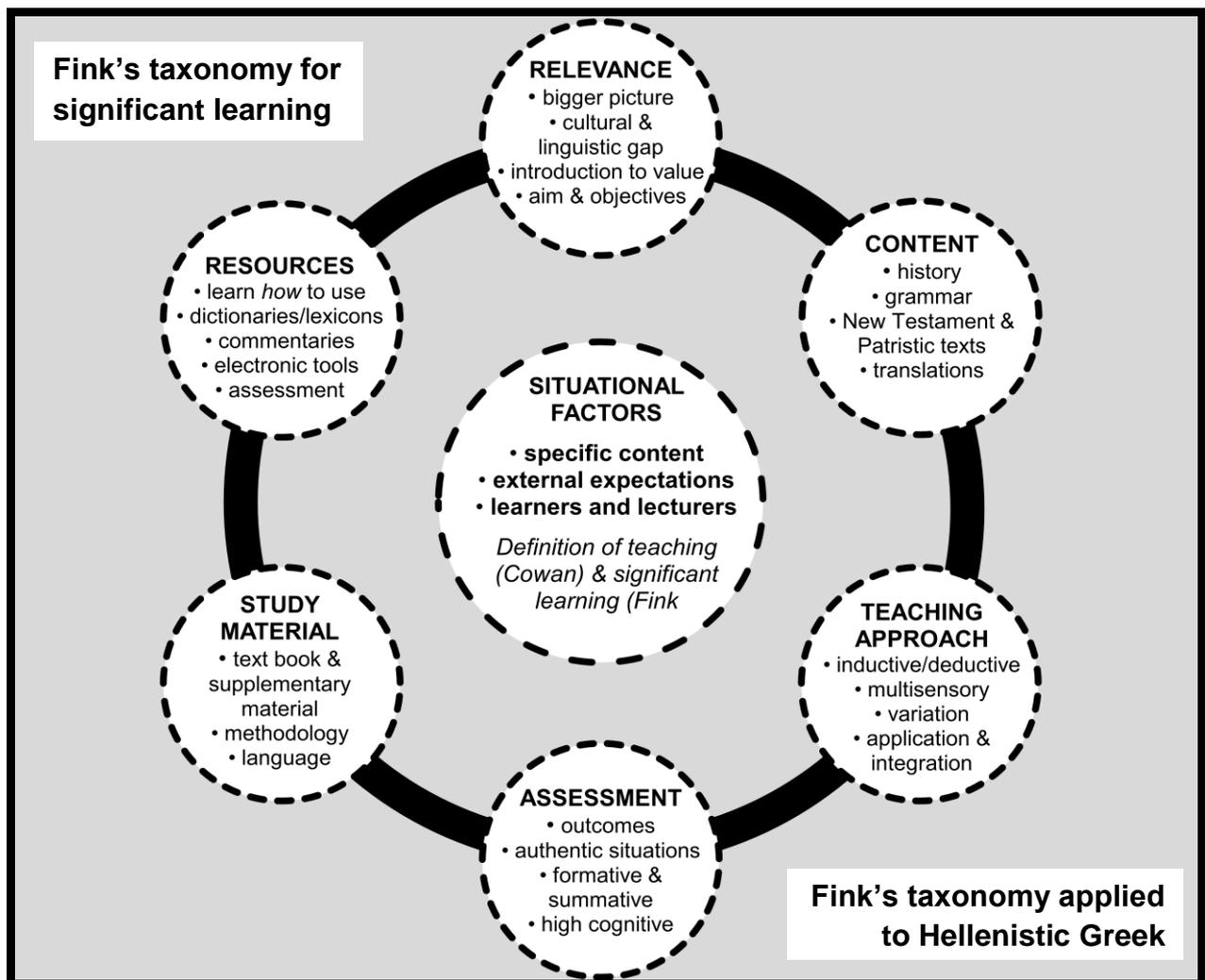
The following directives relating to resources are proposed.

- Students have to (and want to) learn **how to use** resources and theological reference works effectively – to support their knowledge and the application of their knowledge, and not to replace the learning of basic foundational knowledge (see 3.4.1.4 and 3.4.2.4).
- Include a variety of **dictionaries, lexicons, commentaries, interlinear texts and electronic tools** in the course. Explain to students how to use these resources, but also incorporate them in class presentations or even in selected **assessment** opportunities to allow students some practice in the use of the resources (see 3.4.1.4 and 3.4.2.4).
- Include the use of **electronic tools** with caution.
Be aware of the fact that students need a basic foundational knowledge before they are able to interpret the information derived from an electronic tool (see 3.4.3 and 4.4.5).

In isolation, the proposed sets of directives and guiding questions and/or suggestions might not necessarily be viewed as innovative. *Innovation*, however, becomes evident when these directives are adhered to within the proposed actualisation of an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek, as presented in the next paragraph.

5.2.2 Proposed actualisation of an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek

A possible way in which the sets of proposed directives can be actualised is presented visually in Figure 5.1. This presentation takes into account all the evidence regarding the need for an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek, and the possibilities an adapted taxonomy (based on Fink's taxonomy) holds for innovation and change. The suggested approach in Figure 5.1, therefore not only reflects the relationship between the proposed directives, but also accentuates the application of Fink's taxonomy to Hellenistic Greek. A brief discussion on the features of the approach and possible application follows after Figure 5.1.



Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

Figure 5.1: Suggested innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek

The suggested innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek comprises different components with the following features:

- Set 1: situational factors gathered prior to, and used during the implementation of the innovative approach (bigger circle with dotted line in middle).
- Situational factors influence the different sets of proposed directives (indicated by dotted lines encircling these factors and the sets of proposed directives).
- Sets 1-6 of the proposed directives representing the specific areas in which innovation is needed (six smaller circles all around the circle with the situational factors).

- All the directives are equally important and relational – not linear (indicated by six similarly sized circles with dotted lines – organised circularly).
- The sets of directives are connected and support one another (indicated by the uninterrupted [solid] lines connecting the circles).
- The proposed directives must be viewed against the background of Fink’s taxonomy for significant learning (see 4.3.2) and the application of his taxonomy to Hellenistic Greek (see Figure 4.3) (indicated by the shaded background).

In his discussion of situational factors as part of the integrated course design, Fink (2003a:72) also refers to ‘any special situation’ that leads to a pedagogical challenge (see nr (i) in 4.2.3.2). In the innovative approach presented here, two definitions (one of teaching and one of significant learning) represent this pedagogical challenge.

Cowan (2006:100) defines *teaching* as “the purposeful creation of situations from which motivated learners should not be able to escape without learning or developing”. Fink (2003a:30) defines *significant learning* in terms of change –

[f]or learning to occur, there has to be some kind of change in the learner. No change, no learning. And *significant learning* requires that there be some kind of lasting change that is important in terms of the learner’s life.

An innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek, therefore, has to create a learning environment in which students would be motivated (and remain captivated!) to study Hellenistic Greek and where learning could have a lasting impact on their lives.

The relation among the directives, and the presentation of these directives against the background of Fink’s taxonomy, within the context of Hellenistic Greek, can be illustrated by an assignment given to second-year students in the Hellenistic Greek course. An outline and discussion of the assignment is presented subsequently.

5.2.3 Illustrative example of the suggested innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek: Mrs Jones and Romans 5

As part of their formative assessment, second-year students of Hellenistic Greek had to complete a written assignment on Romans 5:1-11 during their first semester. I outlined the following scenario when I gave them the assignment:

“You are a minister and requested the members of your congregation to read and reflect on Romans 5:1-11 in preparation for a special service in three weeks’ time (*content: New Testament reading*). Mrs Jones, an elderly member in your congregation, wrote you a letter (with the assistance of her granddaughter who studies Greek, of course!), asking some questions regarding the passage you asked them to prepare. You have to read her letter and carefully consider her questions. Take note of the fact that Mrs Jones is an elderly woman and said she used the Old Afrikaans Translation (OAT) and the New Afrikaans Translation (NAT). Where applicable, you have to refer to these translations in your answers. Answer all her questions according to the instructions I gave you with the letter. Therefore, read the instructions carefully and make sure you do and submit everything asked. You can also refer to the assessment rubric to assist you in formulating and organising your answers and assignment”.

The original assignment is included as Appendix A. (Since the assignment was presented to Afrikaans-speaking students, the original letter and instructions are in Afrikaans.) The aim of the subsequent discussion is to illustrate the relation between the proposed directives and the applicability of components from Fink’s taxonomy (and taxonomy applied to Hellenistic Greek), by reflecting on directives and components as represented in the following aspects of the assignments: my outline to the assignment; the opening remarks of Mrs Jones’ letter; and each of the questions she posed to her minister. (These directives and/or components of the taxonomy are indicated in brackets throughout the discussion.)

Opening remarks of the letter: The assignment reflected an authentic situation, similar to situations students most likely would encounter in future when they enter the ministry. Even if they do not specifically ask their congregation to prepare a certain passage for a sermon (like the minister in the assignment asked Mrs Jones’

congregation), people from different ages and/or backgrounds can come to *them* for answers (*relevance: bigger picture, aim*). They could be asked to elaborate on the meaning and interpretation of a Biblical passage during an informal discussion with a congregation member or during a weekly Bible study (*taxonomy: human dimension/interaction with others*). They could also be asked to reflect on the differences between translations and their own preference regarding translations for reading and studying (*content: translations*). They have to be prepared for these (and similar) questions. Students also have to realise from this example that members in their future congregation would have personal preferences regarding translations. As students, they have to try and work from different translations to be prepared to use and discuss them later.

