Papers from the Conference, Communication
at University: Purpose, Process and Product.

Edited by
Hanne Bock and June Gassin
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FOREWORD

Over recent years, there has been a growing concern in Australian universities over students' ability to live up to the demands that tertiary studies place upon them. The cry of "falling standards" has consequently led to the appointment in most - if not all - universities of EFL-teachers, study skills counsellors and English advisers.

The general view of the function of these people reflects the concern over "falling standards". It can be summed up as the belief that what we are dealing with is a deficiency in the student, a problem of incompetence and of remedial needs. Yet this view is contradicted by another simultaneous and just as firm belief that all we are dealing with are surface problems, cosmetic blemishes on otherwise bright intellectual minds; nothing, in fact, that a prefabricated, mass-produced aid kit would not solve. These beliefs imply that being incompetent, or being a remedial case, is an absolute state which exists independently of context and can therefore also be redressed independently of context.

For the teachers working in this field, things have not proved so simple. To them, it is becoming increasingly clear that language and study skills problems do not exist *per se* but only as defined within specific environments. Thus a student who writes "bad grammar" is not necessarily a bad communicator with retarded language development, as the word "remedial" implies. Language develops in the face of a challenge; such a student may have an excellent command of language but in a dialect developed to

cope with other than academic pursuits and therefore unacceptable in that context. Or again, it is not necessarily the case that a student who presents a poor argument cannot argue in any absolute sense. It may well be that his sense of structure and mode of reasoning are based on cultural patterns and world views distinctly different from his teacher's and therefore not recognized or accepted by the teacher. To stamp such students "remedial" plants a stigma of all-pervading incompetence which they - rightly - feel to be unjust, and which is counter-productive to learning.

Language, then, is interwoven with culture, structure with content and study skills with modes of reasoning. It is, indeed, fair to say that what we tend to see as independently existing "skills" are merely the outward expression of inner reasoning processes. It follows that the deficiency model must be redefined so that it is seen as relative to a given environment, rather than as an absolute. At the same time this understanding allows the aid kit approach to be seen for what it is: an attempt to treat symptoms rather than causes.

This understanding in turn has generated a demand for a variety of approaches largely dictated by the needs of individual students. It has also proved far more useful for teachers in the struggle to achieve results with their students, and far more satisfactory for the student, for it defines and thus delimits his problems, allowing him to retain a feeling of competence.

This understanding makes work with the students far more effective; it also makes it far more complex; and there is therefore a great need for people working in this field to exchange views and experiences, not least because the number of people in each institution is so small that each of us is virtually working on his own, isolated from the push towards the development of new ideas that discussion with colleagues can bring.

A major step towards overcoming this isolation was taken by the Communication and Study Skills Unit in Canberra in 1980 with the hosting of a study skills conference for people working with university students. This conference was very successful in sharpening the participants'

awareness of the complexities with which they were working as well as in providing new perspectives from which to approach their work. It was followed up in May 1981 by a second conference at La Trobe University under the title "Communication at University: Purpose, Process and Product". This volume presents the papers from that conference.

While being firmly addressed to the tasks of analysing and overcoming language and study skills problems, these papers cover a variety of approaches reflecting both the diversity of the writers' theoretical backgrounds and the equally varied student populations with which the contributors are working. If these papers have anything in common, it is the conviction that, in order to overcome the learning and language problems of students, the nature of those problems must first be understood. Far too much work in the remedial area relies on ad hoc measures and is based on assumptions rather than analyses. These papers represent an attempt to come to terms with the task of teaching learning and language skills by people working in the field, and we believe they will prove as useful to their readers as they were to the conference participants.

Hanne Bock
June Gassin

La Trobe University, 1981

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PART I

FACTORS INFLUENCING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

ELIZABETH DINES, COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

When Hanne Bock asked me to speak at this conference I wondered what qualifications I had for speaking to a group like this. My own research is on the language of children in primary and secondary schools, and although I have taught many students at the tertiary level I have not made any particular study of this group's language. It seems, however, that the work which I have been doing on linguistic variation in school students is relevant to the problems you have to deal with in older students.

I propose to approach the topic of factors influencing effective communication from three separate but related points of view. First, considering the question from your own view-point as teachers and counsellors in tertiary institutions, I shall focus on the language difficulties of tertiary students, outlining a number of factors likely to impede communication and suggesting some forms of support which might be appropriate at this level.

Secondly I will refer briefly to the later professional needs of your students, raising in particular the question of how training programs can ensure that professionals can communicate effectively with migrant clients.

In conclusion I will address the issue from the vantage points of a policy maker. At this stage I intend to raise a number of language issues which are relevant to the tertiary sector and on which you as a group might seek to formulate policy. Such policies might then be

encompassed by a much broader language policy which would take account of Australia's total communicative needs.

I shall begin with the idea of variation in language - a phenomenon which is familiar to us all. We take in our stride minor variations in accent but often have difficulty in understanding accents which are markedly different. We sometimes exaggerate or make jokes about stereotyped 'foreign' accents. We accept that a range of vocabulary items and syntactic structures may be used to convey more or less the same meaning and we use this feature ourselves in order to create a certain nuance or style. In letter writing, we adopt certain conventions according to whether the intended recipient is a friend or a prospective employer. Writing a report is different from writing a novel,and so on.

I have become very sensitive to the value of linguistic variation since I joined the Public Service. Previously I had considered that to write "I understand that the meeting is to be on Thursday" was to be unnecessarily pompous. However modality is a wonderful form of insurance for the public servant and in a life of uncertainties, qualifying the factual status of every proposition uttered may be the only way of ensuring that you at least will not be culpable should the meeting be postponed. Similar conventions help underlings who are at heart egalitarian, cope with the hierarchical structure of the Service.

Language varies not only according to its use but according to its users. Differences in accent, grammatical structure and lexical choice can reflect the geographical origins or social milieu of the speaker. Voice alone is a fairly reliable indicator of the speaker's sex. We frequently make such judgements and the fact that we can be proved wrong appears not to detract from our readiness to make them.

It has been argued that the social dialect which is characteristic of working class speakers can cause difficulties in communication because, it is claimed, it is imprecise and illogical. This was certainly the initial opinion of a group of teachers with whom I undertook a research project in Melbourne several years ago. In an exhaustive analysis of the language of four groups of 12 year olds we explored this hypothesis.

In the course of the study we were able to identify 25 features which we classified as elements of a non-standard social dialect. These are indicated in Table 1. We also classified a further 6 features as 'informal discourse strategies' (see Table 2) and a number of other more idiosyncratic constructions which are illustrated in Table 3.

It is evident from the relatively low occurrence of non-standard forms in over 40 hours of recording that these students are in no sense 'confined' to speaking a non-standard dialect. All of them displayed variation between standard and non-standard forms, usually selecting the non-standard form when talking to friends on topics unrelated to the school work they were meant to be doing, or in particular when role-playing in drama sessions. Our conclusion was that these children were bi-dialectal, able to shift from standard to non-standard at will. We considered that their non-standard language might be inappropriate in certain formal situations but its use did not appear to give rise to any misunderstandings. It seemed that breaches of linguistic good manners rather than breakdowns in communication were the consequences of using non-standard forms.

Our findings in this study were not dissimilar to the position put forward by William Labov in the much quoted paper "The Logic of Negro Non-Standard English" (1969). In this paper he demonstrated through an analysis of discussions between young Black Americans, the internal consistency of non-standard Black English vernacular and traced out the undeniable logic in the argument of speakers of this much derided form of English. In our own case non-standard Australian English is much closer to standard English than the Black English Vernacular but the comparison is still valid. Educational difficulties of disadvantaged urban school children cannot be explained away simply by their propensity for 'bad grammar'.

The question now to be addressed is whether the inherent adequacy of linguistic systems implies that communication will always be effective. If this were so then sources other than language must give rise to educational problems. Undoubtedly many more general social factors need to be considered in counselling students but it would be as detrimental

to discount the possibility of communicative disfunction ever occurring. Communication does break down at times, misunderstandings arise, people quarrel, misinterpret what is said, *not* because of dialect differences, but because of the range of other factors which affect the effectiveness of communication preventing the idea that is in one mind transferring intact into the mind of another. Such factors which seem particularly relevant to the tertiary context include the role relationship between the participants, the degree of mastery of language appropriate to the specific situation, and sub-cultural and inter-cultural differences in styles of argument and modes of discourse. I propose to spend some time discussing each of these in turn.

Let us consider language as a communicative act in which participants exchange ideas. Students are involved in many different types of communicative acts in the course of their studies. They take on active spoken roles when talking to other students, adopting varying degrees of informality towards their peers depending upon other contextual factors such as whether the setting is the tutorial or the cafe. Students also interact with teaching staff in formal and informal settings and in addition to their spoken roles undertake more or less reproductive written exercises such as note-taking, and more or less creative exercises such as essay writing. (Students also are involved in a variety of passive roles such as listening to lectures and solitary reading but difficulties in these areas will not be explored in this address).

The nature of the role relationship between participants can affect the quality of the communication. Brown and Gilman (1957) demonstrated that power relationships can be signalled by asymmetrical patterns of address as when an employer refers to an employee by first name, but is addressed in response by title and family name or surname. A reciprocal pattern of address on the other hand expresses a relationship based on solidarity. Where two speakers consider themselves on equal terms first names are likely to be used. Those who consider themselves equals yet who wish to maintain mutual respect and distance use titles and surnames/reciprocally. This distinction between symmetrical and asymmetrical systems of address is implicit in English but overt in many European languages where it is

signalled by the polite and familiar forms of the second person pronoun, for example VOUS and TU in French.

The question of whether an asymmetrical relationship in which one participant has some form of power and control over the other affects the form of communication has been an issue in pragmatic linguistic research. To cite a local example, Bill Lomas (1980) investigated the relationship between the directive function and linguistic form in the language of primary school children. He analysed language produced in a number of co-operative tasks, which by their nature required the giving of directions on how to proceed. Twelve children in grades 1, 2 and 3 were recorded in four situations; paired with children who were younger, with children of the same age, with older children and with adults. He found that as children became older they selected more direct imperatives; i.e. they tended more often to say outright "Give me a brick" as opposed to hinting "I need a brick". Furthermore with successively older partners they used fewer imperatives, reducing their occurrence to the point where only four occurred in the total child-to-adult interactions. These two findings are consistent with the exercise of power being the prerogative of the older speaker.

The content of a message is also affected by the role relationship between participants. The feeling that the person addressed is important and that one's own position is relatively inferior can lead to a disruption of the normal rules of communicative competence. Just as hypercorrect or "affected" accents can reflect social insecurity, so a lack of confidence in one's own status can lead the speaker to focus more on the listener than on what is being said, and to seek for any topic of conversation which might conceivably be of mutual interest; a recently completed report or task that is overdue, an item of news or, in desperation, the state of the weather. In this way, speakers seek to bridge the gap created by the residual power dimension, affecting a spurious jollity, a comradeship that suggests solidarity.

Now, how do differences in status between addresser and addressee affect tertiary students? Social status is not a live issue for most students and most members of staff would no doubt pride themselves upon their

egalitarian attitudes. There is however such a thing as a "capitalism of ideas". I have found that many students believe that their ideas are not worthy of presentation to their teachers or their peers. Students in this frame of mind may well remain silent or if required to speak,may distort what they have to say by their own lack of self-esteem. And this problem is shared by students whose mother tongue is English as well as those who come from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Developing students' confidence to the point where they can gain and hold the floor and can hold to a position or line of argument in the face of vocal opposition is one way of overcoming difficulties which arise from real or imagined differences in status. Skilled narrators have this gift, holding off a callous disregard for their story on the part of the listener with their own evaluation of the worth of the narrative.

Let us move to a very specific form of role relationship: the differences in language which may be attributed to differences in sex. It has been claimed that the self-assessed low status and low self-esteem of women leads them to use language which is tentative; for example, tag questions and modal verbs. These linguistic features function in other ways however, and it is just as likely that a high proportion of female to male questions in any given interaction signifies politeness rather than the inability to make up one's mind. I recall in my teens being advised by more experienced peers that I should get boys to talk about themselves by asking them lots of questions. However, a point of view was never to be questioned if there was any risk of embarrassing "him" by exposing a fallacious argument or inflaming him by offending political or religious canons. Let us hope that those days have gone.

I raise the prospect of the sex differences in language being directly attributable to acculturation because it leads to the issue of the effect of cultural differences on communication. To what extent do sub-cultural communicative norms and expectations affect the effectiveness of communication in a tertiary setting which draws together students from a broad spectrum of society? I suggest that the monolithic approach to learning that is the inheritance of western literate cultures is at odds with the expectations of students from certain subcultural groups. I shall expand

upon this idea, referring again to my study of secondary school children's language.

The main purpose of the study was to examine the language of the classroom from a functional perspective. Bearing in mind my earlier point that language varies according to factors such as topic, role relationship and setting, we recorded children working in different school subject areas, in conjunction with teachers and with peers and in different group sizes. In each case we examined the demands for language function placed upon them by each situation and the way in which these demands were met. Our findings on the humanities lessons are particularly pertinent here.