Question 1: Mrs Jones mentioned that the translation of verse 1 was not the same in the OAT and the NAT. She requested a literal translation of the verse (directly from the Greek text) that would probably give an indication of the original author's reason for writing in a specific tense, mood and voice and using specific cases (see question 1.1). Mrs Jones also requested some comments on the translations of verse 1 in the OAT and the NAT. Are they really different? (Refer specifically to the translation of: Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως and εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν) (see question 1.2).

Making a literal translation requires knowledge of basic Greek vocabulary, concepts and grammar principles (*taxonomy: foundational knowledge/essential building blocks, application; content: grammar*) and the application of these aspects to make an analysis of the phrase. The second Greek phrase in question 1.2 – εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν – is used to explain:

εἰρήνην	feminine noun – in the accusative case, singular in number; meaning: <i>peace</i> (probably object of verb)
ἔχομεν	verb – in the present tense, indicative mood, active voice 1 st person plural; meaning “to have” or “to possess” ; literal translation: <i>we have</i>
πρὸς	preposition – can be followed by nouns in the accusative, dative or genitive case; have different meanings with different cases; here

followed by τὸν θεὸν (noun in accusative), and can therefore mean:
for, against or with (basic meanings from long list of possible meanings)
 τὸν θεὸν definite article and masculine noun – in the accusative case, singular in
 number; meaning: *the god/God*

The following literal translation of the phrase is possible after the analysis:

εἰρήνην	ἔχομεν	πρὸς	τὸν θεὸν
<i>peace</i>	<i>we have/possess</i>	<i>for/against/with</i>	<i>the god/God</i>

Further application and integration are necessary to synthesise the different parts of the phrase into a meaningful translation (*taxonomy: application/practice learning*). Students have to interpret the function of the cases and choose between multiple meanings based on context or sometimes just on what would be ‘good Afrikaans’. Students have to realise that ‘peace’ is the object of the verb because of its case (accusative), and that ‘the god/God’ forms a prepositional phrase with *for/against/with*. Two possible translations would be: “*We possess peace against the god*” or “*We have peace with God*”. The rest of the verse refers to ‘*being justified*’ and ‘*through Jesus Christ*’ in close connection with the word meaning *the god* or *God*. From the context, *God* will therefore be a better translation of τὸν θεὸν. With regard to the phrase, *we possess* or *we have*, a choice for *we have* can be made because it sounds better and is more in concordance with the way we speak. After considering all of these aspects, meanings and interpretations a decision is made to translate the phrase with, “*We have peace with God*”.

The same approach of analysis and reasoning can be followed when a student has to consider differences between translations (as requested by Mrs Jones in question 1.2). Only one word from the first Greek phrase in question 1.2 is used to explain:

Δικαιωθέντες a *passive participle* (verb) in the aorist tense

Translation in OAT: ‘since we have been justified ...’ (*omdat ons geregverdig is*)

Translation in NAT: ‘God justified us ...’ (*God het ons vrygespreek*)

It seems as if the NAT ignored the passive voice of the verb and added 'God' as a direct subject, whilst the syntactical subject (agent) of the passive verb is not mentioned in the Greek to be 'God'. This is probably what bothered Mrs Jones and she wanted to know the reason for the difference, if there is a difference. The answer lies in the term *divine passive* referred to in Mrs Jones' second question.

Question 2: Mrs Jones also decided to consult a commentary on Romans when she prepared these verses. She read about a "divine passive", a term she did not understand. She therefore requested the minister to explain the term, and to identify and translate all of the occurrences of the "divine passive" in the passage (see questions 2.1-2.3).

In order to answer Mrs Jones' third question, and especially to determine the meaning of "divine passive", the students had to consult commentaries on Romans or other resources explaining theological terminology (*resources: commentaries*). A *divine passive* implies that the action of a passive verb is carried out by God – God is the obvious agent of the passive verb, even though not indicated as such in the Greek. Mrs Jones asked the minister to identify all the occurrences of the "divine passive" in Romans 5:1-11. The explanation is however restricted to one example from verse 1, the word from question 1 referred to earlier, Δικαιωθέντες - a *passive* participle in the aorist tense; meaning: *to justify*, and in passive sense: *'being justified by ...'* The context of verse 1 allows for the assumption being made that this is a divine passive, indicating that God is the one who justifies. The two translations of the OAT and the NAT are therefore not really different in meaning.

Question 3: Mrs Jones referred to the four qualities mentioned in verses 3-4 in which a person has to rejoice. Three of them were not translated with the same words in the translations she read (OAT and NAT). It seemed to her as if the translators might have used different Greek texts when they translated the verses. She asked the minister to write some grammatical and semantic comments on the following Greek words used in the verses: θλίψις , ὑπομονή , δοκιμή , ἐλπίς (see question 3.1). She also requested the

minister to give his choice of translation for these words and provide a reason for his choice (see question 3.2).

Again, the same principles for analysis and reasoning (as explained during the discussion of question 1), can be applied when students have to provide grammatical comments on words. Mrs Jones, however, also asked for semantic comments. Answering her question, therefore, also required the use of a semantic lexicon and/or various dictionaries to reflect on and evaluate the different meanings ascribed to these qualities (*resources; translation; critical thinking*).

Some general comments

One objective of the assignment was to help the students to realise the value of Hellenistic Greek study for exegesis and ministry (*taxonomy: caring; relevance: introduction to value*). An added value would be if the realisation of the value altered their approach/attitude towards Greek. The presentation of the assignment during the *first* semester of the students' second year allowed enough time to approach the remainder of their studies differently.

The assignment was part of formative assessment, but also required high cognitive skills to analyse and evaluate the text. The assignment provided an opportunity to the students to complete an open-book assessment, since they were able (and actually forced) to use a variety of resources (*resources; assessment: authentic, formative, high cognitive*).

Even though the students had to submit a written/typed assignment, the components of human dimension/interacting with others were addressed. An opportunity was scheduled to discuss their assignments in class (*methodology: group work*) and they also had to keep in mind that Mrs Jones was an elderly woman. They had to address (and approach) her accordingly in their answers.

5.3 AN ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF HELLENISTIC GREEK

The compiled set of proposed directives, relating to specific areas within the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek where innovation was needed, was presented in 5.2.1. These directives led to a possible actualisation of an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (see 5.2.2). This innovative approach, however, can only be implemented in a well-considered (systematic) way if the implementation is done according to a drafted (and validated) action plan. This section commences with an overview of action planning in action research, followed by the proposed action plan for the innovative approach (and directives) discussed in the previous section.

5.3.1 Presenting an action plan in action research

An action plan communicates the idea that a project or task should be undertaken in a systematic way. There is a notional goal, and the idea is to achieve the goal via a series of systematic steps. In action research, the aim is to take action in order to improve something, usually practice. (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:26)

Literature on action research describes a variety of action plans that offer steps that can assist researchers to improve their practice. According to McNiff and Whitehead (2005:27), researchers can plan according to four principles (steps) when they are working towards the improvement of their practice. These principles are presented subsequently.

Planning to take action and monitor the action in the social world

The following two questions, according to McNiff and Whitehead (2005:27), should be kept in mind when a researcher drafts an action plan – *Why are you doing your research? What do you hope to achieve?* Lecturers usually want to realise their educational values in practice and therefore their values come to act as their guiding principles when they answer these questions and draft an action plan (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:28). In addition to planning your action, “you also need to plan how you are going to keep track of what you do. You need to decide who will monitor

(self, students, others), what will be monitored (whose practice, students' responses, which aspects of work), and how it will be monitored (observation, written records)" (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:29).

Planning to reflect and to monitor your learning

By undertaking your research project ... you will probably find that you learn not only about substantive issues such as subject matters but also about your own capacity for new learning. (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:30)

Apart from planning action in the social world (see previous paragraph), researchers also have to plan how they are going to keep careful records of their personal learning – their own reflections and evaluations on how their learning is developing from within their practice and feeding back into their practice (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:31). According to McNiff and Whitehead (2005:30), "[t]his can best be done by keeping a reflective journal, where you ask questions about your learning in relation to what you are doing". These questions include: *What have I done? What have I learned? What is the significance of my learning? How do I modify my practice in the light of my evaluation?*

Planning to keep record of action and learning

Researchers have to decide how they are going to keep record of their *action* and of their *reflection and learning* in a systematic way in order to reflect the nature of their enquiry (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:32). Records of actions are usually kept by using written documents (personal field notes or record sheets), or by means of live methods (interviews, videotaped action). On the other hand, a research diary or journal (in written or audio form) and notes of conversations where your learning was discussed, can provide records of reflection and learning (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:33).

Planning to involve others

"Doing your action research always involves other people." (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:33) Researchers therefore have to show care for ethical issues by making sure that they have the necessary permission and authorisation to take action if they want to improve their practice.

According to McNiff and Whitehead (2005:27), it is important to remember that an action plan “is a plan, not the reality, and acts only as a map, not a set of directives ... The main thing is to get where you hope to be, and to be able to articulate the route you took and say why you went that way”. In the light of the discussion and especially this concluding citation, I present a proposed action plan for implementing the innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (see 5.2.2), following the four principles (steps) according to McNiff and Whitehead (2005:27).

5.3.2 The proposed action plan

The proposed action plan is based on the four principles (steps) according to McNiff and Whitehead (2005:27) that were discussed in 5.3.1. A number of *actions* were drafted for each of the proposed sets of directives presented in Figure 5.1 and these actions constitute the proposed action plan. This plan is presented in Table 5.1 and reflect the planning (what and why), the action (who and when) and the monitoring (who and how) for each identified action.