In the humanities lessons, the children were required to record and contemplate personal experience and then to extract certain generalisations or to draw certain inferences; that is, to use personal experience as the basis of argument. We found moreover that children had no difficulty in the first stage of these tasks but rarely were they able to proceed past the level of personal anecdote to extract any underlying generalisation or to develop the anecdote towards an argument. The following exchange illustrates this point.

Teacher: Well, what ways of communicating do animals have?

Gary: Keep it - the same thing like - if the dog starts barking it'll bark until you do what it wants you to.

Teacher: Makes a noise, uses sound.

Gary: Yeah.

Here it is the teacher who extracts the general principle. Another teaching strategy is to ask a general question followed by a request for specific information. For example:

Teacher: People are doing different topics but they're all doing ancient civilizations and they're all looking at similar things about different groups of people. Now, as far as we've gone, can you see anything about the Greeks that's similar to

the Aztecs? For example, what sort of government did the Greeks have?

Where teachers structured tasks in this way and followed through with constant challenges, such as "Why", "How did that help?", "What did that prove?", students moved slowly towards synthesising new knowledge on the basis of previous experience. Unfortunately this happened rarely and in the hurly-burly of classroom interaction the point of the discussion was frequently lost. We saw the answer to this problem to be in training small groups to work together in a constructive way. A discussion group of 35 is just too large to do justice to the needs of all.

What of the relevance of this example to the present topic?

The general acceptance of anecdotes in place of argument in this school caused us to speculate that we were dealing here not only with a developmental phenomenon but also with a characteristic form of communication which was acceptable in groups not oriented to formal education. I have strong ties with a working class rural ancestry and know from my own childhood that in some circles it is a put down to sum up in a few words the point of another's five minute personal anecdote. Similarly any second-order deliberation upon experience, such as the verbal articulation of feelings, is censured. As a child I was chastised for "wearing my heart upon thesleeve for all the world to see" in order, I presume, to foster a linguistic and effective counterpart to the physical modesty which was then the norm. What problems are there, we must ask, for a student from a home where verbal reticence is valued, in coping with the requirement of a humanities course where the contemplation and expression of personal and vicarious experience is central to the exercise? Is this perhaps the basis of that style of essay-writing which leaves so much of the argument to be filled in by the reader, provoking a marginal comment "too dense!"

The particular problem of students coming from homes where the communicative norms are very different from those operating in tertiary institutions is shared to some degree by all students as they come to grips with the modes of thinking and styles of discourse of the various

academic disciplines. The difficulties are exacerbated for migrant and overseas students from other cultures.

In the case of students for whom English is a second language the specialised registers of the disciplines present new areas for language learning even for those students who have considerable fluency in English. Special support may be needed for much longer than it is normally available. We found this to be the case in a study of so-called 'second phase' learners. These students, who had been in Australia between two and five years, still had difficulties in interpreting the teacher's demands and in determining how to respond. In one lesson for example, 19% of the questions addressed to second language learners had to be rephrased before they were understood as opposed to 4% which were rephrased for the benefit of English mother tongue (EMT) students. ESL students also experienced difficulties in realising the subtle distinction between the request for a report and the request for a generalisation confusing "What do you do?" with "What did you do?". These students also found problems in coping with pragmatic aspects of discourse; problems in knowing how to bid for a place in the discussion, how to gain the floor and how to hold it once gained. In our noisy secondary classrooms ESL speakers who hesitated even just momentarily, perhaps to search for a word, were interrupted by other speakers and so lost their place in the discussion.

Recognising the continuing nature of second language learning poses policy issues and practical difficulties for tertiary institutions. There is the question of formulating policy on standards of English necessary for entry into universities and colleges where English is predominantly but certainly not exclusively the language of instruction. In the case of both sponsored and private overseas students tests of proficiency in English are a pre-requisite for enrolment, and provisions are made for further study in English if this is considered necessary or advisable. It is moreover recognised that the test itself cannot predict entirely the student's ultimate academic success, not least because many additional factors over and above competence in English contribute to a student's development.

In the case of students resident in Australia, the matriculation requirements provide a hurdle, ostensibly ensuring that the matriculants have a level of competence including competence in the English language sufficient to undertake tertiary studies. (Students from non-English speaking backgrounds are underrepresented at the tertiary level, suggesting that the matriculation process also excludes from academic study an unknown number of students on the basis of language background.) Amongst ESL students who do enter universities and the colleges there will be some who need further assistance but this need may not be apparent to those at the first point of contact with the students. Indeed even amongst those who have the task of assessing students' needs in the area of communication, new insights into varying dimensions of language will lead to fresh understandings of specific points of difficulty.

A small group of students who can find themselves in difficulties on entering university are recently arrived migrant or refugee students, matriculating on the basis of recognition of their overseas qualifications. Such students, who may have very limited English, are not always advised on the difficulty they are likely to encounter or the degree to which Australian universities and colleges rely on English. There is a need for institutions to develop policies for this eventuality covering the assessment of language needs on enrolment, the provision of support services and the role of the student's first language in tertiary studies. And these policies need to be consistent with those applying to other ESL students.

Universities do in part recognise the long-term nature of second-language learning in the provisions which are made for editing assistance at the post-graduate level. It is recognised in the world of publishing that writers publishing in other than their mother-tongue may need special editorial assistance. Similarly a supervisor's editing of an ESL student's doctoral or masters thesis is considered legitimate and does not usually reflect badly on the student. However at the undergraduate level tutors are less likely to accept any responsibility for an editorial function. Student advisors have an important role to play here in sensitising the whole staff to their responsibility in supporting ESL

students and in training them to recognise language problems. It may not be easy to take on this consultancy role in a time of shrinking financial resources and given the tenuous position of many language support programs. I suggest that the alternative is to collapse under the burden of an impossible case load.

I have moved from considering factors affecting the effectiveness of communication to suggesting policies in the area of ESL in the tertiary institution. Before concluding I want to correct this imbalanced emphasis on English by raising an issue in the area of inter-cultural communication.

Communication between professionals and migrant clients

One of the concerns of the report on the provision of post-arrival services for migrants, known as the Galbally Report, was the problem of communication between professionals and migrant clients. The report recommended:

> that professionals including those studying and those currently in practice in areas with large migrant clienteles should receive assistance in obtaining or upgrading language skills and understanding cultural differences.
>
> Galbally Recommendation 14.

Over the last three years between 1979 and the end of 1981 some 2,000 professionals have taken part in introductory language courses or courses in cultural awareness and understanding. One might question the provision of such courses as opposed to the provision of more interpreters. While not denying the value of the latter and the need to expand on our current interpreting capacities, it is unlikely that interpreting alone will lead to greater understanding between professional and migrant clients. For migrants, just as for your students, difficulties are not solely located in words. When people attempt to communicate across cultures much more is at stake than just understanding the language. To take an example: friction can arise between a doctor and a patient when each has different expectations about the degree of personal interest the

doctor should express or the amount of information about the condition which the doctor should offer. The doctor's ignorance of the patient's former experience of health care or of the conditions under which the patient was living can contribute to a breakdown in communication just as readily as the patient's ignorance of local health care provisions.

The uniqueness of the Galbally 14 program as I see it is that for the first time, we have government commitment to the notion that the host community has a responsibility towards migrant settlers. And that commitment has been backed by funds which have allowed, to date, the development of over 93 specific language courses for diverse professional groups such as lawyers, doctors, teachers and social workers, as well as 66 courses and seminars on cultural differences.

What we have seen to date, however, is only the beginning. Unless members of the professions and the institutions which train them take responsibility for incorporating these elements within their core training programs I do not see that we will ever get beyond the beginning.

In the training of teachers alone there has been a relatively widespread introduction of courses in multicultural education and ethnic studies. Yet in many places these are now being threatened, vulnerable because they are staffed in the main by contract and non-tenured staff. The recent introduction of 12 new tertiary courses in community languages offers new opportunities for language departments to co-operate with other faculties in incorporating language units into a wide range of courses. But I wonder whether there is sufficient flexibility in the tertiary system to meet this challenge.

Language policy and Language Planning in the Tertiary Sector

'Challenge' is where I would like to end. Throughout this address I have referred to a number of open questions concerning effective communication in the tertiary sector. Some of these concern the English language difficulties which undergraduate students from other cultures or sub-cultures have to confront. Some of these concern potential difficulties

which students will face in their later professional lives, particularly when they are offering their services to clients or patients who come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. All in all, it has been a very problem-oriented, needs-focussed discussion. I wish to end on a more positive note.

I believe that our language policy in this country has for too long focussed on problems. We have ESL programs to meet the needs of migrants. We have a few services provided in languages other than English to meet the needs of those who do not learn English.

Slowly there are signs that more and more Australians are coming to understand that a needs-based policy and needs-based programs are robbing us of the enjoyment and benefits which come from living in a society where languages other than English have a more important role to play. Increasingly I believe we need to think of language as a resource. This group is well placed to foster the development of language policy in the tertiary sector. In planning the most effective programs for your students and in developing a consensus on provisions across the nation you are already involved in a national language policy exercise. The extension of your current interests to incorporate discussion and debate on the role of other languages with language departments and the institutions as a whole will give an added impetus to the development of a national language policy for Australia.

TABLE 1 NON-STANDARD VARIANTS

VARIABLE	EXAMPLE	OCC	FREQ.
VERB TENSE AND ASPECT			
1. Non-standard preterite	It come unstuck.	33	
2. HAVE deletion	I got to go to the dentist now.I got a very sore tooth.	57	
3. BE substitution for HAVE	I know but they're got better sense.	1	
4. GOT passive	Cause she got locked up.	3	
5. BE regularized	They was like the last tribe to get there.	3	
6. Semi-auxiliary GO + verb	You go wash your hands.	5	
NEGATION			
7. Negative Concord	I don't know nothing about this project	33	60
8. Emphatic Denial NEVER	I never put that there.Mary did.Mary put that on there.	10	62
9. AIN'T	I ain't got no pets.	7	18
10. 3rd Person singular DON'T	I'll do the whole lot. It don't worry me.	7	32
PRONOUNS			
11. YOU plural	What's wrong with youse two?	11	36.7
12. Objective pronouns:			
a) objective for subjective	It's not the clouds that are moving.It's us that's moving.	3	
b) in coordinate subjects	Me and me sister have to do dishes.	6	
13. THEM/THOSE	I'd hate to have a bath in them days.	10	26.3
14. Indefinite reference	No, let's not do your own.	2	
15. Relative WHAT	It's a well what water's in.	4	
16. Intrusive WHAT	She wasn't as bad as what he was.	3	6.7
17. Dative movement with pronount direct object.	Give us it back.	4	
ADVERB AND ADJECTIVES			
18. Predicative adjective replacing adverb	They don't stick very good.	9	
19. Intensifer with -LY deletion	When you talk it goes real loud.	9	34.6
20. Degrees of Comparison	This thing is the most easiest thing to fold	1	
PREPOSITIONS			
21. Deletions	And so I took the heater down my room, miss.	3	
22. Different usage	Mine is different than yours.	2	
LEXICAL DIFFERENCES			
23. LEND for BORROW	Can I have a lend of your texts or something	8	
24. GO for SAY	I ask him if he'd turn it down and he goes 'shut up'.	11	
25. Idiosyncratic lexical items and new formations	Are you gunna done blood? (i.e., be a donor)	12	

TABLE 2 INFORMAL DISCOURSE STRATEGIES

1) Pronominal Apposition

"and the old lady there though, she shut the door on our faces and wouldn't open the doors."

2) Specific deictic determiner for absent referent

"Well, I read in this book that he made a whole lot of theories."

3) It/there is/was + plural subject

"There's no poles in the earth."

4) Historic Present

"Did you see that part when that bloke was climbing up - all the lights are out and then he gets some light and he gets his machine gun and . . . ."

5) Extraposition

"Now and then have a beer, my father does."
"We've gone through it all, that."

6) Set-marking Tag

"Stir it until it goes blue or something."

TABLE 3 STRANGE AND CLUMSY SYNTAX

1) Word Order

"We get half an hour out earlier."

2) Aspect

"When the policeman came all the time."

3) Clumsy

"Australian - if they're in Australia or whatever their parents are, they usually bring them up how they speak."

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ASSISTING STUDENT LEARNING: SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN THE U.S. AND U.K.[1]

JOHN CLANCHY, A.N.U.

For three months (November 1980 - January 1981) I undertook a study tour of universities in America and Canada and the United Kingdom. The specific aim of my tour was to examine provisions made in overseas universities for helping students acquire effective skills for tertiary study. I was also interested in more general matters of curriculum and the organization and practice of teaching.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA[2]

I begin this report (and the later section on universities in the British Isles) with some general observations, then focus more specifically on matters relevant to the work of the Communication and Study Skills Unit (CSSU) at The Australian National University. My observations derive from discussions with professional colleagues and academic staff, attendance at departmental meetings and seminars, sitting in on lectures and tutorials, and talking with students.

1. This paper is adapted from the author's Professional Development Leave Report.

2. In California, though I visited other institutions, I concentrated on the University of California at Berkeley and Davis, and Stanford University. In Boston I was based at Harvard University College but also spent time in Yale University, Tufts University and University of Massachusetts at Boston. In Ottowa I visited Carleton University and the University of Ottowa, and in Montreal McGill and Concordia Universities.

1. In the universities in both the U.S. and Canada there exists a general movement towards, if not a core curriculum, then a more restricted range of options for undergraduate students than has previously been the case, and a requirement that students gain experience in a number of the classical modes of reasoning (scientific, mathematical, historical, philosophical, etc.) The influence of Harvard here is very noticeable. There seems to be a consensus amongst faculty that the proliferation of electives which has occurred over the previous two decades is not in students' best interests and that universities have shirked their responsibility in not being more definite about what constitutes an appropriate undergraduate curriculum.

   Though none of the universities I visited had gone as far as Harvard in pursuing the aims of a general undergraduate education, the same tendency was evident everywhere. Berkeley, Davis, Yale, U.Mass. Boston, Ottowa and McGill were all moving, with local adaptations, in a similar direction. Stanford has recently introduced a compulsory course in Western Civilization and is contemplating a compulsory foreign language requirement. (The logistical and other problems entailed by such a shift in philosophy are immense - as Harvard is only now discovering.)

2. There exists a widespread concern amongst university administrators and faculty about:
   (a) falling enrolments. The present decline in numbers of enrolling students across both countries is expected to worsen throughout the eighties.
   (b) falling standards amongst students on entry. Scholastic aptitude test scores of entering students have dropped markedly over the last decade, particularly in the areas of mathematical and verbal competence. Most faculty lay the blame for this on what they see as deficient secondary schooling.
   (c) the squeeze on funds. Federal and state funding for university education have tightened considerably in recent years, and faculty in universities without substantial private endowments perceive the future of their institutions as very bleak.

3. The consequences of these changes and pressures are interesting; in some cases ominous. There is, first of all, an enormous drive to recruit students, which many faculty assert is simply exacerbating the problem of falling standards. A number of universities have set up offices of student recruitment and unashamedly poach in the traditional drawing territories of fellow universities.

Even more noticeable is the concern to retain students once they are in the university. Special tutoring and support programs, particularly designed to give assistance to groups of students with records of high drop-out and failure (e.g. minorities, mature-age students), seem to flourish everywhere. The Student Learning Centre at Berkeley, for example, which is only one of a number of such centres on that campus, employs 34 full-time learning skills counsellors and some hundreds of tutors, and has a budget well in excess of $1 million per annum. A substantial part of the work of such centres is focused on special educational programs for minority students both for reasons of general polity and social equity and because these students are a source of additional government funding.

There is a curious ambivalence here in the attitude of academics. On the one hand they recognize the practical urgency of recruitment. On the other, they resent having to teach an increasing proportion of less capable first-year students. One result is that more and more service, supplementary and alternative teaching programs are set up outside the mainstream academic departments. There may be more students taking remedial mathematics than there are taking mathematics.

Most ominous of all is the clearly destructive effect of these pressures on faculty morale. The competition for tenured and track-tenured positions is intense and still depends largely on publication records. Time and again I was told "Yes, such and such would be a good idea but would involve spending more time with students and less on research. In the present climate, that would

be professionally suicidal". At the same time many tenured staff, apparently disenchanted with the aftermath of student pressure for change in the 60's and 70's and disappointed by the falling quality of students, apportion more and more of the general teaching load to inexperienced teaching assistants. This is particularly the case at the first year level. So teaching suffers, learning centres (the "invisible colleges" of American higher education) proliferate, and standards do not seem to rise. All the worst prophecies become self-fulfilling.

4. First-year teaching in American universities seems currently to present massive problems and challenges as the entering population becomes more diverse. On the one hand, there are rapidly increasing numbers of minority students - each minority seeming to have its own special needs - and others entering under an increasing number of special"admit" provisions and programs. On the other, the educational preparation of the traditional school leaver population becomes more diverse and more uneven. This diversity raises important questions both in terms of assumed levels of knowledge in the discipline and preferred styles of learning. (CSSU staff have, on a number of occasions, drawn attention to the emergence of similar problems within the first-year ANU population.) Staff in teaching development units in both countries see this as an important area of research and faculty development for the 80's.

5. The establishment and expansion of student learning centres seem to be characteristic North American responses to the problems created by the influx of minority students and the drop in standards amongst the general entering populations. For an Australian visitor these centres are remarkable for their size, the diversity of services they offer, and the level of resources apportioned to them. They differ from their Australian counterparts in a number of other ways:

   (a) they are much more concerned with testing - both for the student's own evaluation of his/her capacities in a range of skills and as a selective and diagnostic agency for the University and for particular courses.

(b) they make much greater use of educational "hardware" e.g. computer-assisted individualized learning programs are common.

(c) they commonly make use of (paid) student peer tutors.

(d) they provide instruction that is directly related to disciplinary content. It is common, for example, for a centre to employ tutors who "specialise" in major first year courses; Maths A, Chemistry I, Freshman composition, etc. (Australian advisers, by contrast, focus more on process and styles of thinking and make no attempt to teach content directly.)

These differences, of course, must be seen in the context of the much greater size of student populations than is the case at ANU and the lower general level of achievement amongst first year American students.

I found the staff in American centres impressive for their diversity of skills, their energy and for their preparedness to take initiatives. There were, however, three aspects of their work which I found disturbing:

1. the sheer size of the student peer tutoring programs meant that "quality control" procedures were often deficient. Full-time staff admitted that this was a continuing problem and that friction with academic departments occurred from time to time.

2. the bigger such centres grew, the more they seemed to become empires unto themselves. My questions about how staff and tutors fed information back to the academic departments from which their students came often met with incomprehension. Clearly some of the centres had lost sight of the fact that their primary function was to support the main academic activities of the university.

3. on many campuses there was not one but a number of centres and programs established to help students learn more effectively as well as centres for research into learning and teaching, staff development, etc. My impression was that there was frequently duplication of services and waste of resources. Rivalry, territoriality and competition for scarce resources sometimes seemed to engage inordinate amounts of staff time

and energy, and obvious opportunities for co-operative endeavour were neglected. There were some indications of attempts to correct these problems. Berkeley, for example, had very recently reorganized its academic and welfare support services into a new structure under a Vice-Chancellor for Undergraduate Matters. This structure brought together the University's Outreach Programs (contacts with schools and the general community), Admissions, Student Services (including educational counselling, the outside work programs for students, office of student research) and other functions such as audio-visual services and the Teaching Improvement and Evaluation service.

In general, therefore, though I learned a great deal from visiting the learning centres of North American Universities, my experience there also acted as something of a radical corrective.

It reinforced my conviction that learning/study skills centres operate most effectively when they are: small enough to permit continuing inter change and co-supervision amongst staff; aware of their role as essentially support services to the main academic activities of the university; able to maintain close contact with staff in academic departments; able to act in concert with the general educational goals of the university - though they may, by providing information about and insight into student behaviour, occasionally act as agents for change.

IRELAND, SCOTLAND and ENGLAND[3]

General Observations

1. The squeeze on university funding evident in North America is even more marked in the British Isles. The consequences are no less disappointing for being entirely predictable: an unholy scramble for students amongst all but the prestigious universities; an intensification of pressure on academics for more and more

3 In Ireland I visited University College at Cork and Dublin, Trinity College Dublin; in Scotland the University of Strathclyde at Glasgow and the University of Edinburgh; in England, the University of East Anglia, Open University, Birmingham, Sussex, Oxford, Cambridge, the Institute of Education London University, the British Council and Oxford Polytechnic.

publications; an increasing disinclination to experiment or innovate in course content or teaching methods; and a reassertion of the centrality of traditional disciplines and of the power of the department as the source of academic advancement. The last is perhaps most keenly felt in universities like East Anglia and Sussex which had specifically set out to break down the strong boundary insulation between disciplines but which now find themselves, due to a variety of pressures both from within and from the graduate market place outside, forced to cut back on multi- and inter-disciplinary courses, options, and contextual and supplementary studies.

The sources of these tendencies are many and complex. Undoubtedly they have their roots in a multiplicity of economic, political and social forces of which the squeeze on funding is merely a symptom. But the major consequence is - for me at least - unmistakeable; nothing less than a retreat from teaching.

2. In this general context it was no surprise to find a relative paucity (by comparison with North America and even Australia) in the academic supporting services available to students and teaching staff.

The staff/faculty development centres I visited commonly reported a decreasing interest amongst academics for programmes designed to improve teaching. Most U.K. universities have at least one staff member concerned with the development of study skills/learning skills and usually more than one involved in the development of teaching practice. In the main, however, they seem to work in an atmosphere of isolation, even from one another, carrying out routine number-crunching non-controversial "busywork" such as course evaluations.

Interestingly some of these centres are now focusing, in their research anyway, on learning rather than teaching behaviour. Is this an implicit recognition that, there being no likelihood of a resurgence of interest in the improvement of teaching with the

present climate, the next most useful thing is to see what can be done about the improvement of learning?

3. Within the area of "study/learning skills" I was heartened to note a growing disenchantment amongst UK practitioners with the custom-made "learning packages" approach with dominates US practice, which was taken over holus-bolus in the UK in the 60's and early 70's and which is still reasonably fashionable in Australia.

The North American preference for packaging ("systematized", "sequentialized", "computerized", etc.) is both a manifestation of a cultural tendency and a consequence of the level of problems being tackled there. The large number of minority and other special admission students requires the construction of massive supplementary, remedial and bridging programmes. In this context it makes sense for Americans to put money into, for example, computer-assisted courses in English grammar. Speakers of Black English vernacular and Chicano dialects are required to master the structure of standard English if they are to succeed academically - similarly with mathematics and other fundamental "skills". It makes no sense, however, for U.K. and Australian practitioners to follow the American example. The problems faced by students in those two countries are of a different order. The methodologies currently being adopted in the U.K. reflect very closely our own style of working in CSSU: highly personalized tuition focused on the development of skills in context.

One of the objectives of my tour was to attempt to find more effective methods of organizing the teaching of writing skills to very large numbers of students. In this respect the tour was largely a failure. In the U.K. there is still a great reluctance to believe that it is a university's function to teach students to write well. In America I saw a wide diversity of programmes in action, ranging from individualized computer-assisted instruction (but operating at a very low level and only tackling

the "surface" problems of linguistic correctness) through to massive freshman composition courses. The best of the latter are those at Harvard and Stanford but even there the problems are all too easy to see: vast numbers of reluctant "press-ganged" students engaged in writing exercises which bear little or no relation to the actual writing they are doing in their discipline studies and in which their intellectual energies are genuinely engaged. Staff teaching in these programmes commonly express a desire to work in more closely with major first year disciplines- and there are a few exciting instances, for example at Yale, where this is beginning to be done - but their capacity to effect change is limited by the vast numbers they are dealing with and the political requirements of a compulsory "writing" semester unit as part of the degree structure.

U.K. and Australian teachers of writing are fortunately not so constrained. The fact that they have independently (i.e. working in ignorance of each other) moved towards a similar model of teaching is encouraging.

4. I was delighted (and surprised) to find that some of the most interesting insights into methods of learning was being developed by English as Second Language teachers, a group of people sometimes regarded as uninspiring linguistic technicians. Those I met at the British Council and in a number of U.K. universities were engaged in a full-scale reassessment of traditional ESL philosophy and practice. Dissatisfied with current aims and methodologies, they have gone back to fundamental questions: what is the purpose for which students are learning English? What is/are the context(s) in which they will be using it? What intellectual and cultural (rather than simply "social") adjustments will they be required to make in studying within a Western intellectual tradition, etc.? By starting with questions about thinking and learning behaviour rather than with questions about linguistic taxonomies, they are coming to the view that a great deal of the testing and teaching practice employed to date

is misdirected. The insights being generated by this work have important implications for native English speakers as well.

In conclusion, I returned from this study tour feeling optimistic about the work being done in the Communication and Study Skills Unit at The Australian National University (and about the work of our colleagues in other Australian Universities). The model we have evolved of a small advisory unit, working co-operatively with both students and academic staff, offering highly individualised tuition and seeking to develop students' cognitive, writing and study skills within disciplinary contexts, is effective, practicable and relatively inexpensive.

THE INTEGRATION OF STUDENT STUDY SKILLS SESSIONS IN A FIRST-YEAR UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME

ORTRUN ZUBER-SKERRITT, GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

This paper discusses the following questions:

1. WHY have psychologists and educationalists in the past two decades increasingly researched the complex process of how students learn and of how they can be helped to learn?

2. WHAT are the areas of concern and what knowledge and skills have to be taught at tertiary level today which were neither taught nor required to be taught in the past?

3. HOW and by which methods can these skills be taught and learnt?

4. BY WHOM should the skills sessions be conducted: by outside experts, the University Counsellors, or the teaching staff?

5. WHO should attend? Should attendance be voluntary or compulsory?

6. WHEN are the skills sessions to be held: in Orientation Week, the first week(s) of teaching, or through the first semester(s)?

In response to these questions I shall refer partly to research literature, but mainly to my own experimental studies at Griffith University, where I have been involved in the design, implementation

and evaluation of an integrated Foundation Course in the School of Modern Asian Studies.

Reasons for Change

Why has it become more and more necessary (especially since the late 1960's) to investigate the processes and problems of learning, and to consider and meet students' needs?

As in most Western countries, universities in Australia are experiencing a crisis caused by a decrease in student numbers, economic stringency, societal demands for accountability, and changing student characteristics.