Table 5.1 Action plan for the implementation of the proposed innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek

RELEVANCE			
RELEVANCE	PLANNING 1	WHAT	Explore a variety of purposeful activities which can be used as an introduction to the study of Hellenistic Greek (and as frequent reminder of its relevance).
		WHY	... to get the students interested and motivated to study Hellenistic Greek. ... to present them with the aim for studying the language. ... to help them realise the bigger picture.
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self: July 2011 – December 2011 Validation group: during meetings to ask for suggestions.
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping a reflective journal with entries of the different activities, how they were executed and how students reacted (immediate reaction and possible lasting impact). Students: by asking them to describe their experience of the activities (add their comments to own in journal). Other Greek lecturers: by presenting the activity to them in advance for evaluation and comments. Validation group: during feedback sessions.

CONTENT			
CONTENT	PLANNING 1	WHAT	Evaluate current curriculum of the first-year module (one-year course).
		WHY	... to make a summary of the grammatical principles, paradigms, vocabulary and other aspects relating to the grammar currently being presented. ... to make a summary of the reading exercises and New Testament passages currently being used. ... to make changes where needed to adapt the curriculum according to the suggested innovative approach.
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self, students and other Greek lecturers July 2011 – December 2011 Self: continuously. Students: during module evaluations. Other Greek lecturers: during meeting/s where the curriculums of all the Greek modules are discussed.
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by updating the module portfolio and keeping a reflective journal. Students: by asking students to reflect on the content of the module and to make recommendations. Other Greek lecturers: by reflecting on content at meeting/s where the curriculums of all the Greek modules are discussed.
CONTENT	PLANNING 2	WHAT	Evaluate current curriculums of the second-year modules (two semester courses).
		WHY	... to make a summary of complementary grammar (content, revision, exercises) currently being presented. ... to make a summary of the reading exercises and New Testament/Patristic passages currently being used. ... to get an overview of semantics and lexicography content being presented. ... to make changes where needed to adapt the curriculum to innovative approach.
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self, students and other Greek lecturers First-semester modules: July 2011 – December 2011 Second-semester modules: January 2012 – June 2012 Self: continuously. Students: during module evaluations. Other Greek lecturers: during meeting/s where the curriculums of all the Greek modules are discussed.
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by updating the module portfolio and reflective journal. Students: by asking students to reflect on the content of the modules and to make recommendations. Other Greek lecturers: by reflecting on content at meeting/s where the curriculums of all the Greek modules are discussed.

CONTENT	PLANNING 3	WHAT	Compile a summary of the minimum foundational knowledge needed (and to be presented in the first year).
		WHY	... to identify the necessary grammatical principles and paradigms students have to learn by heart. ... to identify a core vocabulary and to present these words according to the frequency of their appearance rather than endless lists of words.
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self and other Greek lecturers July 2011 – December 2011
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping a reflective journal. Students: by asking students to reflect on the possible minimum foundational knowledge and to make recommendations. Other Greek lecturers: by reflecting on content at meeting/s where the curriculums of all the Greek modules are discussed.
CONTENT	PLANNING 4	WHAT	Explore and compile a summary of additional content to be included in the curriculums of the first- and second-year modules.
		WHY	... to add an overview of the <i>history</i> of the Greek language. ... to add an introduction to <i>translation</i> principles.
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self and other Greek lecturers July 2011 – December 2011
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping a reflective journal. Students: by asking students to reflect on the possible additional content and to make recommendations. Other Greek lecturers: by reflecting on content at meeting/s where the curriculums of all the Greek modules are discussed.
TEACHING APPROACH			
TEACHING APPROACH	PLANNING 1	WHAT	Explore ways in which more kinds of learning can be included in the teaching process (based on Fink's taxonomy).
		WHY	... to reflect on the balance between inductive and deductive teaching approaches. ... to reflect on variation in approaches – lectures, group assignments, group discussions. ... to reflect on application and integration of foundational knowledge. ... to reflect on the connection between content relating to history, grammar, reading and translation. ... to reflect on the connection between Hellenistic Greek and New Testament studies (and future work in ministry). ... to develop students' ability to interact with others. ... to increase students' awareness of the value of studying Hellenistic Greek.

	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self and Greek lecturers June 2011 – July 2012
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping a reflective journal. Students: by asking students to reflect on various teaching approaches and to make recommendations. Other Greek lecturers: by continually discussing all findings with one another.
ASSESSMENT			
ASSESSMENT	PLANNING	WHAT	Evaluate current assessment methods.
	1	WHY	... to determine whether they are aligned with outcomes. ... to identify the different cognitive levels included.
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self and Greek lecturers June 2011 – December 2011
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping a reflective journal. Students: by asking students to reflect on the current assessment methods and to make recommendations. Other Greek lecturers: by continually discussing all findings with one another.
ASSESSMENT	PLANNING	WHAT	Explore a variety of assessment methods.
		WHY	... to include formative and summative assessment during the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek. ... to make use of variation (not all aspects of Hellenistic Greek can be assessed with one method). ... to ensure assessment methods are aligned with the outcomes and teaching approach. ... to ensure assessment methods include all the cognitive levels (from memorising to higher level).
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self and Greek lecturers June 2011 – July 2012
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping a reflective journal. Students: by asking students to reflect on various assessment methods and to make recommendations. Other Greek lecturers: by continually discussing all findings with one another.
ASSESSMENT	PLANNING	WHAT	Evaluate the possibility to conduct open-book assessment (use of electronic tools and/or resources during assessment).
		WHY	... to simulate authentic situations. ... to align assessment with the outcome: “being able to use resources effectively during analysis of texts”.
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self and Greek lecturers June 2011 – July 2012
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping a reflective journal. Students: by asking students to reflect on the use of resources during assessment activities and to make recommendations. Other Greek lecturers: by continually discussing all findings with one another.

STUDY MATERIAL			
STUDY MATERIAL	PLANNING 1	WHAT	Explore and evaluate a variety of available textbooks on New Testament Greek, i.e. <i>Grieks met Begrip</i> (Werksgroep vir Griekse onderrig); <i>The elements of New Testament Greek</i> (Duff 2008); <i>New Testament Greek</i> . 2 nd ed. (Stevens 1997); <i>The elements of New Testament Greek</i> (Wenham 1965).
		WHY	... to find a textbook that supports the needs and purposes for teaching and learning Hellenistic Greek (see reference to Steyn 2001:376 in 3.3.1). ... to find a textbook with a balance between inductive and deductive approaches. ... to find a textbook in the mother tongue of the students and evaluate its functionality. ... to keep record of chapters and/or sections in different books that address relevant issues effectively.
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self and Greek lecturers June 2011 – July 2012
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping written comparative notes on different books being explored. Other Greek lecturers: by discussing my findings with them and/or asking them to provide their view on a textbook.
STUDY MATERIAL	PLANNING 2	WHAT	Use chapters, excerpts, exercises on selected aspects from different books during the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek
		WHY	... to evaluate the applicability of the material to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek. ... to determine if the material leads to a better comprehension of the selected aspects.
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self and Greek lecturers June 2011 – July 2012
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping comparative notes on chapters, excerpts and exercises on selected aspects from different books. Students: by letting them evaluate chapters, excerpts and exercises from the books implemented during teaching. Other Greek lecturers: by continually discussing my findings with them and/or asking them to provide their view on a textbook.
RESOURCES			
RESOURCES	PLANNING 1	WHAT	Explore and evaluate a variety of resources on New Testament Greek, i.e. interlinear texts, dictionaries and lexicons.
		WHY	... to take note of resources being used by other lecturers. ... to compile a list of available resources. ... to determine which of the identified resources can be recommended and prescribed to students.

	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self, students, lecturers (Greek, Hebrew, New Testament) July 2011 – July 2012 Self: continuously. Students: during module evaluations. Other lecturers: during informal conversations.
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping comparative notes on resources. Students: by letting them evaluate recommended resources. Other Greek lecturers: by continually discussing my findings with them and/or asking them to provide their view on the resources.
RESOURCES	PLANNING 2	WHAT	Explore and evaluate a variety of electronic tools on New Testament Greek, i.e. <i>BibleWorks, Libronix, Perseus Digital Library, E-sword.</i>
		WHY	... to compile a list of available resources (indicating whether it is available free online or have to be bought). ... to determine which of the identified resources can be recommended to students. ... to decide which of the identified resources can be prescribed as compulsory tools. ... to investigate the possibility of making the tool/s available in computer laboratories.
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self, students, lecturers (Greek, New Testament) July 2011 – June 2012 Self: continuously Students: during module evaluations. Other lecturers: during informal conversations.
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping comparative notes on resources. Students: by letting them evaluate recommended resources. Other Greek lecturers: by continually discussing my findings with them and/or asking them to provide their view on the resources.
RESOURCES	PLANNING 3	WHAT	Experiment with ways to implement the identified resources in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek.
		WHY	... to help students realise the value these resources could add to their study and interpretation of texts. ... to learn them how to use and apply the resources efficiently.
	TAKE ACTION	WHO WHEN	Self, students, lecturers (Greek, New Testament) July 2011 – July 2012 Self: continuously. Students: during module evaluations. Other lecturers: during informal conversations.
	MONITOR	WHO HOW	Self: by keeping a reflective journal. Students: by continuous evaluation of preliminary implementation of tools.

			Other Greek lecturers: by continually discussing my findings with them.
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Source: Compiled by researcher (Machin 2011).