Whilst there is little that universities can do about the first three factors, much can and must be done to adjust to the fact that student characteristics have changed and are continually changing; a fact which may no longer be ignored or wiped aside by the argument that since universities have to maintain high standards and since teaching staff must provide a high intellectual level in their lectures, those students should be expelled from university who cannot follow the lectures or who fail the examinations or other forms of assessment.

Universities are no longer elitist; they have opened their doors to democracy. However, that does not mean that standards should be dropped, but it means that different approaches have to be adopted in order to achieve the aims.

Altrichter (1980) points out that more and more students from the working class and older students from the work force enter university. They lack the background information and tradition of earlier students whose parents had had a university education themselves. Lack of information and of other necessary prerequisites can cause frustrations in students, decreased motivation and a need for increased effort, which may lead to their drop out or change of programme and/or to a longer period of study.

The discrepancy between a university's educational goals and the dysfunctional waste of personal energy (of both students and staff) and of public funds seems to have widened in recent years. Thus, universities have increased their efforts not only to recruit students but to retain them by better counselling.

Altrichter (1980) gives a good account and analysis of studies in Germany and Austria on programmes of student study skills, orientation or induction, on problems of transition from secondary to tertiary education, and on difficulties of socialisation and cooperative learning.

The technical term for such programmes which were developed within the Study Reform system of German universities in the past few years is "Orientierungs-einheiten". These 'Orientation Units' comprise the work done in Counselling Services, Orientation Weeks, Foundation Courses, Student Study Skills Workshops, etc. at Universities in Australia and New Zealand, where we do not yet have a uniform concept* of how to maintain students' interest in university studies and of how to meet their motivation needs.

At this point it might be worth a short diversion to clarify what is meant by "motivation", since it is the key to more effective and enjoyable study in the interest of students, teaching staff and the University administration.

According to West and Foster (1976) motivation may be defined as "those internal forces which energise, direct and sustain action or behaviour; as such all human behaviour can be said to be motivated" (p. 286). Therefore, there are no unmotivated students. When teachers say that students are not motivated, they really mean that students are

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* I would suggest the term "Study Orientation" and, at a more advanced level, "Studiology". The definition of Studiology would be "the study of study methods and skills".

not motivated to do things or behave in the way they want them to behave, but that they are motivated to do different things and behave in a different manner. All motivation is, therefore, intrinsic.

Ritter (1980) mentions several studies which have shown that adult students' motivations to study are different from those of adolescents, and that adults drop out of courses if their expectations are not met, while adolescents stick it out, mainly for extrinsic reasons (e.g.fear, desire not to disappoint parents, competition with peers). He concludes "If universities want to survive the crisis of motivation, more participatory forms of teaching and learning must be introduced" (p. 254) which are useful and meaningful to students.

Our main concern therefore need not be the younger students who for extrinsic reasons are less likely to drop out, but the mature-aged students whose needs and motivations can be better satisfied in small groups than in a lecture theatre.

Working in small groups, however, requires more skills than merely transmitting or receiving information, factual knowledge, ideas, viewpoints, etc. Small-group work depends on personal behaviour and human interaction. Preconditions for effective group work are awareness of group dynamics and adherance to certain behavioural rules.

Foster's plea (1980) is to do more research on affiliation motivation. He accepts the proposition "that motives are learned, through social feedback, informally" (p. 286) and, whereas achievement motivations (typical of Western males) are learned on the left hemisphere of the brain, affiliation motivations (typical of Western females), i.e. to co-operate, serve or work together with others, are learned on the right hemisphere. He suggests that "affiliation and motivation for co-operation may be important components for a new theory of participatory learning" (p. 287). He advocates the need for this research to be complemented by participatory teaching techniques.

Apart from the aim of fostering affiliation motivation and cooperative attitudes, small-group work and other participatory learning-teaching

methods have been proved to cater for a greater variety of individual student needs and to be more effective with regard to cognitive achievements, psychological satisfaction (less anxiety and stress, more enjoyment), long-term memory, and creative, analytical thinking (Bligh 1974). It may be concluded then that it is not university goals and standards that will change, but attitudes and teaching strategies, and that there are at least three areas in a university which need rethinking and change:

1. Change in staff attitude: from the traditional belief that a University teacher is an unquestionable expert in his field to the attitude that the teacher is a facilitator of learning, who, as well as being a scholar, tries to understand and meet students' needs when communicating his/her knowledge and ideas.

2. Change in learning-teaching methods: from lecturer-centred methods of teaching to participatory group-centred methods of learning which bring about affiliation motivation and cooperative learning.

3. Change in content and approach according to societal needs.

Staff resistance to change (defensively arguing that the university's task is not in "remedial" teaching and "spoonfeeding", and not in training for a job) inevitably results in an increasing gap between staff expectations and student achievements and vice versa and, consequently, in high student drop-out and failure rates, both of which are fatal for a university.

Presuming that teaching staff are aware of these factors crucial in the present university crisis, and presuming that they are prepared to collaborate in trying to identify and meet students' motivation, information and skills needs, programmes can be designed which take these factors into consideration. One Foundation Course at Griffith University might serve as an example.

A Case Study

The School of Modern Asian Studies (MAS) decided to introduce *Study Skills* sessions for first-year students as an integral part of its Foundation Course, using course material as the content and basis for these training and awareness sessions.

The following figures may indicate the problems to be expected with a student population as heterogeneous as this:of the students enrolled this year in the MAS Foundation Course (37% part-time, 63% full-time) 39% are "mature-age"; 34% did not choose Modern Asian Studies as their first preference; 27% are "Special Admission" students; and only 41% have a TE score of over 800.

The aims of the *Study Skills* components are:

- to satisfy staff complaints in recent years that students at high school have not been adequately prepared for university studies and that the level of performance and achievement has dropped because of a lack of basic skills.
- to help mature-aged students to adjust to university studies and point out weaknesses which have to be improved individually.
- to raise an awareness of certain skills necessary for effective individual and/or group learning.

After sending a circular to all Australian universities and other major tertiary institutions, we* were surprised to see from their responses how little systematic and integrated work has been done in this area. Of course, there are Counselling Services; the odd,

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* I wish to acknowledge the valuable work and advice of our research assistant in CALT, Debby Oliver (nee Cunningham), in corresponding with other tertiary institutions and in selecting, compiling and discussing with me the suitability of the material for our purposes.

voluntary, added-on workshop; and many useful handouts or booklets on the various study skills.

From this material and the responses to our circular we could identify eight main study skills categories which we used for compiling a reference book with selected material from other universities:

1. Time Management, Self Organisation
2. Taking Notes from books and lectures
3. Reading Skills
4. Tutorials, Seminars (papers, discussions)
5. Writing Essays and Assignments
6. Examinations
7. Using the Library
8. Study Methods (general)

Part I of the *Student Study Skills* is the short version distributed to all first year MAS students for individual study and constant reference. Part II is the comprehensive version available from the Library with more material in each category for students who want to study more in a particular skill area. Part III consists of a section on how to use the audio-visual equipment in the University and of exercises related to MAS course material and practising the individual skills introduced in Parts I and II.

Apart from these books and two information lectures on the Library and on essay writing, practical *Student Study Skills Workshops* were included in the Foundation Course timetable and designed as an integral part of the course, using course material as the content and basis for these training and awareness sessions. For example, students were required to do the following *exercises:*

- to find books and journal articles for tutorial topics as part of a library exercise
- to take notes from an actual lecture and from a book chapter

- to write a diagnostic essay (corrected by the teaching staff with constructive comments, but not assessed) after viewing and discussing a film on the Third World.

Most of the workshops were structured according to the Open University format designed by Gibbs (1977).

The workshops on Discussion Skills deserve special mention because they were most demanding on staff and most highly appreciated by students (according to an open-ended questionnaire). They were demanding in that an awareness of group dynamics and processes cannot be achieved by only reading the literature in the field or listening to a paper, but by experiencing, reflecting and discussing the supportive and destructive elements for an effective discussion.

It was therefore suggested that the teaching staff first participate in a workshop on "Conducting Tutorials" and observe a student workshop on "Discussion Skills" held by a faculty member of the Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CALT) before they themselves then conducted a workshop on the same topic with their own groups of students.

The full attendance at the staff workshop was probably due to the School Chairman's supportive memo to all MAS Faculty Staff, asking them to "take this opportunity to share with us your experiences in conducting under-graduate tutorials and to discuss group processes, structures and techniques maximising active student participation and learning." (11/2/81)

The purpose, structure and outcome of the workshops was similar for both staff and students: First they were reminded that whilst the lecture can be an appropriate method to transmit information and factual knowledge, it is often ineffective for other educational objectives such as promoting thought and understanding, and for developing (or changing) attitudes and skills. Here the most appropriate method is small-group teaching in tutorials.

This cognition deduced from educational research findings (Bligh 1974) was then confirmed after a group-dynamic exercise (in listening without reacting and in speaking without getting any response) when we worked out the following experiential conclusions:

Having a discussion in a small group of 2-6 participants

- you cannot withdraw as easily as in a large group; you have to listen.
- you cannot help but react, comment, state your own views.
- shy students are less inhibited.
- all participants are actively involved.
- when speaking you are aware if the others do not listen and respond. You feel uneasy and probably try to attract attention.
- there is more interaction and less tension.

Participants were then reminded that the effectiveness of group discussions can be improved either through appropriate strategies and techniques, e.g., Buzz Groups (Bligh 1974), the "Learning Cell" (Goldschmid 1977), the Open University-model (Gibbs 1977), Nominal Group Technique (Done 1979), Simulation Games, Triggers, etc.; or through Group Dynamics and an awareness of group processes, e.g., micro-teaching (Turney 1973), VSC or Video-Self-Confrontation (Kagan 1978; Perlberg 1976, 1979), Role-playing etc. Without the latter the best techniques are ineffective. On the other hand group-dynamics exercises and the analysis of human interactions are very time-consuming.

Thus, a compromise was achieved by the following intensified workshop activities:

Participants of the staff workshop were asked to read the paper "Learning through discussion" by Northedge (1975) and an extract from the Business Management Course on various discussion types and how to deal with them. (Appendix I).

In both staff and student workshops eight members were asked to volunteer to participate in a role-play discussion and were allocated one of the roles described by Burgoon (1974). One member who volunteered to play the role of the discussion leader was asked to select one of the two major patterns as identified by Flanders (1967): the dominative or the integrative pattern. (Appendix 2) The rest of the members were observers of the role-play discussion which was video-recorded (Appendix 3).

As in all other student workshops the discussion topic was related to the content of the Foundation Course:

> Australia's future - political, economic and cultural - is dependent upon its forging closer relations with Asia and cutting its outdated ties with the West."

Faculty staff in their workshop chose the topic: "The Assessment System in the School of Modern Asian Studies".

The most important part of the workshop on Discussion Skills was the reflection phase when first the leader, then each member in turn, talked about his/her role, feelings, group relations and dynamics, followed by observers' comments and a general discussion on what actually went on, why, how, and to what effect. For all members the objectives of the workshop seemed to have been achieved: they expressed their awareness and understanding of group processes as summarised below:

1. There can be supportive and destructive elements in a group discussion.
2. A discussion is ineffective if some students are allowed to dominate, make irrelevant comments and discourage or prevent others from making contributions.
3. Shy students often make valuable contributions to a discussion, if given the opportunity.
4. It is the responsibility of the <u>whole</u> group - and not just the tutor - to remind dominant or negative types

to restrict themselves to short, relevant, constructive comments; to create and maintain a harmonious and friendly atmosphere; to respect and be polite to each other; not to ridicule,but to tolerate and answer any questions students might ask, even if they seem silly.

5. Seeking information (i.e.,asking questions) is not stupid, but often clarifies a point for one or several students and allows for greater depth of discussion.

6. Video is an excellent tool to improve discussion skills.

Full-time students had the opportunity to attend a second (follow-up) workshop on Discussion Skills. Eighty-three percent of the students took advantage of this opportunity.

With the aid of video replay the students continued to discuss the tasks of a discussion leader and of the group members. They found that:

1. A discussion leader should
   - introduce the topic at the beginning of the session
   - structure the tutorial
   - summarise the discussion at the end
   - lead the discussion democratically rather than in an authoritarian way
   - establish rules with the group, e.g., not to barge in, but to raise a hand and wait for one's turn
   - seek and give information and opinions
   - never dominate the discussion
   - overcome blockage tactics
   - neutralise aggressors and dominators
   - encourage shy, quiet students to participate
   - recognise and reward contributions
   - not put down students for being wrong
   - harmonise and create a good working atmosphere

2. The group members' tasks are similar to those of the leader (except for the first five tasks mentioned) if the discussion is to be effective and enjoyable. Students can learn more in a supportive group than in a nasty, competitive, threatening atmosphere.

   Further important group functions are:

   - to seek out all relevant evidence and ask for clarification, explanation, illustration, expansion, etc, of the information or view given.
   - to solicit the opinions and feelings of other students, including the reticent ones
   - to clarify the relationship between various facts, ideas or view-points and to tie together elements that may appear unrelated and would otherwise be ignored.