5.4 VALIDATION OF DIRECTIVES AND ACTION PLAN

The last section of this chapter (and the last objective for this study) comprises the validation of the proposed set of directives and action plan for implementing an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek. A short introduction to the meaning and application of validation in action research is presented first. This is followed by a brief exposition of the validation meeting held on 2 December 2010 with role players and experts in the field of Hellenistic Greek, classical and ancient languages, and New Testament studies. Inferences drawn from the meeting conclude this section.

5.4.1 Validation in action research

According to (McNiff 2002a:16), the word ‘prove’ does not exist in action research. Instead of ‘proving something’, an action researcher has to make a ‘claim to knowledge’ and produce reasonable evidence to back up this claim (McNiff 2002a:17). However, even if a researcher has taken care to authenticate the collected data and adhered to the necessary methodological principles while searching data for evidence, the claim remains his/her claim and has not yet been subjected to public critique. Therefore a further step is needed before a claim to knowledge can be demonstrated as valid (McNiff and Whitehead 2009:24; McNiff and Whitehead 2005:94). According to McNiff (2002a:17), validation occurs when “other people critically consider your claim and agree that you have good reason for making your claim. They might agree that you are justified in making your claim, and their agreement would be validation of your claim”. This validation enables a researcher to state, “I now have the endorsement of other people to show that what I say I am doing constitutes a fair and accurate claim.” (McNiff 2002a:17)

A validation group, according to McNiff and Whitehead (2009:61; 2005:95), is a formal gathering and usually comprises three to ten people (peers) drawn from a researcher’s professional circle. This group can meet two or three times during the

course of the research – initially to reflect on progress reports and ultimately to validate its overall quality. Members include those who have agreed to meet the researcher periodically, listen to his/her progress reports and scrutinise collected data. Critical friends might or might not be members of the group according to McNiff (2002a:20). The field of Hellenistic Greek (and even New Testament studies) is rather specialised and therefore not many experts are available. Since all the relevant ‘experts’ at the UFS were already part of my critical friends, I had to include my critical friends as validation members (see 5.4.2).

The main purpose of a validation group is to offer feedback about the validity of the research. Members have to judge the quality of evidence and assess whether or not claims to knowledge are justified. By implication, however, a validation group also lends legitimacy to the research since they “show that they are taking it seriously, so it should be taken seriously by others and should be seen as holding significance for future practices and knowledge” (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:59). With this view in mind, I also included some of the student participants of the study in my validation group (see 5.4.2). In my experience, first-year theology students (and even prospective students) regard the view of fellow students on the study of Hellenistic Greek as more important than the views of lecturers or ministers.

Apart from the periodic validation that took place during the informal conversational interviews with my critical friends, I convened one validation meeting towards the end of the study.

5.4.2 Validation meeting: 2 December 2010

The validation group for the meeting comprised five lecturers (referred to as L1 to L5, respectively) and five students (referred to as S1 to S5, respectively). Lecturers were drawn from my professional circle of colleagues and were representative of the following fields of specialisation, i.e. Greek (Hellenistic/Classical), New Testament studies and Hebrew. When I invited students to be part of the meeting, I aimed at selecting senior students from their third or fourth year of theology studies, since they were able to reflect on the use of Hellenistic Greek in exegesis and sermon preparation from their own experience.

A validation meeting was held (on my request) with all the members of my validation group on Thursday, 2 December 2010. The meeting started at 09:00 and adjourned approximately at 10:30. After a word of welcome and sincere appreciation for their time and participation, a PowerPoint presentation was done, followed by a reflection on and discussion of the presentation and findings. Minimal conversation took place during the presentation.

The aim of the PowerPoint presentation was to orientate the members of the validation group to the study and present some evidence and claims to knowledge for their validation. A short overview of the PowerPoint presentation is presented subsequently (see Appendix B for the slideshow).

Slides 1-12 presented an introduction and orientation to the study, research design and methodology. Time was not spent to explain or discuss these slides in detail. I did, however, share some views on my values and emphasised the fact that I followed an action research approach. I also focused their attention on the number and variety of participants.

- Introduction (slides 1-2).
- Research problem and aim (slide 3).
- Research questions (slides 4-5).
- Research objectives (slides 6-7).
- Research design (slides 8-9).
- Methodology: sampling (slide 10).
- Methodology: data collection and data analysis (slide 11).
- Methodology: ethical consideration and quality assurance (slide 12).

Slides 13-14 presented a summary of my first set of evidence, collected from literature and participants. The slides only reflect key words or phrases, but some elaboration was given during the presentation.

- Evidence relating to the relevance of the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek for theology studies (slide 13).
- Evidence relating to possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek (slide 14).

Slides 15-27 presented an overview of Fink's taxonomy, an explanation of each component of the taxonomy and its application to Hellenistic Greek and some reference to Fink's view on the influence of his taxonomy on learning goals.

- Rationale of Fink's taxonomy for significant learning (slide 15).
- Overview of the six integrated components of Fink's taxonomy (slide 16).
- Explanation of each component and its application to Hellenistic Greek (slides 17-23).
- Fink's view on the influence of his taxonomy on learning goals (slide 24).
- Adapted learning goals for Hellenistic Greek (slides 25-27).

Slides 28-29 presented a summary of my second set of evidence, collected from literature (excluding Fink's taxonomy) and participants. The slides only reflect key words or phrases, but some elaboration was given during the presentation.

- Summary of selected innovative approaches included in the study (slide 28).
- Summary of student suggestions on how to improve teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (slide 29).

Slides 30-31 presented the seven sets of proposed directives for the implementation of an innovative approach to teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.

Slide 32 presented a visual representation of the possible actualisation of an innovative approach to teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.

Slide 33 presented the proposed action plan for the implementation of an innovative approach to teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.

Slide 34 represented the question of validation to the members. The validation group was asked to reflect on the presentation and the applicability of Fink's taxonomy of significant learning to Hellenistic Greek in general. They were also requested to evaluate the proposed directives, innovative approach and the drafted action plan that were presented as findings (claim to knowledge) and to offer feedback on the validity of the research.

Some views of validation members and inferences drawn from the validation meeting are presented in 5.4.3.

5.4.3 Inferences drawn from the validation meeting

Considering the fact that the action plan was organised according to the proposed sets of directives, it was difficult to discuss the one without referring to the other. The validation of the proposed directives and action plan therefore also occurred simultaneously. For this reason, the discussion of the inferences drawn from the validation meeting is not presented under the sub-headings of 'validation of directives' and 'validation of action plan'. Inferences are presented according to their relation with the sets of directives. (It is inevitable that inferences refer to more than one set of directives.)

Inferences relating to relevance

- L1 confirmed that students have to realise the value of being able to read the Bible in its original languages (Old Testament in Hebrew and New Testament in Greek).
- L1 and L2 referred to their own realisation that the reading of texts in the original language brings one as close as possible to what the Word of God means.
- L2 suggested that students should be motivated to grasp the concept that the original languages and the ability to read the original languages enhance their comprehension of the text.
- L1 suggested that students do a practical exercise of translating an English text into Afrikaans (or Afrikaans text into English). This exercise might help them to realise the difficulty of translating the *meaning* of a text when you translate.
- L1 concurred that students could realise the value if an example of exegesis is presented to them early on in their studies. S1 elaborated on the introduction of an exegesis example and added that basic examples of style and semantics can also contribute to students' realisation of the value of Hellenistic Greek.

- L2 referred to a lecturer who presented his students with a Greek idiom or expression on a weekly basis. The use of ancient expressions have the dual purpose of bridging the cultural gap that exists between today and the ancient times, and the students could also realise that the ancient (and seemingly dead) language was actually spoken.
- L1, L3 and L4 all agreed that prejudice plays an important role in students' attitude towards Greek. Greek lecturers have to address these prejudices.
- S3 emphasised the importance of intrinsic motivation. Students have to realise that the study of Greek (and the use of the language) actually enriches their own lives.

Inferences relating to content (Inferences relating to resources)

- All the members of the group agreed that basic (minimum) knowledge of Greek is important, especially during the first year.
- L1 felt strongly that students have to comprehend certain paradigms, grammar principles and vocabulary *before* they start using electronic resources.
- S3 and S4 also agreed that basic fundamental knowledge was needed to interpret the information from the resources (hard copies or electronic).
- L1 and L4 agreed that the aim of resources (and especially electronic tools) should only be to assist you in working faster and not to make up for your lack of Greek knowledge.

Inferences relating to teaching approach (Inferences relating to resources)

- L1, L4 and all the students expressed the need for more integration between Greek and other fields of study, especially New Testament.
- L3 was of the opinion that the application of Fink's taxonomy could most likely enhance the teaching of Greek. The lecturer did however note that such an integrated approach necessitates a revision of current assessment outcomes and methods.
- The students all supported the use of group work in class and during assignments.

Inferences relating to assessment (Inferences relating to resources)

- L3 is an external moderator for Greek papers of another tertiary institution. The lecturer drew from that experience and suggested that assessment of Greek texts should involve the critical comparison of translations instead of only assessing a student's ability to make his own translation. This type of assessment is of a higher level and could reflect application and integration of knowledge since a thorough knowledge of Greek is necessary to compare translations.
- All the students agreed with the implementation of more group assignments. They motivated this by referring to their own experience from participating in group assignments. They were able to share and discuss their views while interacting with other students.
- Students did however request careful consideration regarding the composition of groups. On the one hand they realised that stronger students could help weaker students during group work, but their experience up to that stage had been that weaker students were not really interested in *learning* – only in gaining higher marks.
- Students preferred the assignments that were done with students who had similar competency.