3. There can be certain disfunctional behaviours in a group discussion which are destructive and reduce group cohesion and productivity, e.g.,

   - blocking progress by constantly reacting negatively to all ideas and proposals put forward by other students
   - being aggressive, disapproving, distrusting, insulting, making jokes at other students' expense, etc.
   - constantly seeking attention and recognition by telling irrelevant anecdotes or mentioning experiences and achievements in irrelevant contexts
   - dominating, demanding, interrupting others.

Part-time students had only a one-hour workshop with the same introduction, listening exercise and role-play discussion as was used for full-time students applying the fish-bowl technique (Appendix 3), but no video recording.

Apart from the Student Study Skills books and workshops, students have the opportunity to seek individual advice from an English coach, especially in essay writing, throughout the course on two afternoons

per week.

Evaluation of the Study Skills sessions has not been completed yet, but a preliminary survey of both full-time (86) and part-time (43) students by a questionnaire (Appendix 4 and 5) showed that attendance at all sessions was extremely high and dropped very little towards the end; in fact part-time students' attendance rose slightly. On the whole, students' comments were very favourable. Mature-age students in particular appreciated the skills sessions. Most students felt that the sessions were very successful, especially those on essay writing techniques including the diagnostic essay, and the Discussion Skills workshops. Some could not find anything to be criticised, others complained about some aspects (e.g., lack of explanation, of feedback and of practice), and/or made suggestions for improvements. Only four students out of 129 considered all of the sessions a waste of time.

The teaching team will take all students' comments into consideration when reviewing the course for next year. Meanwhile there will be structured review sessions through the year in which staff and students will analyse the work they have done.

Apart from improvements in response to students' opinions, the review team will have to decide on certain administrative points, e.g.,

1. Attendance at the skills sessions (optional or compulsory)
2. The timetabling (in Orientation Week, first weeks of teaching, or throughout the course)
3. Grouping students (in smaller groups, separating school-leavers from mature-age students)
4. Staffing (outside experts, the University counsellors and/or the teaching staff)

Conclusions

From my personal experience with this interdisciplinary course including a skills component I would draw the following conclusions:

Most universities in Australia have Higher Education Research Centres offering courses in Staff Development

for faculty staff (course design, methods of teaching and assessment, evaluation of teaching, etc) and separate courses in Study Skills for students.

The School of Modern Asian Studies (MAS) in collaboration with the Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CALT) at Griffith University has attempted to integrate both kinds of activities in its Foundation Course for the first time in 1981.

As a result, the aims and functions of Study Skills sessions and of CALT work on request of and in collaboration with MAS faculty staff can be summarised as follows:

Study Skills Sessions

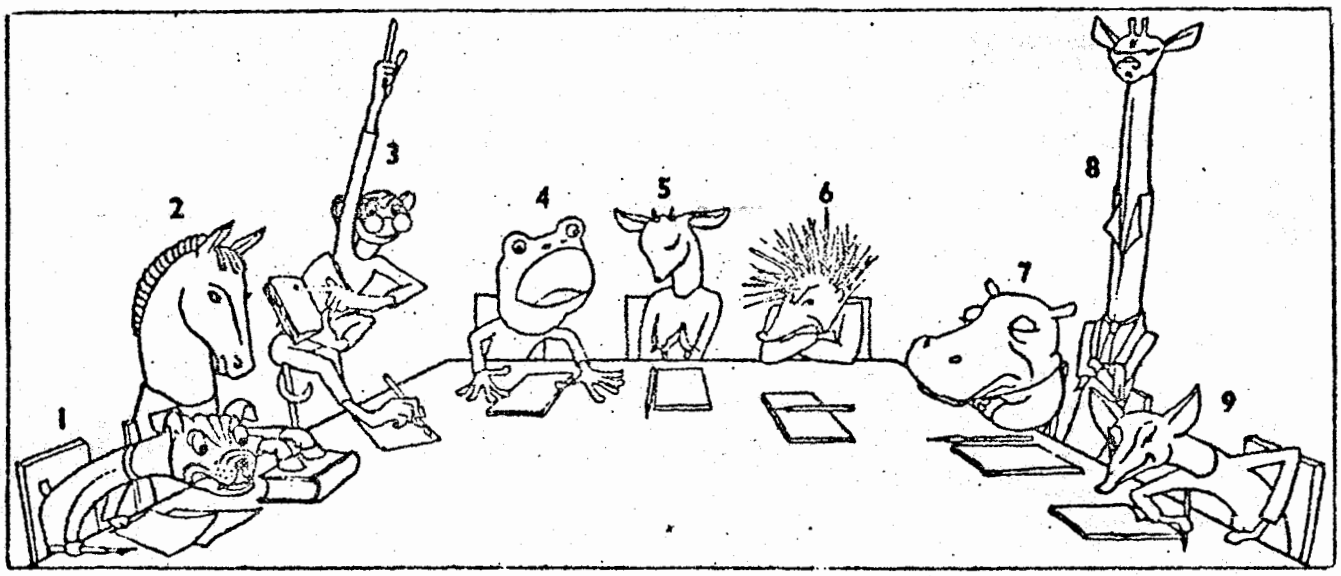
should not	*but should*
- be added on to the course as an option (e.g.,at lunch time)	- be integrated in the programme of study; but attendance should not be compulsory
- be restricted to discussing skills and techniques	- use course material as the basis and content of discussion
- be taught by outside specialists who are not involved in teaching the rest of the course (e.g., CALT faculty)	- be conducted by faculty staff who can follow up and further develop the skills throughout the course,but who need some training and advice in conducting these workshops, especially in group dynamics, learning processes etc.(e.g., by CALT faculty or outside specialists)
- consist of lectures on Study Skills, because skills have to be practically experienced, trained and developed by doing, not just by hearing about.	- be conducted in the workshop method, i.e.,students work out, discover themselves, and practise skills which make their study more effective.

The Role of a Higher Education Research Centre in Assisting Faculty Staff with Student Study Skills Sessions, as I see it, would not be to act as outside experts who teach study skills in general rather than subject-related, but, like CALT in this case study, to work together with teaching staff in and throughout their first-year course and:

- to improve learning for students and teaching for staff, and to make both learning and teaching easier, more enjoyable and more successful.
- to provide professional advice based on research literature as to learning processes and problems, teaching strategies and techniques, etc.
- to help design or redesign a Foundation Course in such a way that the component of Student Study Skills Workshops are an integral part of the course, i.e., related to the course content and integrated in the structure and time-tabling of the course.
- to be involved in indirect, integrated Staff Development and to assist with Staff Self-Development by (a) conducting Staff workshops on small-group teaching and on conducting Student Study Skills sessions, (b) participating in conducting these skills sessions with students as observation sessions for staff and (c) continually having informal discussions on students' learning difficulties; exchanging views, experiences and conclusions immediately after the sessions (d) evaluating and reviewing the skills component at the end of the course, since it has been introduced for the first time.
- thus, by giving the above advice, to be a member of the teaching team in designing, conducting and reviewing Study Skills workshops for the first year of operation.
- to compile a manual for faculty staff who will conduct these workshops independently (i.e., without CALT) in subsequent years.

Appendix I

DISCUSSION TYPES



1. Quarrelsome
2. Positive
3. Know-All
4. Loquacious
5. Shy
6. Uncooperative (rejecting)
7. Thick-Skinned, uninterested
8. Highbrow
9. Persistent Questioner

HOW TO DEAL WITH THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION TYPES

Discussion Types	Advice
1. The quarrelsome type.	Stay quiet, don't get involved, use the conference method. Stop him monopolising.
2. The positive type. A great help in discussion.	Let his contributions add up. Use him frequently.
3. The know-all type.	Let the group deal with his theories.
4. The loquacious type.	Interrupt tactfully. Limit his speaking time.
5. The shy type.	Ask him easy questions. Increase his self-confidence. Give credit when possible.
6. The uncooperative, "rejecting" type.	Play on his ambitions - recognise his knowledge and experience and use them.
7. The thick-skinned uninterested type.	Ask him about his work. Get him to give examples of the work he is interested in.
8. The highbrow type.	Don't criticise him. Use the "yes-but" technique.
9. The persistent questioner - tries to trap the Group Leader.	Pass his questions back to the group.

Appendix 2

MAS FOUNDATION COURSE WORKSHOP ON DISCUSSION SKILLS:

Role Play:

Students who played the role of the discussion leader were asked to select one of the two major patterns as identified by Flanders (1967)[1] and summarised below:

Pattern A (Direct Influence: The Dominative Pattern)	Pattern B (Indirect Influence: The Integrative Pattern)
a) expresses own viewpoints	a) accepts, clarifies, and supports ideas and feelings
b) gives directions and orders	b) gives praise and encouragement
c) Criticises or deprecates	c) asks questions to stimulate participation in decision-making
d) justifies own position and authority	d) asks questions for the purpose of orienting towards tasks

Eight students were asked to volunteer to participate in a role-play discussion and were allocated one of the roles described by Burgoon (1974)[2] and summarised below:

1. *Information seeker* -asks for information from other members of the group, or seeks clarification of information given. The seeking out of all relevant evidence is an important function if group effort is to be more creative and wider ranging than individual efforts.

---

[1] Ned Flanders, "Teacher Influence In The Classroom". In Amidon-Hough eds. Interaction Analysis : Theory, Research, and Application. 1967.

[2] Burgoon, Heston and McCroskey. Small group communication a functional approach. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974, pp. 163-165.

2. *Elaborator* - takes up, clarifies and expands the ideas of others through examples, illustrations, etc.

3. *Integrator* - ties together elements that may appear unrelated, thus incorporating ideas that might otherwise be ignored. This function is essentially one of clarification of the relationship between various facts, ideas, etc.

4. *Harmoniser* - attempts to reduce conflict by moderating differences, and acting as a trouble-shooter and peacemaker. This role is essential to a pleasant socioemotional atmosphere.

5. *Dominator* - attempts to lead the group by monopolising interaction and doing things his own way. Uses various tactics to gain support, including flattering, interrupting and demanding.

6. *Blocker* - prevents progress by constantly reacting negatively to proposals and ideas put forward by other members of the group. He may belabour issues which the group has finished discussing. He constantly verbalises his dissatisfaction with the group.

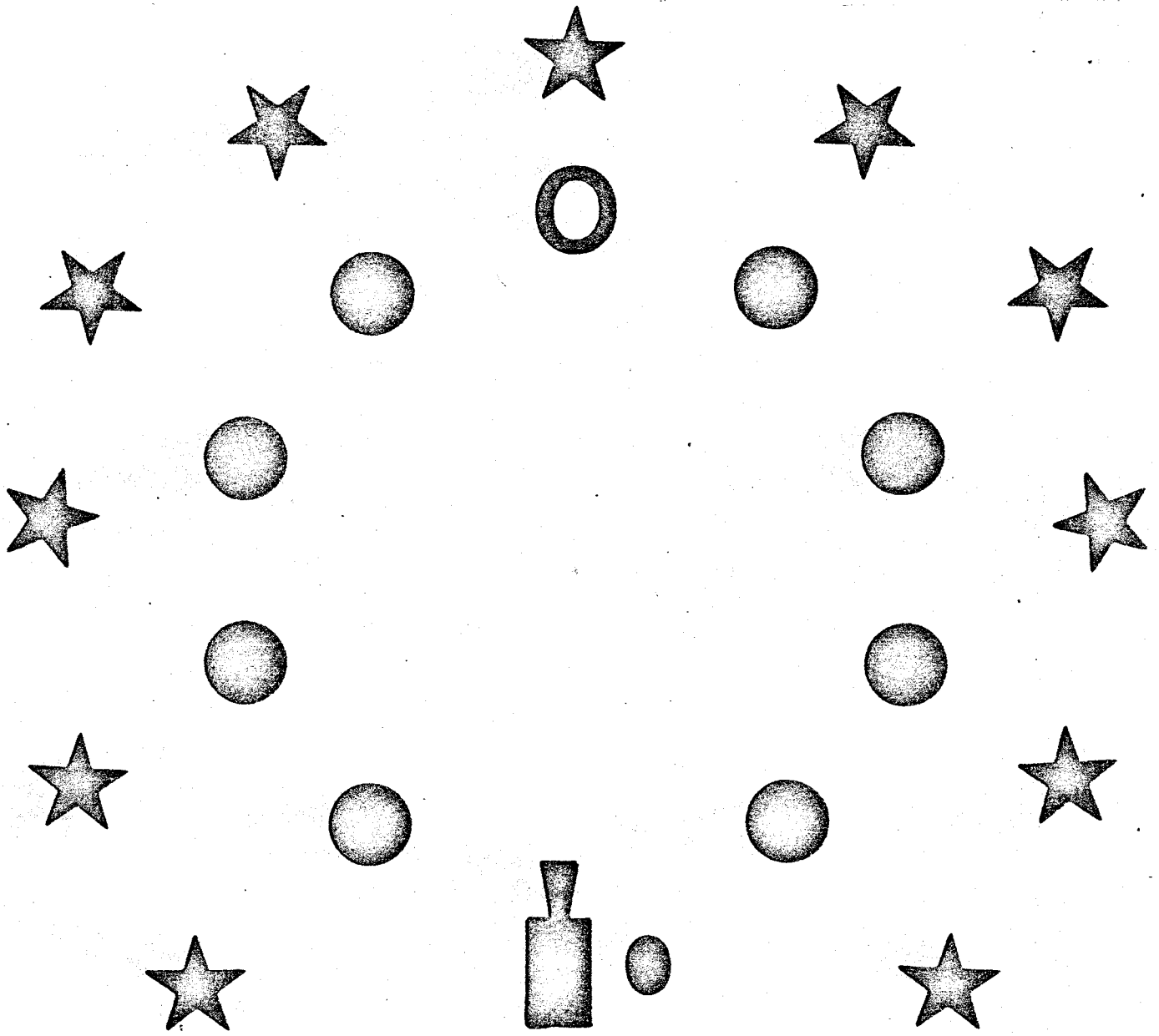
7. *Aggressor* - is critical of others and is generally dissatisfied and disapproving. He may insult others or make jokes at their expense, showing a general distrust of other members of the group.