Inferences relating to study material (Inferences relating to resources)

- Students (S1 and S3) confirmed the need for a textbook in their mother tongue.
- L2 raised a question about the availability of the Afrikaans textbook – *Grieks met Begrip*. I replied that the book was no longer available in print, but that I had permission from the publisher (*Werkgroep vir Griekse Onderrig*) to make copies for students.
- All the lecturers were involved in a discussion on possible textbooks and suggested that I went ahead with the exploration of the books I mentioned in the action plan. These books are the same as the books they discussed.

Members of the validation group agreed that the proposed directives, innovative approach and action plan presented to them during the meeting reflected the evidence and findings of the study.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The aim of the chapter was to compile directives and draft an action plan for the implementation of an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek, and to have the directives *and* action plan validated. The directives and an actualisation of an innovation approach were presented in 5.2, the action plan in 5.3 and the validation thereof in 5.4. The findings in this chapter reflect all the evidence (claims to knowledge) presented in previous chapters.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of Chapter 6 is to draw conclusions from the main findings of the study and to present a reflection on the significance the study holds for the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek. In the first section of the chapter, the four educational action research questions that directed the structuring of the research design are used to present an overview of the study from which conclusions are drawn. The latter part of the chapter constitutes the significance (and limitations) relating to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek at the UFS and further studies and/or research needed.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM MAIN FINDINGS

The following four educational action research questions were addressed in the study and yielded important findings: *i) What concerning issue am I interested in researching? ii) Why am I concerned and want to research this issue? iii) What kind of evidence can be gathered to show my interest in this issue? iv) What can I do? What will I do?*

6.2.1 Question 1: What concerning issue am I interested in researching?

I realised during my first year of lecturing Hellenistic Greek to theology students at the UFS that a certain level of anxiety towards the study of Hellenistic Greek was present amongst the students (especially the first-year students) and that they were not motivated to study the language. In my opinion, the following factors contributed to students' lack of motivation and their experience of anxiety (see 1.2):

- Hellenistic Greek is presented as a compulsory module to theology students.
- Students doubt the significance of studying Hellenistic Greek due to the fact that an abundance of resources are available. In their opinion, these resources can provide the necessary assistance in the translation of Greek texts and the exegesis of New Testament passages.

- The range of different student needs, abilities and learning styles within one group is not addressed by the teaching and learning approach in use.
- Students have negative experiences during the teaching process, i.e. the failure to pass, the lack of clear outcomes and poor teaching methods.

Conclusions:

- A reflection on these factors confirmed the need to alter students' perceptions of Hellenistic Greek and to enhance their performance in the language.
- Innovation in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek is necessary.
- The following research problem was formulated for the study: *the need for an innovative approach to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek.*

6.2.2 Question 2: Why am I concerned and want to research this issue?

I regard the study of Hellenistic Greek as relevant and important for theology studies. The teaching and learning approach to Hellenistic Greek must invite students to realise the relevance of studying the language by including different kinds of learning that go beyond understanding, remembering and application. Intrinsic motivation has to be the driving force behind their studies. Teaching has to be characterised by integrity and consistency, must be innovative and purposeful, and must have a lasting impression on students. Despite efforts to communicate these values through my teaching, I found students studying Hellenistic Greek unmotivated and anxious.

Conclusions:

- There were contradictions between my personal values and the expression (embodiment) of these values in practice.
- The contradictions probably contributed to my concern of the current situation and the expressed need for innovation.

6.2.3 Question 3: What kind of evidence can be gathered to show my interest in this issue?

The first two research questions and objectives of the study (see 1.3 and 1.4, respectively) were addressed in the exploration of this educational research question. Two sets of evidence relating to the issue – *the need for an innovative approach* – emerged during the literature review, interviews and focus-group discussions and were presented in Chapter 3.

The first set of evidence related to the importance and relevance of the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek for theology studies (research question 1). A reflection on the evidence that emerged during the literature review (see 3.3.1), interviews and focus-group discussions with students (see 3.3.2) and informal conversational interviews with lecturers and ministers (see 3.3.3) was presented in 3.3.4. The reflection yielded that literature *and* participants provided strong support for arguments in favour of the relevance of the study of Hellenistic Greek for theology studies. Conclusions drawn from the evidence are presented subsequently.

Conclusions:

- The importance of being able to read and derive meaning from the Biblical texts in the original (authentic) language was pointed out in literature and echoed by participants. Exposure and a thorough introduction to the original text of the New Testament and other ancient texts, as well as the ability to read these texts, will enable the theology and Greek student to derive sensible information from the richness contained in these writings (Steyn 2001:381; Dobson 1997:vii; Ruck 1968:111). Students claimed that the ability to read the text in its original form enhanced (or would enhance) their understanding of the author's original intention and the text's true meaning or core message.
- The range of evidence supporting the relevance of Hellenistic Greek also emphasised the importance of acquiring a foundational knowledge of Greek and the skills to apply this knowledge.
- Knowledge of Greek enriched preaching and application, because it led to better comprehension of commentaries and more detailed exegesis.
- A thorough knowledge of Greek was needed to evaluate different translations and interpretations of a given text.

- Students and ministers contributed to a shared view that a better understanding of grammar resulted in better translations and interpretation of texts, the efficient use of resources, and eventually also influenced exegesis and sermon preparation.
- The collected responses provided evidence that the study of Greek was perceived as necessary to enhance students' knowledge of the following aspects: Greek grammar, authentic texts, style and syntax, semantics, textual criticism, translations, different resources and a general history of the language.

The second set of evidence related to possible shortcomings in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek that necessitate innovation (research question 2). The aim was to reveal possible shortcomings to identify and confirm the need for an innovative approach to Hellenistic Greek (objective 2). A reflection on the evidence that emerged during the literature review (see 3.4.1) and interviews and focus-group discussions (see 3.4.2), was presented in 3.4.3. This reflection on the identified shortcomings in the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek, confirmed the need to explore innovative approaches for addressing these shortcomings in the most appropriate way. Conclusions drawn from the evidence are presented subsequently.

Conclusions:

- A review of literature revealed shortcomings relating to the following aspects within the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek: *ancient and foreign language; current teaching and learning approaches; different objectives of teaching and learning approaches; textbooks and auxiliary tools; and context and time.*
- Interviews and focus-group discussions revealed shortcomings relating to the following aspects within the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek: *prescribed contents (curriculum); previous and current teaching methodology; assessment; resources; and general organisation and study material.*
- Objectives for the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek have to include reference to the ability to read, translate *and* analyse the texts.

- Students need to read *original* texts as early as possible but with maximum understanding and less frustration.
- Textbooks, auxiliary tools and study material have to support the needs and purpose for teaching or learning Greek and students need to be taught how to use a variety of resources.
- More general (background) information on the language has to be included in the curriculum of Greek.
- More interaction with the lecturer and other students (group work) must be included in the teaching and learning context of Greek.
- Students need to be assessed on their ability to make analyses or interpretations of texts and not only on their ability to memorise and provide translations.

6.2.4 Question 4a: What can I do?

An overview of general perspectives on innovative teaching and learning (see 4.2.1) and the paradigm shift from content-centred to learning-centred approaches (see 4.2.2) provided the background for addressing the first part of the fourth educational research question – *What can I do?* An exploration of Fink’s taxonomy for significant learning (Fink 2003:31-32), other innovative approaches and student suggestions to enhance the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek, were presented in Chapter 4 and provided some answers to this question.

Fink’s taxonomy for significant learning

Different aspects pertaining to Fink’s taxonomy for significant learning were explored to determine if the integrated components of this taxonomy can potentially make a contribution to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (research question 3). A short introduction to the rationale behind Fink’s taxonomy for significant learning (see 4.3.1) was followed by an explanation of the six integrated components of the taxonomy and their applicability to Hellenistic Greek as well as the formulation of learning goals (see 4.3.2 and 4.3.3, respectively). An amended taxonomy for Hellenistic Greek was compiled as a result of this discussion (see Figure 4.3).

Conclusions:

- Lecturers must be aware of the respective surface and deep approaches to learning since all the students involved in a learning process do not have the same approach to learning.
- Three elements characterise a significant learning experience, i.e. students are engaged, students' efforts result in significant and lasting learning and the learning adds value to their lives (Fink 2009a:1-2).
- All six components of Fink's taxonomy add distinct value to the learning process of students (Fink 2003a:31-32; 2003b:8) and the taxonomy is also applicable to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek (see 4.3.2). The amended taxonomy for Hellenistic Greek (see Figure 4.3) bears witness to this applicability.

Foundational knowledge provides a basic understanding that is necessary for other kinds of learning and forms the *essential building blocks* for a sound knowledge and comprehension of Greek.

Application allows other kinds of learning and actions to become *useful* in order to master the content of a module or to manage complex projects. Students need skills and practice in how to *use* the acquired building blocks in order to reach the objectives (to read, translate and analyse Greek texts) of a course.

Integration allows students to recognise connections, similarities and/or interactions among ideas and perspectives within a specific course and between different courses. Students have to understand *why* the study of Greek is necessary and *how* it can assist them with New Testament exegesis. The *human dimension* adds value to students' learning experiences by informing them about *the human significance* of what they are learning about themselves or others. Significant learning of Hellenistic Greek also requires interaction with other people during the learning process, since students need to discuss the content of the course and share information with different kinds of people in specific contexts.

Caring involves learning experiences that lead to the adoption of more positive feelings, interests and values towards a module that can change the degree to which students care about the subject for the better. Students have

to realise, by themselves and through significant learning experiences, the value of Greek for their studies and future work in ministry.