8. *Recognition seeker* - constantly tries to call attention to his achievement and successes by " incidentally " mentioning them in irrelevant contexts, rather than simply boasting about them.

It is obvious from these role descriptions that the first four are positive, supportive, group-maintenance roles and the last four are negative, destructive, disfunctional roles.

Each participant of the role-play discussion received a slip of paper with the description of his/her role as a constant reference and reminder, while the other members did not know which role he/she had to act. I wish to acknowledge that the device of this role-play is taken from the CAT Minicourse No. 15, Macquarie University.

Appendix 3


GROUP MEMBERS
DISCUSSION LEADER
OBSERVERS
VIDEO CAMERA
TUTOR

Appendix 4

23 March,1981

SCHOOL OF MODERN ASIAN STUDIES

Survey on students' opinions of the Study Skills sessions in the Foundation Course,(full time), Semester 1, 1981.

Which group were you in? *(please tick one box)* x [31] y [26] z [29]*

Please help us evaluate the following Student Study Skills sessions and tick which ones you attended:

TOPIC	METHOD	ATTENDANCE NUMBER	%
1.Organising your Time	Workshop	73	84.9%
2.Library Skills	Lecture and exercise	80	93%
3.Essay Writing Techniques	Lecture	79	91.9%
4.Diagnostic Essay	Marking and discussion	78	90.7%
5.Discussion Skills I	Video-recorded role-play discussion	78	90.7%
6.Discussion Skills II	Evaluation of discussion by video analysis	73	84.9%
7.Taking Notes from Lectures	Workshop	77	89.5%
8.Taking Notes from Written Materials	Workshop and video tape	64	74.4%

By answering the following questions (specifying the particular sessions where appropriate):

1. What was positive about the Study Skills sessions?
2. What was negative about them?
3. What could have been improved (i.e., different,added or deleted)?

* There were 86 students who responded (out of 99 enrolled, i.e.86.9%)

Appendix 5

23rd March,1981

SCHOOL OF MODERN ASIAN STUDIES

Survey on students' opinions of the Study Skills sessions in the Foundation Course (part time), Semester I, 1981.

What group were you in? *(Please tick one box)* A [9] B [11] C [12] D [12] *

Please help us evaluate the following Student Study Skills sessions and tick which ones you attended:

TOPIC	METHOD	ATTENDANCE NUMBER **	
1.Library Skills	Lecture and exercise	40	93%
2.Essay Writing Techniques	Lecture	41	95.3%
3.Diagnostic Essay	Marking and discussion	42	97.7%
4.Discussion Skills	Role-play discussion & analysis of group processes.	42	97.7%

by answering the following questions (specifying the particular sessions where appropriate):

1. What was positive about the Study Skills session?
2. What was negative about them?
3. What could have been improved (i.e.,different,added or deleted)?

* There were 43 students who responded (out of 56 enrolled,i.e.,76.8%) One student attended both groups B and C.

** All respondents attended all sessions except for:

a) one student missing the first two sessions

b) another student missing the first only

c) another still who did not tick any box at all and was not included in the attendance rate,but is likely to have attended because of his/her positive comments.

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MARSHALLING INFORMATION: CONCEPTS AND SKILLS FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

URSULA NEWELL, LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

For me as a librarian it seems self-evident, for two reasons, that I should participate in a conference on the teaching/learning process at University.

a. the library both collects and disseminates books and other materials to students and staff. It is hard to do either really effectively without a close knowledge of what is being taught and how courses are structured,

b. if students are to become in any sense independent thinkers they must possess certain skills and one of these is the ability to find and evaluate information.

The realization of the need for librarians to be both aware of and involved in deliberations about the learning process at university is a comparatively new one and one which is still not fully appreciated by some members of teaching staff.

To justify this assertion about the importance of our involvement, let me first of all tell you what variety of the Library genus I am and then how it came about that such a "variety" was developed or perhaps hybridized! Depending upon practice at your own University, you may have come across colleagues of mine under the title of Reader Education Librarian (the term used at La Trobe University), User Education Librarian, Library Instruction Librarian, Orientation Librarian. Each

of these terms deliberately conveys both a teaching and a bibliographical role because the appointment of people like myself has recognized the need for students to be made aware of the services and resources of the library and for them to acquire the bibliographical skills necessary to access them.

If this is indeed the case, why are reader education librarians a fairly recent phenomenon in Australia (they are to all intents and purposes "children of the 60s"!) and what happened to students before their appearance?

The answer to both parts of the question lies in the model of the university prevailing at a particular time and in the relationship between the library and the teaching departments within that model. It would be foolhardy indeed for me to attempt to give you a concise and incontrovertible history of the university in Australia since 1900 because it is an area where the issues are far from clear-cut and where there is still much debate. However I will make use of the current vogue for travel in time-capsules to visit two very different types of university in the company of our undergraduate student and potential library user. In a place which time-travellers variously call Melbourne in the 1920s or Oxford in the 1890s the university sees itself as a "community of scholars", where students are as dedicated to their chosen discipline as are their teachers and where teaching (both subject content and a knowledge of the literature) occurs in small groups in a sophisticated "sitting beside Nellie" way. Should the undergraduate visit the library he may espy the "scholar librarian" who is primarily a bibliographer and a curator; a personage who is rather intimidating to anyone, student or staff, not already steeped in his or her discipline. Few books will be visible because the library is run on the "closed access" system, and one must rely on a small study collection or ask for particular titles to be brought from closed stacks. Only the privileged scholar is allowed the indulgence of browsing.

Not so in "1960s land" where the undergraduate library user has access to the whole collection spread over several floors. It is not only in the area of library materials that the choice for the undergraduate is wide and sometimes overwhelming. Departments offer a wide choice of units as various in their subject content as in their educational philosophy.

It becomes increasingly common for students of the humanities and social sciences to be asked to select their own research topic about which they must then formulate their own well-argued and substantiated opinions. Particularly for the first year student direct from secondary school, the opportunities of such university courses are potentially exciting, but somehow frighteningly unfocussed. The University is larger and its student population less homogeneous than in that previous world to which nostalgia now lends a cosy glow. The "learning from Nellie" model of teacher/student interaction is over-stretched and the intimacy of the Department has been lost so that it is less likely that the student's chosen discipline and a familiarity with its literature can be learned by osmosis.

Libraries gradually became aware that their undergraduate patrons were often bemused by the size of the building and the collections which it housed and lacked an awareness of the kinds of service available or how to access them. Two steps were taken in an attempt to remedy this situation. Reference or enquiry desks were established offering one-to-one assistance, but it soon became obvious that the library staff: student ratio was heavily weighted against this as the sole means of student assistance, and that many students were too intimidated to approach a librarian sitting behind a busy desk.

"Reader education" or "library instruction" programmes were initiated to complement the work of the enquiry desk by teaching classes of students the bibliographic skills necessary to the achievement of their course objectives. These programmes have become widely recognised by librarians, and by an increasing number of academics, as a core component in university education.

Most libraries in tertiary institutions followed a similar evolutionary pattern.

(1) First to develop was "Library Orientation". By means of printed guides, library tours, or lectures, new first year students were acquainted with the Library's staff and its basic geography. More ambitious programmes also attempted to equip students with basic skills, such as how to borrow a "reserve" or "short term loan" book. These tours were often condemned by the literature for herding large groups of students through such a mass of procedural detail that they became either bored or overwhelmed.

(2) To librarians aware of the inadequacies of the tour method the "educational technology" movement arrived like manna from heaven because it promised to make possible the production of interesting, even entertaining audio-visual programmes which could introduce the library to a large group of students with the immediacy of a personally arranged tour. The message remained the same, only the medium changed with the result that to librarians' initial surprise, the student response was much as before.

(3) Perhaps the content rather than the presentation was at fault. In order to test this assumption, care was taken to avoid bibliographical jargon as much as possible in all material aimed at the new student and to present only as much information as his/her immediate task demanded. Displays were erected at particular service points, such as the Loans Desk, Reserve Collection and the Subject Catalogue. A hierarchy of bibliographical skills was developed for the guidance of librarians planning reader education. This would mean, for example, that the post-orientation Workshop for first year students in the humanities or social sciences would concentrate on the construction of subject headings, because the Subject Catalogue is a primary tool for finding books on a topic which have not been referred to in course guides or lectures.

When our endeavours were still met with a patchwork of successes and failures, we finally reached the nub of the problem. i) the teaching

philosophy as much as the level of course dictates the bibliographical skills required, ii) these bibliographical skills must be presented within a conceptual framework which equips the students to decide when to use them, but iii) the framework is of little value if the student has a negative perception of the Library. Before all else the student must feel that the Library is approachable and useful.

To see why they are so important, let us look at these three factors in the order of attitude, teaching philosophy and, finally,conceptual framework.

Attitude: That the Library is still frequently seen as a place where an austere lady with a bun says "Ssssh!" is evidenced by the number of cartoons still trading on this stereotype. The Library can mount its own publicity as one means of counteracting negative "attitudes" and of disposing students to use the Library. To do so successfully it must be well-familiar with the values and attitudes of the student population so as to pitch the campaign correctly. This means, for example, that it cannot be assumed that material produced with one student population in mind will be equally successful in the instruction of another. Thus Using the University Library, a tape/slide programme from University of Sussex is witty, light-hearted and informative, but its tone and language make very definite assumptions about the nature of the student population which may not transfer well to an Australian campus.

To a large extent, students absorb attitudes towards the Library from their teaching departments. More important than any general publicity is a close working relationship between librarians and teaching staff which should ensure that students see the importance of the Library to their course. At La Trobe University this year we arranged sufficient tours to cater for all new students and contacted all teachers of first year units in an effort to ensure that reference was made to these in their course guides, and preliminary lectures. As a result 1,241/2,425 students met a member of library staff and learnt the basic geography of the building. As well as this, Library and academic staff co-operated in the development of a "package" of overhead transparencies

which the teaching staff then used in tutorials to teach students how to use the Library in order to find material cited on reading guides.
Teaching philosophy: That teaching philosophy dictates extent of library use can be seen from a comparison of two first year subjects of the type widely taught in universities. If a course known as "English I" places most emphasis on the students' familiarity with particular works, which they are encouraged to own, in order that they may develop their own critical faculties, these same students are unlikely to have much recourse to the library's collection of literary criticism. In terms of bibliographical skills they must be able to find specified works in the Author/Title catalogue and to use reference works such as the Oxford Companion to English Literature. By contrast, "Sociology I" may have as its principal objective the exploration of basic concepts. In bibliographical terms, the student must acquire the concept of i) the specialist dictionary or encyclopaedia, and ii) the subject heading so as to be able to find definitions of these concepts and discussions about their validity and usefulness. A "pathfinder" can provide assistance here.

The conceptual framework must reflect the discipline itself and take into account the relevant bibliographical concepts.

a) the discipline itself

What makes "doing" Art History different from "doing" History? A central difference is art history's emphasis on the visual: the art object is the primary source which the student must be able to analyse and appreciate. This means that "Art History I" Reader Education must emphasize i) how to find illustrations, ii) how to find works on an artist, and if possible a catalogue of his/her works, and iii) how to apply data about the artist's work in general to the consideration of a particular work.

Students of history beginning to "do" Art History may be so used to textual analysis that they feel discomfited and insecure when the librarian cannot provide a detailed text of the painting which they are required to analyse but instead suggests that they use the evidence of the work itself to test the validity of more general statements written about the painter.

b) bibliographical concepts

Without a knowledge of how the literature in their given discipline is structured, it is hard for students to find the information which they need other than by a hit-and-miss approach. Students often complain that there is "nothing" in the library because browsing and a cursory dip into the Subject Catalogue have proved fruitless. More often than not the problem lies in a lack of awareness of the pattern upon which subject headings are constructed. There are, for example, standardised sub-headings which may be added to the name of any country, thus enabling the student to "roll his/her own subject heading". One such sub-heading is "politics and government". To find out about Britain under Margaret Thatcher, one might look under "Gt. Brit. -- Politics and government". By applying the same rule, the impact of Ronald Reagan on the United States might be listed under "US -- Politics and government". Once you know the accepted formula for subject headings, it seems self-evident.

Looking back on the evolution of reader education it becomes clear that, originating as it did from within the Library, it suffered from isolation from the teaching activity of the University and that its effectiveness increased as this gap was narrowed. Bibliographic skills are part of the basic equipment needed by the undergraduate student. They are unlikely to be acquired unless academics and librarians jointly formulate a programme of "reader education" which takes into account both the educational aims of the particular course and the structure of the literature in the discipline concerned. The reader education must be practical in nature and scheduled to provide students with bibliographic skills at a time when the course requires their immediate use.

REVERSING AN EFFECT OF THE TV SET: COMPUTER GAMES AS AN AID IN DEVELOPING LITERACY

PETER A. CALDWELL & ROSALIND MEYER, DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

The tools which provided the real opportunity for the ideas discussed in this paper to become reality became available in mid 1980. For its new off-campus Graduate Diploma in Computing, the Division of Computing and Mathematics at Deakin University modified a $300 "minimum" computer to be used by the student in his home as a computer in its own right, or as a terminal, linked by telephone, to the large computer at Deakin University. The device has been successfully used by 24 students in the first months of 1981, at Ballarat, Mildura and Geelong.

The two authors came together on the common grounds of literacy problems detected in a group of 160 first year Science students taken by author (A) in 1980. These problems were discussed at meetings of a Literacy Committee of which author (B) was a member.

The feasibility of the low-cost computer was demonstrated by an anagram game program developed earlier by author (A) to assist the word recognition of a young friend of age 14. The boy was bored with, and unresponsive to classroom teaching but interested in anything as "with it" as computers and computer games. A demonstration of this program might include the following dialogue (Upper case characters are used to show the teacher's or student's entries - made on a conventional keyboard. The computer's response - on a TV screen - is shown in lower case characters).

```
Anagram Spelling Tutor.

The teacher should first set up words that the student
is having difficulty spelling.  Make the first three
words the subject areas for the overall set.  Enter
word set, ending with "END".

? FOOTBALL
? ARMY
? MUSIC
? GOAL
? CIVILIAN
? FORWARD
? KISS
? END
(The screen is cleared, here.)
```

```
Please type your name?  PETER
OK Peter, I'm going to give you some jumbled words for
you to unscramble.  Type your answer and press the
RETURN key.

     The words have something to do with Football,
Army and Music.
Unscramble the word RWROFDA
Type your answer?  RAWFOOD
No, but it starts with F
Try again?  FORWOOD
No, but it starts with FORWA
Try again? FORWARD

     Very good. Press the SPACE bar when you are
ready for another word.
```

```
Unscramble the word VICIAINI
Type your answer?  CIVILIAN

     Very good. Press the SPACE bar when you are ready
for another word.
(This program cured a student's spelling of civilian
as surveillon!)
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```
Unscramble the word WDROAFR
(Since the screen was cleared, the student must try
and remember his earlier spelling.)
Type your answer?  FORWARD

Very good. (And so on ...)
```

For the anagram game the computer selects words at random from the provided list, and scrambles the words randomly. The game may continue as long as the student does not become bored. In other games, audible responses and progressive scores provide the student with an incentive to go on.

The microcomputer was affectionately christened "Doc" by author (B), indicative of its use as a DOCtor of literacy and as an acronym for Deakin Off-Campus Computer studies. Introductory numeracy exercises have been common on larger computers for some time and are now available on hand calculators. These can readily be programmed on DOC, again using random generation of exercises. This relieves the teacher of the need to be constantly with, and finding exercises for, the student.

As mentioned above, the computer work should relate to the student's individual difficulties and interests and should include as many "bells and whistles" as possible to keep up the student's interest. In other words, it was considered that the computer teaching aid should be as close to the attraction of a domestic television set or pinball parlour game as possible.

The authors would not be alone in asserting that the devotion to TV at an early age, and the early independence of students attracted to such things as pop music and pinball/computer games, are amongst the reasons for the reduction in basic literacy over the last 20 years. The computer's TV screen, its "intelligent" responses and its game - playing ability suggest that it might be used to reverse a detrimental effect of the TV set. Such use of the computer and spectacular screen displays is not new in the field of remedial teaching. What is new is the low cost at which this can now be done. The best example of the conventional form is that of PLATO, which was developed in the U.S.A. over 10 years ago. It has just been released in Australia. The cost of such comprehensive teaching systems can be many thousands of dollars per year, enough to purchase many DOC's per year.

Of course, PLATO's teaching programs are much more sophisticated, but they are also generalized to cater for a large number of users in many fields of application. The present authors were keen to be able to cater for each student's individual problems, individual likes and dislikes and individual learning rates. To develop a PLATO-like program once-off for each student involves skilled knowledge of the procedures to set up a teaching program. This and the computer time involved is costly. The authors' aim, therefore, was to be able to diagnose the student and to develop an individual program for him in an hour or so, and leave him to exercise it.

This necessitated an inexpensive computer, low running costs, a simple language such as BASIC and as many "enjoyable" extras as possible. DOC provided the low-cost answer to enable the initial development of remedial aid programs, but the market was also scanned for a further low-cost computer system with additional features.

A Texas Instruments (T.I.) home computer with a base price of $800 and optioned-up price under $3,000 was acquired. This provided the BASIC language, colour, sound, speech, printed output and magnetic disk storage of programs. The same range is available on other, more recognized, computers for about $6,000. With the T.I. computer, the student may be prompted by words or sentences "spoken" by the computer and may be rewarded by tones, tunes or colour effects. A library of programs may be maintained on the magnetic disk which also permits a more sophisticated organization of words and sentences for student testing. There were some deficiencies, in the computer sense, in the authors' choice, but these were acceptable when compared to savings in cost.

A consequence of the authors' approach, which favoured individualized programs, is that, unless the budget allows for programming aid (some $20 per hour), the teacher must adapt to the computer with no inhibitions. This may be an obstacle in some cases; on the other hand, it is readily seen that the early teenager today can be at ease at a computer keyboard for the use of games and remedial programs, after a

few seconds of instruction by the teacher.

Author (B), with no previous computing experience, readily adapted herself over the recent summer period. An example of her programs is one which displays sentences exercising the use of the words "practise" and "practice", where these words are replaced by "--------" in sentences presented to the student. The student is asked to select the appropriate word. The computer indicates whether he is correct, and coaches him if not.

At Deakin University, final year computing students carry out a project of their own (approved) choice over one semester. The authors, with the aid of three (Asian) students, are developing programs for both DOC and the T.I. computer, using the best methods that their computing knowledge can provide. However, the authors' research is young and results, though encouraging, are not yet ready to be quoted.

Early experience has confirmed, however, that the student "apparently" having difficulties will often not display encouraging progress to the conventional teacher if he is disinterested in the work or if the teacher does not display a faith that the student CAN overcome his difficulties. Give the student challenge, and the computer to provide new interest, and unsuspected abilities are revealed.

This of course will not apply to the student with real, sometimes physiological, problems. But if this method aids the student who is progressing slowly due to the teaching system not keeping up with his view of the world, then something worthwhile will have been accomplished.

A current reference for similar work:

Pollard, J. and G. Campbell. Using a home computer to teach a dyslexic child to read, Information Processing 80, North Holland.

The computer programs "ANAGRAM", "SIMPLE ARITHMETIC" and "-ICE or -ISE" were demonstrated to support the text.

A FORMULA FOR WRITING?

ROSALIND MEYER, DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

"To airy nothing, a local habitation and a name."

Advisers in Study Skills spend a good deal of time helping students to improve their expression; yet as a rule we concentrate on one problem at a time. Monday we may need to explain the structuring of a sentence; Tuesday, to expound a plan which will do justice to the content of a piece of writing. It was when called on to give a year's course in "writing" for Electrical Engineers that I first had to ask myself what gamut of primary essentials, related or unrelated to each other, might be found behind an ability to communicate at tertiary level. Freshman Composition in the United States relies as a rule on drill in grammar and efforts to inspire creative writing: odd bed-fellows, one might think, the latter not observably useful for the compiler of a report or an essay. Nevertheless, something has to be done to overcome the suspicion Engineering and Science students feel for writing, especially once they are told by their own staff that the language which has served them all their lives is now suddenly deficient for their professional purposes. They must write fluently and they must also write grammatically, if they are to succeed in their careers.

Little enough may be achieved in one two-hour weekly class through the year; but while considering what were the particular requirements of my twenty-four second-years in 1980, I came up with an answer that seems to me to have some bearing for Study Skills Advisers on their work with students of all disciplines.

At first I was not clear what direction the course should take. Early in the year, however, since an Engineer must supply an Abstract at the opening of a Report, I refreshed the students' memory of précis. Or rather, it was my intention to do so; but I found that apparently they had not heard of subsuming specific examples under a generalisation. Further, when in explanation I used the terms, they claimed they had not heard of concrete and abstract nouns.

I considered that they might benefit from some work in this area. I had noted, in the crossword which began the year by testing their vocabulary, reasonable synonyms for concrete terms but some startling disparities where abstractions were concerned: "meek" for instance,was clued in as "cowardly". I add that this year's class, during the same exercise, could only vaguely suggest the meaning of "technology", connecting it merely with some form of progress. The implication,both times, was that abstractions as far as they knew were not susceptible to precise definition.

In 1980 my first step was to define concrete and abstract nouns, and ask for illustrations. These were slow in coming when they pictured a landscape; they were more at home when visualizing a supermarket, and, catching on to the rules of the game, offered for abstracts such rarified concepts as "cash-flow", "consumer appeal" and "marketing". They were thereafter better equipped for précising, and turned out reasonable synopses while concentrating on abstracting generalisations. Transforming the concrete to the abstract is precisely what one does when briefly recounting what pirates plundered and hid away: saying not "pieces of eight, silver from the mines, cloth of gold and jewelled goblets" but simply "treasure-trove". In the same way an Engineer terms resistors, transistors, integrated chips, and inductance coils (once connected and functioning) "an electrical circuit".

I began to ask myself, at this point, how many students from Humanities and related disciplines might benefit from similar instruction. Not all of them can summarise, or even reduce, as the extravagance of over-lengthy essays reminds us each week. I recall one, in which the essayist was asked to explain the impact of Western Europe on Africa, taking as

her starting point a representative explorer. From the options open to her, unfortunately she chose a German, who typified the vigour, thoroughness, and determination of his race. Arrived in Africa at one side, he energetically pursued his way to the other, undeterred by mishaps; and the essayist followed him through every particular of his adventures. After 5,000 words she stopped; but only because he had left Africa, one gathered. She reached no conclusion, because she had not thought to analyse the habits of mind which governed his actions, and thus was debarred from considering the results of these actions,as they were measured by the traditional values of another race.

Equally familiar to the staff is that student who comes to ask for an assignment extension and is literally unable to offer in excuse simply "domestic hassles". One is forced to wait while she tells her story in full, even if she has an arm in a sling for evidence. I contrast the lad who once walked in to say "I had to bail my brother out after he was taken on a drugs charge. There's the police receipt." He had said more than enough to engage my active concern, which in fact was aroused principally by the human detail which he had omitted from his laconic synopsis.

Not everyone must adopt an abstract conceptualist way of thinking, of course - nor need anyone practise it all the time. Yet an ability to conceptualise is vital for discussion at tertiary level. The question any discipline asks about its subject matter is Pilate's - that same which stimulated one of Bacon's most maturely provoking essays: "What is Truth?" Whatever Truth may be, it is not necessarily synonymous with fact; and in any case, facts are so easy to establish in a University that they are not as a rule the topic of dispute. A bet over who first flew the Channel may be settled in the Library; over the stress of sound-waves on a given metal, in the laboratory; and whether every solid is heavier than water, without ever leaving the bar. Questions as to matter of fact become an issue only when facts reflect principles, and the extent to which these are exemplified in observable events. Thus a legal expert, asked who is to blame in a collision between two cars, applies the law of the land to the actual incident.

The lawyer checks the specific instance against a legal criterion - or several criteria.

This is the reverse of the method which the essayist on Africa ought first to have adopted. She should have discovered what European attitudes and assumptions guided her explorer during his actual encounters with people of another race, and formulated typical native reactions. The lawyer takes the second step in an academic process:he applies the generals back into the particulars. The two steps are necessary if principles are to be analysed and hence their nature and function tested; and this very simple process lies behind most effective argument.

Sometimes I come on an essay from a student who has grasped the first step of procedure only imperfectly,and has no idea whatsoever of its practical application in the second. I read recently an assignment which never condescended to specifics. On and on it went, confusing the reader's mind with generalisations so broad as to relax him into torpor. Is this waffle, I wonder? We can all recognise waffle, and distinguish it from gobbledygook; I make the suggestion that it may be caused by failure to recognise the relationship between concrete and abstract. Noticing that academics automatically classify particulars, using technical disciplinary terms as they do so, a weak student perhaps produces waffle when attempting to "talk like the grown-ups." A small child may comment on a bird's behaviour: "Look, when he jumps he stays up!" but the mother is able to reply, generalising her experience,"Yes birds do that - it's called 'flying'." She is in fact using a technical and somewhat abstract term : "flying".

My Engineers had waffled a good deal during an early essay in which they were required to discuss War; save one, who used two contrasting specifics most effectively. First he described the thrill of viewing a war film on television, where one destroys by proxy in glorious technicolour. Then he turned to the actual situation of those who suffer attack and invasion. The tension between the two brought out the conflict of human instincts and thus the issues of warfare. Even so,he

was not able to offer a theoretical summary in conclusion. The other students could not sufficiently conceive of War itself: and instead concentrated on the concretes which they could envisage; detailing weaponry for armament. How was I to provide these students with a mental lens which could bring abstractions into focus?