Learning how to learn enables students to learn something about the process of learning itself in order to continue learning with effectiveness in the future. Teaching and learning relating to Hellenistic Greek should encourage students to work independently and thoroughly and should equip them with the necessary skills to become lasting (life-long) learners of Greek.

- Fink's taxonomy, like other taxonomies of learning, can be used when formulating learning goals for Hellenistic Greek and seeking ways to assess different kinds of learning (see 4.3.3).

Other innovative approaches

Six approaches that reflect aspects of innovation relating to the teaching of a classical language emerged during the literature review (see 4.4.1 to 4.4.6 for detailed discussions). During an exploration of these approaches, elements were identified that can make a contribution to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (research question 4). These elements were compared to the components in Fink's taxonomy for significant learning and the amended taxonomy for Hellenistic Greek. The comparison and a discussion of the findings were presented in 4.4.7 (see Table 4.2 for a summary of the comparison).

Conclusions:

- *Multisensory approach and inscriptions* (see 4.4.1 and 4.4.2) provide opportunity for learning basic foundational knowledge and provide a link between the world of the authentic text and the world of the students, but students are not necessarily taught how to learn and keep on learning.
- *Essay assignments* (see 4.4.3) might help the students to identify the value of Greek study through enhancing their skills to apply and integrate knowledge (making own translations and comparing different translations).
- *Model for second-year college Latin* (see 4.4.4) requires knowledge and/or skills from the majority of Fink's components. This is a very well balanced approach that might enhance deep learning.

- *Electronic auxiliary tools* (see 4.4.5) only include three of the taxonomy's components. I am concerned about the learning that might be lost because of the exclusion of the *Human Dimension*, *Caring* and *Learning How to Learn*.
- *Reading and exegesis* (see 4.4.6) focus on the process of exegesis. This integration of the exegetical use of Greek with the language teaching itself also has to include a solid grammatical foundation.

Student suggestions

Research question 5 – *What, according to students, are necessary to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek* – was addressed in 4.5. Students made suggestions relating to five areas within the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek that needed innovation (see 4.5.1 to 4.5.5 for a detailed discussion).

Conclusions:

- *Methodology*. Tutorials and the use of various teaching methods with enough opportunity for repetition should be employed in order to make Greek a less intimidating experience for first-year students. There should be a greater emphasis on vocabulary and the ability to translate.
- *Relevance (bigger picture)*. The study of Greek should be integrated more with theology studies and especially with New Testament modules. Students have to understand *what* is expected of them and *why* the study of Greek is necessary.
- *Group work and exercises*. More group work and exercises (practical work with Greek) should be included in the teaching context.
- *Resources and assessment*. Students should be introduced to different resources (i.e. dictionaries, commentaries and electronic resources) and be allowed to use resources during tests and exams.
- *Translations*. More information should be given on why different translations of the Bible (especially the New Testament) exist. More practical examples and explanations on how and why the Greek text differs from Afrikaans/English translations should be included.

6.2.5 Question 4b: What will I do?

The final research question (sixth) and objectives (fourth and fifth) of the study (see 1.3 and 1.4, respectively) were addressed in the exploration of the question – *What will I do?* The results of this exploration were presented in Chapter 5.

Evidence, relating to the relevance of Hellenistic Greek and possible shortcomings, innovations and improvements in the teaching and learning context of the language was used to compile directives that characterise an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (research question 6). These directives were organised into seven sets, relating to specific areas within the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek where innovation was needed (see 5.2.1). The directives had to include different kinds of learning – as many as possible. Table 6.1 reflects the relationship between the proposed directives and Fink's taxonomy for significant learning. An *innovative* approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek should include directives that relate to the *Caring, Human Dimension* and *Integration* components of Fink's taxonomy in particular.

These directives contributed to the recommendations for the actualisation of an innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek (see 5.2.2). The visual representation of the innovative approach (see Figure 5.1 in 5.5.2) and the illustrative example of this approach (Mrs Jones and Romans 5) presented in 5.2.3, provide further evidence that objective 4a of the study was reached.

In order to implement the directives and innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek, an action plan was drafted to guide the process of implementation (objective 4b). The proposed action plan (see Table 5.1) was based on the general principles for drafting an action plan in action research that were presented in 5.3.1. The action plan reflected the planning (what and why), the action (who and when) and the monitoring (who and how) of identified actions relating to the compiled directives and also confirms that objective 4b of the study was reached.

Table 6.1 Significant kinds of learning addressed by proposed directives

Integrated components of Fink's Taxonomy	Directives relating to specified areas within the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek in need of innovation
<p>Foundational Knowledge (understanding and remembering)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include content relating to the history of Hellenistic Greek (<i>content</i>). • Include essential building blocks relating to grammar (<i>content</i>). • Include a variety of dictionaries, lexicons, commentaries, interlinear texts and electronic tools in the course (<i>resources</i>).
<p>Application (skills, thinking)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include New Testament and Patristic texts (<i>content</i>). • Include a study of translations and translation principles (<i>content</i>). • Follow a teaching approach characterised by a balance between an inductive and a deductive approach (<i>teaching approach</i>). • Follow a multisensory approach (<i>teaching approach</i>). • Make use of variation in the approach to teaching Hellenistic Greek (<i>teaching approach</i>). • Follow an approach that includes application and integration of knowledge (<i>teaching approach</i>). • Include formative and summative assessment in the course (<i>assessment</i>).
<p>Integration (connecting ideas, people, realms of life)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take note of the specific context in which the course is presented (<i>situational factors</i>). • Identify external expectations that might have an influence on the course (<i>situational factors</i>). • Provide students with the bigger picture of where the study of Hellenistic Greek fits into their theology studies (<i>relevance</i>). • Help students to bridge the cultural and linguistic gap in order to interpret a text according to its specific context (<i>relevance</i>). • Explain the aim and objectives of the course to students in good time (<i>relevance</i>). • Include assessment on higher cognitive levels (<i>assessment</i>).
<p>Human Dimension (learning about oneself and others)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the characteristics and profile of learners (students) registering for the course (<i>situational factors</i>). • Determine the characteristics of the lecturer presenting the course (<i>situational factors</i>).
<p>Caring (developing new feelings, interests, values)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with an introduction on the future value and usefulness of the course (<i>relevance</i>). • Assessment has to reflect authentic situations (<i>assessment</i>). • The prescribed textbook and the supplementary material have to support the needs and purposes for teaching Hellenistic Greek (study material).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prescribed textbook and the supplementary material have to be available to students in their mother tongue, whenever possible (study material).
<p>Learning How to Learn (<i>better student, self-directing learners</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess students according to the outcomes of the course (<i>assessment</i>). • Students have to (and want to) learn how to use resources and theological reference works effectively (<i>resources</i>).

Source: Compiled by the researcher (Machin 2011).

The final step in the study was to have the proposed set of directives and action plan validated by role players and other experts in the field of Hellenistic Greek and New Testament studies (objective 5). General principles relating to validation in action research were presented in 5.4.1. An overview of the validation meeting that was held to validate the findings of the study was presented in 5.4.2. The validation meeting was held on 2 December 2010 with a validation group, including five lecturers and five students. Lecturers were representative of the following fields of specialisation, i.e. Hellenistic and Classical Greek, New Testament studies and Hebrew, and students were selected from third- and fourth-year theology students. A PowerPoint presentation was used to orientate the members of the validation group to the study and to present evidence and claims to knowledge for their validation (see Appendix B). The main part of the validation meeting was the reflection on and discussion of the presentation and findings. Inferences drawn from this reflection and discussion were presented in 5.4.3. The fact that a validation meeting, with selected role players and experts in the field of study, took place and that the members expressed their agreement that the proposed directives, innovative approach and action plan reflected the evidence and findings of the study, confirm that objective 5 of the study was reached.

6.3 SIGNIFICANCE

The first part of this section provides a reflection on the significance of the study for the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek at the UFS. Some suggestions and opportunities for further studies/research are presented in the second part of this section.

6.3.1 Significance for teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek at the UFS

The significance of the study for my personal development and learning as researcher, and for the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek and other courses, are presented subsequently. A possible limitation is also succinctly mentioned.

Personal development: I realised during this inquiry that my values relating to teaching and learning can only be realised if existing contradictions between these values and their expression in practice are addressed. This made me aware of the relationship between theory and practice and the importance of being able to evaluate and critically reflect on this relationship continually in order to learn from it and to improve my practice. The study contributed to my own education, thinking and action. My insights and knowledge on innovation and the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek increased. The acquired knowledge assisted me in changing my practice for the better.

Teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek and other courses: I am convinced that the suggested innovative approach can enhance the teaching and learning (context) of Hellenistic Greek. The innovative approach would, in my opinion, not only assist me in redesigning my courses but would also help me to alter the attitude of students to be more positive and to become motivated and lasting learners of Hellenistic Greek. A new innovative approach might seem academically less daunting and might attract even non-theology students to study this ancient but very relevant language. I further believe that the developed approach can be applied to the teaching of Latin and Hebrew as classical and Semitic languages, respectively, with minor adjustments. The principles reflected in the approach, i.e. inclusion and integration of different kinds of learning and learning goals that reflect these kinds of learning, can also be applied to other courses in general. And although the study was undertaken within the context of one specific institution, I have no doubt that the findings and recommendations are applicable to similar teaching and learning environments.

Other domains: The study may certainly add to knowledge in the fields of Higher Education Studies and Classical Studies when shared by means of publications, conference papers and at other forums.

Possible limitation: The proposed directives in 5.2 might be viewed by other professionals/specialists in the field of classical languages (or Semitic languages) as actions/practises already being implemented in the teaching of these languages. The significance, however, is evident in the innovative way these directives are integrated.

6.3.2 Further studies/research needed

In the words of McNiff and Whitehead (2009:114), “[t]he end of this cycle of action-reflection is the beginning of a new one”. They also state, “Good practice means constantly monitoring, evaluating and changing as appropriate. Never be content to leave things as they are. Once you do that, you fall asleep.” (McNiff and Whitehead 2005:53) The study provides several opportunities for further study. The action plan presented in Table 5.1 provides the starting point for another action-reflection cycle. The findings of this study can be implemented, evaluated and adapted during a follow-up study. The evaluation of textbooks to find an adequate one and the evaluation of the inclusion of electronic resources during teaching and assessment are two of several burning issues that might be addressed in future studies.

6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The specific aim of the study was to investigate the most appropriate features and/or directives that could lead to a validated action plan for the implementation of an innovative approach. This investigation was a very satisfying experience and contributed to my own intrinsic motivation to further my study in the field of Hellenistic Greek *and* in the field of Higher Education. McNiff (1993:10) states, “I believe that the best teaching is done by those who want to learn.” I share her sentiment. As lecturer I have to learn more about my field of specialisation (Hellenistic Greek), but without the necessary experience I have gained (and will gain in future) from studies in Higher Education, I will not be able to bring authentic innovation to my subject and live according to my values. I have taken the small step; now the giant leap towards successful implementation is waiting, keeping in mind that... *ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ. (... that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God - 1 Corinthians 2:5).*

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APPENDIX A

ASSIGNMENT TO SECOND-YEAR STUDENTS: MRS JONES AND ROMANS 5

GRK 214: WERKSTUK 3 – Mev Jones en Romeine 5:1-11

Opdrag

Lees Mev Jones se briefie en beantwoord haar vrae so volledig as moontlik in jou werkstuk. Skenk aandag aan die volgende aspekte:

Raamwerk/inhoud van werkstuk

Jou werkstuk moet uit die volgende afdelings bestaan:

Afdeling A: Inleiding (probleemstelling en benadering)

Afdeling B: Hantering van vraag 1-3 (elkeen apart)

Afdeling C: Slot (Het die werkstuk jou gehelp om Rom 5:1-11 beter te verstaan?)

Afdeling D: Bronnelys (volledige lys van alle bronne geraadpleeg)

Gebruik die ingeslote assesseringskriteria (*rubric*) om seker te maak jy beantwoord alle vrae volledig en jou werkstuk voldoen aan al die vereistes wat hier gestel word, voor jy dit indien.

Algemeen

Jy moet in jou beantwoording/redenasies bewys lewer dat jy die volgende bronne geraadpleeg het (voeg verwysings in wanneer jy bronne gebruik en lys al jou bronne in jou bronnelys):

- Ou Afrikaanse Vertaling (OAV)
- Nuwe Afrikaanse Vertaling (NAV)
- Griekse teks (Nestle-Aland 27) & Tekskritiese notas
- Ten minste 1 semantiese Grieks-Engels leksikon
- Een of meer gewone Grieks-Engels / Grieks-Afrikaans woordeboeke
- Ten minste 2 kommentare van Romeine

Mev Jones se briefie en die assesseringskriteria is hierby aangeheg.

MEV JONES SE BRIEFIE

12 April

Liewe “Dominee”

Laat ek sommer met die deur in die huis val. Dominee het gevra ons moet Romeine 5:1-11 by die huis lees voor die ere-diens van 8 Mei. Dominee weet ek lees mos maar eintlik net die Ou Afrikaanse Vertaling, maar omdat Dominee nou Sondae die Nuwe eene gebruik, lees ek nou maar die “huiswerk” in albei. Daar is egter nou ’n paar goedjies wat my so bietjie pla en ek wil vra of Dominee nie asseblief die tyd sal maak om dit vir my te verduidelik nie? Ek noem dit nou maar so puntsgewys dan is dit sommer makliker vir Dominee om die antwoorde neer te skryf. (My kleindogter het my so bietjie gehelp, toe sit ons sommer van die Griekse woorde ook so hier en daar in!)

Vraag 1

Sommer so in vers 1 al lyk dit vir my of die 2 vertalings wat ek gelees het verskil, so ek wil die volgende vra:

- 1.1 Gee asseblief vir my ’n letterlike vertaling van vers 1 – Dominee weet, die skrywers het tog seker rede gehad om sekere tye, modusse, diateses, naamvalle, ens. te gebruik!
- 1.2 Sal Dominee bietjie kommentaar lewer oor die verskille in hierdie vers tussen die OAV en die NAV? Of verskil hulle nie regtig nie? (Veral tov: Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεόν).

Vraag 2

Ek het self so bietjie in ’n kommentaar gaan lees oor hierdie verse en daar word kort-kort gepraat van ’n “GODDELIKE PASSIEF”.

- 2.1 Ek wil baie graag weet wat vir ’n ding is dit?
- 2.2 Kan Dominee vir my 5 sulke goed uit die gedeelte uithaal. (Dominee kan sommer die Griekse woord en die vers waarin dit staan ook vir my neerskryf.)
- 2.3 Ai, en dan sal Dominee tog asseblief vir my die woorde moet vertaal en moet aandui wat dit in die gedeelte beteken teen die agtergrond van die “Goddelike passief”.

Vraag 3

In vers 3-4 word vier kwaliteite (eienskappe) genoem waarin ons ons moet verheug of waarop ons moet roem. Behalwe vir “*hoop*” word die ander almal verskillend vertaal in die OAV en die NAV. Veral “*beproefdheid*” en “*egtheid van geloof*” klink vir my nie of die vertalers dieselfde Griekse teks gehad het nie!

- 3.1 Kan Dominee dalk vir my bietjie grammatikale en semantiese aantekeninge skryf oor die Griekse woorde wat hier gebruik is: $\theta\lambda\iota\psi\iota\varsigma$, $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\mu\omicron\nu\eta$, $\delta\omicron\kappa\iota\mu\grave{\eta}$ en $\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\pi\grave{\iota}\varsigma$
- 3.2 Dominee kan dan ook somer sê watter vertalings van die woorde Dominee verkies en hoekom?

Ek hoop regtig Dominee gaan dit geniet om my vragies te beantwoord! Dis tog so lekker om te weet ons Dominee ken Grieks en weet hoe om dit te gebruik.

Baie sterkte met al Dominee se werk.

Groetnis

Mev Jones

GRK 214: WERKSTUK 3 – Mev Jones en Romeine 5:1-11

Assesseringskriteria:

Student:

Studentenommer:

Afdeling A

Inleiding	1	
Probleemstelling	2	
	3	3

Afdeling B

Vraag 1

Letterlike vertaling van vers 1 – (tye, modusse, diateses, naamvalle, ens.)	4	
Kommentaar Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως	2	
Kommentaar εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν	2	
Kommentaar oor verskille tussen OAV en NAV	2	
	10	10

Vraag 2

Wat is 'n Goddelike Passief?	2	
Vyf voorbeelde van Goddelike passief (woord en vers)	2	
Vertaling van vyf Goddelike passiewe (5x1) en betekenis (1x1).	6	
	10	10

Vraag 3

Grammatikale aantekeninge θλίψις , ὑπομονή , δοκιμή , ἐλπίς (4x1)	4	
Semantiese aantekeninge θλίψις , ὑπομονή , δοκιμή , ἐλπίς (4x1)	4	
Keuse van vertaling van woorde en hoekom?	2	
	10	10

Afdeling C

Slot	1	
Hoe het die werkstuk jou gehelp om Rom 5:1-11 self beter te verstaan?	4	
	5	5

Afdeling D

Bronnelys	1	
Verwysings	1	
	2	2

OPMERKINGS

	40

APPENDIX B

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION USED IN VALIDATION MEETING

An innovative approach to the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek as classical language: planning and validation

VALIDATION MEETING: 2 December 2010
Annéli Machin (1992075547)
M.A. (Interdisciplinary: Higher Education Studies & Greek)

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Introduction: captives or refugees

Teaching is ... “the purposeful creation of situations from which motivated learners should not be able to escape without learning or developing”
(Cowan 2006:100)

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Overview of study

Research problem:
need for an innovative approach to enhance the significant teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek

Aim:
to investigate the most appropriate directives that could lead to a validated action plan for the implementation of an innovative approach

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Overview of study (continue...)

Research questions:

1. Why is the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek important and still relevant?
2. Are there possible shortcomings relating to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek that necessitate innovation?
3. How can the integrated components of Fink's taxonomy for significant learning make a contribution to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?

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Overview of study (continue...)

Research questions:

4. What elements from other innovative approaches can make a contribution to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?
5. What, according to students, are necessary to enhance the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek?

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Overview of study (continue...)

Objectives:

1. Gain perspectives on the **relevance** of the teaching and learning of Hellenistic Greek
2. Reveal **possible shortcomings** in the teaching and learning context to identify and confirm the need for an innovative approach to Hellenistic Greek.
3. Explore the applicability of **Fink's taxonomy**, elements from **other innovative approaches** and **student suggestions** to the teaching and learning context of Hellenistic Greek.

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Overview of study (continue...)

Objectives:

4. Compile **directives** and draft an **action plan** for the implementation of an innovative approach.
5. Have the compiled directives and action plan **validated** by role players and other experts in the field of study.

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Overview of study (continue...)

Design and methodology:

EDUCATIONAL ACTION RESEARCH (Whitehead & McNiff)

1. **What is my concern? (What issue am I interested in researching?)**
2. **Why am I concerned? (Why do I want to research this issue?)**
3. **What kind of evidence can I gather to show why I am interested in this issue?**
4. **What can I do? What will I do?**

PROCESS MODEL (Zuber-Skerritt)

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Research design for study

Phase 2 Evidence

Phase 1 & 3 Concern (what & why)

Phase 4 What can I do?

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Methodology

Sampling:

Methods: Maximum variation sampling
Stratified purposive sampling
Convenience (accidental)

Participants: 79 in total
67 students
7 lecturers (3 Greek; 3 New Testament; 1 Hebrew)
5 ministers (Dutch Reformed Church)

Mother tongue: Afrikaans - 71 ; English - 3 ; Sotho - 5

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Methodology

Data collection:

- Literature review
- Semi-structured interviews/focus group discussions (students)
- Informal conversational interviews (lecturers & ministers)
- Reflective journal and self critique

Data analysis: Thematic analysis

Immersion ; Generating categories ; Deleting categories ; Merging categories ; Checking themes ; Linking themes ; Presenting your findings

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Methodology

Ethical consideration:

- Informed consent
- Privacy (anonymity and confidentiality)
- Protection from harm

Quality assurance:

- Credibility (internal validity)
- Transferability (external validity)
- Dependability (reliability)
- Confirmability (objectivity)

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Context / Evidence - relevance

Literature

"If we assume then that the teaching of Greek is not negotiable for the future involvement in the Biblical sciences ... then we ought to ask ourselves about the manner in which a working knowledge of Greek should be acquired" (Steyn 2001:365)

Empirical

- Unlocks the authentic text
- Enhances knowledge and comprehension
- Improve exegesis and interpretation
- Enrich preaching and application
- Underpins critical evaluation of translations




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Context / Evidence - problematic issues

Literature

- An ancient and foreign language
- Current teaching and learning approaches
- Different objectives of teaching and learning approaches
- Textbooks and auxiliary tools
- Context and time

Empirical

- Prescribed contents (curriculum)
- Previous/current teaching methodology
- Assessment & Resources
- General organization and study material




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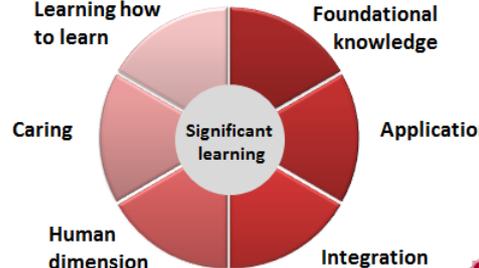
Practice: Fink's taxonomy of significant learning

- What are the ways in which learning can be significant?
 - Impact?
 - Distinguish?
- Significant learning has to involve some kind of change in a learner




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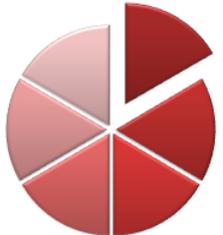
Fink's taxonomy of significant learning



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Implications: Fink & Hellenistic Greek 1

Foundational knowledge



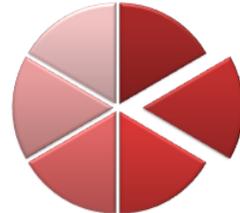
- Fink
 - Need to "know" something
 - Understanding and remembering
 - Basic knowledge, facts, concepts, etc
- Hellenistic Greek
 - Basic history and grammar
 - Alphabet, paradigms, vocabulary
 - Reading and translation of texts



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Implications: Fink & Hellenistic Greek 2

Application



- Fink
 - Engage in new action ...
 - Thinking: critical, creative, practical
 - Skills development: communication, technology
- Hellenistic Greek
 - USE grammar, paradigms, vocabulary
 - Analyse texts, discuss textual issues – critical thinking
 - Use other resources & technology
 - Not just rote learning



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Implications: Fink & Hellenistic Greek 3

Integration



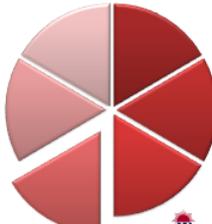
- Fink
 - > See and understand connections ...
 - > ... between ideas
 - > ... between realms
- Hellenistic Greek
 - > Connection between HG and ...
 - > ... history of language
 - > ... Theology studies
 - > ... New Testament exegesis
 - > ... everyday life / questions

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Implications: Fink & Hellenistic Greek 4

- Fink
 - > Learn about self and others
 - > Have better interaction
 - > Discover personal/social implications
- Hellenistic Greek
 - > Learn about self and others
 - > ... group work / opinions
 - > ... how to share information with different kinds of people

Human dimension

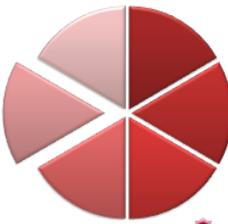


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Implications: Fink & Hellenistic Greek 5

- Fink
 - > Identify and/or change feelings, interests, values
 - > Learning can change degree to which students care about something
- Hellenistic Greek
 - > Identify value of Greek
 - > Change how they feel about subject and how they approach learning
 - > Can be more positive and motivated

Caring



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Implications: Fink & Hellenistic Greek 6

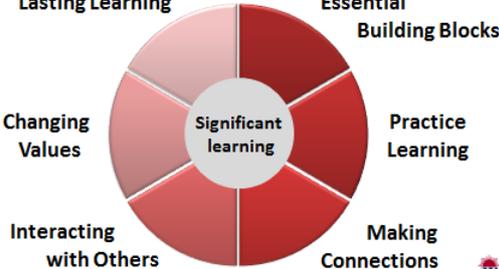
- Fink
 - > Learn HOW to learn specific subject
 - > Learn process of learning itself
 - > Learn how to become self-directed learner - continue learning in future
- Hellenistic Greek
 - > Learn HOW to learn Greek
 - > How to work on own
 - > How to apply knowledge to texts / answering questions

Learning how to learn



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Fink's taxonomy applied to Hellenistic Greek



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Fink's taxonomy and learning goals ...

By the end of this course, students will...

- Understand and remember key concepts, terms ...
- Know how to use the content.
- Be able to relate this subject to other subjects.
- Understand the personal and social implications of knowing about this subject.
- Care about the subject and about learning more.
- Know how to keep on learning about this subject after the course is over. (Fink 2003a:34).

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Adapted learning goals for Hellenistic Greek

By the end of this course, students will...

1. understand and remember the essential building blocks of Hellenistic Greek.
2. be able use building blocks in grammar; reading and translation exercises; use communication skills in authentic situations; use critical and/or practical thinking skills during assignments and analytical discussions of texts; and, use resources and technology effectively while working with texts.



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Adapted learning goals for Hellenistic Greek

3. be able to make necessary connections between Hellenistic Greek and Theology studies, New Testament exegesis and authentic situations relating to their world of work.
4. know how to interact with others and how to share information in different contexts by being informed about themselves and other people (students & people in world of work) and by interacting with others during group work and in authentic situations.



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Adapted learning goals for Hellenistic Greek

5. have changed values and attitude towards Hellenistic Greek if they developed an interest for the language and realized its value for Theology studies and future ministry.
6. keep on learning about Hellenistic Greek (lasting learning) if they know how to learn and how to work independently.



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Practice: selected innovative approaches from literature

Multisensory approach (Masciantonio)
 Inscriptions (Winters)
 Essay assignments (Anhalt)
 Model for second-year college Latin (Anderson)
 Electronic auxiliary tools (various authors)
 Reading and exegesis (Countryman)



Comparison: approaches vs taxonomies (Fink / HG)



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Practice: student suggestions

Methodology
 Relevance (bigger picture)
 Group work and exercises
 Resources and assessment
 Translations



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Practice: Directives – 7 sets

SITUATIONAL FACTORS

- specific content
- external expectations
- learners and lecturers
- pedagogical challenge

Teaching (Cowan 2006:100)

“... the purposeful creation of situations from which motivated learners should not be able to escape without learning or developing”

Significant learning (Fink 2003a:30)

“[f]or learning to occur, there has to be some kind of change in the learner. No change, no learning. And *significant learning* requires that there be some kind of lasting change that is important in terms of the learner's life”



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Practice: Directives – 7 sets

RELEVANCE

- bigger picture
- aim & introduction
- as early as possible

CONTENT

- history
- grammar
- New Testament & Patristic texts
- translations

METHODOLOGY

- inductive/deductive
- variation: lectures & group work
- application & integration

ASSESSMENT

- purpose
- formative & summative
- high cognitive
- authentic

STUDY MATERIAL

- text book
- language
- methodology
- supplementary

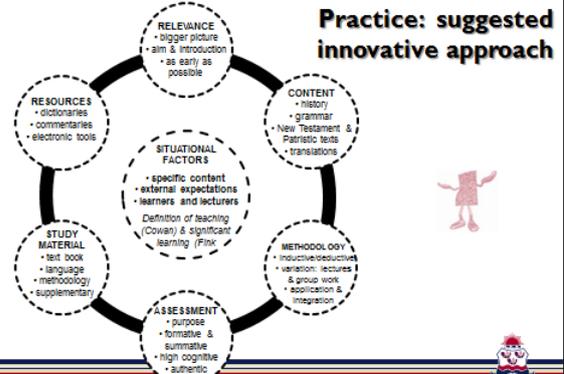
RESOURCES

- dictionaries
- commentaries
- electronic tools



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Practice: suggested innovative approach



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Practice: Action plan

This plan is presented in table 5.1 – [see copies](#)

A number of *actions* were drafted for each of the proposed sets of directives

Actions constitute the proposed action plan.

Action plan reflect the planning (what and why), the action (who and when) and the monitoring (who and how) for each identified action.



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Practice: validation



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