Very simply, I first demanded from them a description of a person (factual or fictional); one paragraph in concrete terms followed by another in abstracts. Most students discovered that they were describing physical appearance first and character thereafter. One or two pairs were admirably matched, and would have done credit to a Nineteenth Century novelist. These students had begun to perceive a relationship.

The next exercise was more complicated, since it drew not only on their new ability to depict personal traits, but required that those be measured against a criterion of character: a criterion which they had to decide for themselves. "'I suppose there's a good deal to be said for them'", read the question, "'but I wouldn't want one to marry my sister.' Discuss, in terms of Hawkeye OR James Bond OR Charlie Brown." Though not all students wrote with great success, at least they wrote fluently; while three pieces were so outstanding that I asked permission to copy and use them.

Arts graduates may not think as highly as I did of the Hawkeye extract: but remember the writer had to find for himself techniques which have become second nature to us, since they are our disciplinary practice. Moreover, he could have no recourse to critical essays, which Literature students use both for models and for material.

> Hawkeye's irresponsibility casts a shadow of doubt upon his credibility. His lack of respect for his superiors gives the impression that he may be deficient in his respect for others who must give him orders of some kind, which inevitably will be the job of his mistress or wife at one time or another. His habit of excess liquor consumption could also present a problem if it becomes out of control. This fact points again to his apparent desire to escape reality which, as discussed previously, may initiate unease within a relationship. His

> impulsive unpredictable behaviour initially generates habits of laughter but occasionally becomes annoying and in time would become irritating. But being an intelligent man Hawkeye could readily supply intellectual stimulation, if required.

The essay, towards conclusion, commented "I can not say I know him well" - a remark which pointed perceptively to just what it is, in the character which Alan Alda so convincingly presents in M.A.S.H., that attracts yet disturbs.

One student who chose James Bond elected to write a short story rather than an essay. The story itself attested the writer's ability to envisage artistic form; and it led from a professionally easy opening to a conclusion which for the first time referred to the topic, ending neatly in its actual words. Moreover, its quiet parody cast a thinking reflection on Fleming's work, human gullibility, and even on the question I had provided.

The opening set the tone of Noel Coward's clipped drawl: "James had retired. At least, that's what most people concerned with the Department were led to believe" - and the following brief excerpt illustrates how it was maintained:

> "James held up a small card of capsules. I immediately recognised the suicide pills by their red colour and the miniature skull and cross-bones imprinted on each. "We shouldn't need those," I grinned ...
>
> "Don't confuse them with sweets, you might regret it." Forcing himself not to smirk, James smiled. "I don't like strawberry flavour anyway."

Another piece on James Bond took the form of a dramatic narrative. It began poorly, but once into its stride developed a stimulating commentary through a discussion between three people. The scene was the supposed sister's twenty-first birthday celebration; the thrust of the argument was taken by a celebrant who observably became more sententious as the night drew on, while a further framework to his remarks was provided by the narrator in accents of culture and cool moderation which formed an effective contrast:

> "I'm not saying that 'e's no good. I'm jus' sayin' that Shauna 'll do no good by staying wif 'im."
> "Alright then, why shouldn't she be with him?" says Bill.
> "Firstly, 'e's always getting shot at, I mean 'e's pretty damn dangerous to be wif. 'E's always gonna have enemies. Second, 'e's always getting onto good-lookin' birds. Can't trust 'im. An' what 'appens if Shauna goes and gets stuck on 'im an' 'e gets killed? Ya must 'mit that 'e's more likely to get killed than we are, even wif the dang'rous roads. Shauna's jus' lookin' for trouble an' 'eartbreak. Aside from that, 'oo's ta say that 'e's honest, I mean, someone 'at goes and strangles uvvers can't be tot'ly honest, 'less 'e's wacko. An' if 'e's wacko surely you can see that 'e's dang'rous."

The last two essayists made use of their sense of humour to furnish a point of view in context of its opposite. This is the aim of a dialectic essay as it debates issues while developing a thesis. I determined to employ humour in my approach; and I recommend it seriously as an aid to teaching. It invokes an ability to see two sides of the coin simultaneously, and in this way stimulates dis-interested objectiveness: the basis of logic in argument and of irony in literature. Furthermore, it disturbs habits of passive receptivity by jerking ideas into another context.

Let me explain what I mean. We on the Arts side tend to forget the power of words to stifle thought; though we meet the results often enough in plagiarised essays, or essays which rely so heavily on quotation as to make clear that their writers have been unable to grasp whatever concept lies behind one particular form of its expression. I take a simple instance. One evening, I was strolling on the Anglesea beach, terribly eroded since I swam from it as a girl. Discussing this with a couple who were walking their dog, I learnt it had happened overnight, while they were interstate. They had read in the paper that "a giant wave" had done it - and no query of mine could elicit further information. Was it a mini-tsunami, a freak tide, a conjunction of currents and weather? I turned the facets of an archetypal prism in an effort to specify the concept. "Giant wave", however, was all they knew, and they just repeated it. If people have no capacity to distinguish the essence of an idea, I reflected at the time, they cannot check their information - which just might be wrong. I was once given a present of

dubious nature. "It's an antique," explained the donor - "I know, I bought it in an antique shop!"

On the Humanities side of the courtyard it is possible to disengage students from the tyranny of words by asking them, say, to define a table. Everyone knows a table when they see one; but by the time you are asking how many legs it has, students are dimly realising that they conceive abstractly of its essence (they perceive its transcendent Platonic form, if you like) before they recognise it, once it is immanent in wood or metal. On the further side of the courtyard you would get little mileage out of such an enquiry: as I have found in practice. What does it matter what the essence of a table is? That is irrelevant, compared with what you do with it when you have it, where you can put it, and whether you can afford it in the first place. Where's the point in wasting time with airy-fairy Mickey Mouse considerations?

Engineers would be too courteous to state these reservations. They would just withdraw their attention - the kiss of death in any class. Further, not only are they polite: they are taught <u>not</u> to argue with the staff. What they want, as one of my advisers rightly told me when I was contemplating a design for the course, is a formula. They will accept a theoretical abstraction, such as the squares on the other two sides equalling the square on the hypotenuse, if you can prove it and then show its practical applications; but of course there is no formula for writing. Yet, as I have been arguing, one basic necessity is an ability to think; and for that, one must distill a concept from its specific instances of operation.

So I resolved on the use of humour, and in particular its element of the grotesque: whereby something is divorced from its familiar context and thrown violently into contrasting circumstances. Since the next exercise was to take place in the exam., I intended to make use of that time to promote the current work; and of course I relied on humour for the secondary purpose of relaxing and stimulating candidates. The questions for the composition section, then, eventually read as follows:

(i) You have been invited to Inner Mongolia to give a lecture on surfing. Visual aids are not available, and your audience have never seen the ocean. Write your lecture.

(If you prefer, you may lecture about skiing, under the same conditions, to a remote tropical tribe.)

(ii) You have returned empty-handed to another country after a rendezvous at Deakin to collect a secret formula. At Waurn Ponds, you sighted the delivery agent; but, due to the complicated lay-out of the campus (among other reasons if you wish), you failed to make contact within your time-limit.

Write a report to your Organization, explaining why you are not to blame.

(iii) You have been asked to produce the play Henry V, on stage OR on film OR for television. Describe your production and its problems.

These topics all required role-playing, which is itself an exercise in departing the familiar for the unfamiliar: although the latter has its balance from the former, since when seeing through another's eyes one calls on experience taken in through one's own. The class had been growing accustomed to this process as they had read through Henry V - included in the course as a tribute to its element of Culture by Compulsion. Gradually first one and then another had cast aside inhibitions and warmed to the characterisation of his part; and those who were able to practise the knack in the exam scored more highly. The few who selected the last question wrote poorly; my impression was that they lacked imagination and chose to answer by regurgitating the little factual information they had absorbed. Certainly they disregarded the dimension of the topic which required them to put their facts to work. Dutiful but passive, they barely passed.

Not so, the majority, who homed in joyfully on the first two questions. Humour stimulates while it relaxes; but needs itself to function with exactitude if a dual point is to be scored in one hit. They grinned as they wrote, and I laughed out loud as I read - relishing the nicety of certain suggestions, functional to their schemes. In Mongolia, the intelligent produced a bucket of water and simulated waves by dropping in a stone; in the tropics, someone likened snow to crushed coconut. Two spies were late for their appointments, one because his country devalued

by 99% as he flew in to Sydney, so that he had to hitch-hike South; the other because he crossed the International Date Line and mistook the date of the week.

These had put their imagination most fruitfully to work; and Coleridge himself might well have approved. Imagination must have something to do with the power to envisage a concept in other circumstances: who has not stood in the tropics and repeated "All in a hot and copper sky..." thinking how exactly the atmosphere has been created? and that, by a man who never went further South than Europe. At a practical level, anyone must know how his furniture will fit the new house; or argue what the boss is likely to do tomorrow, if he runs true to his track record. The principle must be extracted, and then applied.

However, it might be applied incorrectly; or it might be wrong in the first place. Not imagination alone is required, but precision and experience too. Only time and practice will foster these - which is some part of the value of writing assignments. Weak students may then be shown their errors of omission or commission; a task not always successfully undertaken in tutorials, because a weak student tends to forget or muddle what he said.

The next exercise for my class, therefore, required them to cultivate accuracy in giving directions for reaching a certain point in the University - our campus lay-out is so confusing as to baffle even experienced travellers. Thence we progressed to the description first of an object and then of a function. Or rather, I had intended to ask for a function but used the ambiguous term "activity". I was very happy to find, however, that all but one student had taken me in the abstract sense. Two attempted to describe walking; and though they were not markedly successful, such an effort was well worth their time, as they wrestled with the process. In this class at least, the penny had dropped.

I was then able to turn their attention to niceties of drafting, asking them to rewrite such illogical absurdities as TAKE TWO THREE TIMES A DAY, or GUNDAGAI - NEXT TWO EXITS. I did not in fact use these brief

examples, but from their performance with longer ones I am confident that they could have produced THREE TIMES A DAY TAKE TWO, since they were quick to grasp issues by no means easy to conceptualise; and went about redrafting in a thoroughly workmanlike manner.

I was able to deal with other matters for the rest of the year. By this time, most of the class were writing fluently; and, as we all know,under these circumstances errors in expression tend to disappear. I was pleased, too, to see that it was not so much that they had forgotten that they were writing - and hence proceeded unaffectedly- but that many were finding a new enjoyment in their power to turn out their thoughts in writing with ease and with flair.

This year's students have already risen quite well to the challenge of tackling a concept divorced from familiar context. I table attempts of Research Departments to sell their latest discoveries: the African elephant to Hannibal son of Hamilcar Barca, or the berserker to Harald the Shaggy, who reduced Norway to the feudal system. I introduced that exercise early this year, because 1981's fifteen students seemed at first to write reasonably fluently. Yet when asked to explain the process of their writing they could not do so, and became somewhat inarticulate orally and on paper. Moreover, I had noted some students' heavy dependence on works of reference, not merely for ideas but for their verbalisation. They must learn to draft, confident of their ideas as they seek the fittest expression for them. I am, therefore, experimenting with teaching English by means of Latin. It is too soon to assess results: but my theory is that the study of this language illustrates many matters which concern the writer of English, but are not noticeable in his own speech or writing. In Latin, for instance, the relationship of one part of a thought to another is there to be seen in both the shape and placement of words. Is this, perhaps, the "formula" which an Engineer requires?

Take the Subject, for instance, on which the whole sentence structure pivots. How is one to point it out in English? It is useless to tell students that it provides the focus of interest if shortly they are to

meet such a statement as "She watched the slow approach of the spark along its trail of cordite, straining helplessly at her bonds." Generally, of course, a Subject, in our word-order language, begins a sentence: but there is no rule which says it must. I began the last with an adverb followed by an adverb phrase. In Latin, the ending of the word indicates its case and thus its standing within the clause: and that is a rule which may not be broken.

Horatius pontem servavit.

It was not a bridge which saved Horatius, but Horatius who kept the bridge; as we know from the -us and -em terminations. The inter-relationship of Nominative and Accusative crystallises the speaker's thought.

Further, the Finite Verb agrees with the Subject, as we observe because it ends in -t. I would rather say, actually, that a Finite Verb is a verb whose "finis" is the Subject: the Verb plus Subject is one entity, whether that Subject be-o, -s, -t, -mus, -tis, or -nt. There, at any rate, is agreement to be seen by the looking, which at once distinguishes Singular from Plural and the three Persons from each other. Though English verbs vary only the form of the Third Person Singular from the standard form, staff are always complaining that students don't know Singular from Plural. So silly an error perhaps derives from lack of practice in conjugating; though it is more likely to be due to lack of visible agreement in many instances.

Professor Leonie Kramer in her paper to last November's STEP conference[1] stresses the importance of learning foreign languages. She rightly points out that this can promote logical thinking and logical expression; for one must consider how the segments of an idea relate to each other when turning it from one's own tongue into somebody else's, or from theirs back again. The Romans at least put down visibly and uncompromisingly what they meant.

If, for instance, they wished to suggest the beneficiaries of Horatius' action,

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1. Leonie Kramer, "The Importance of Rigour" paper presented to STEP -Secondary and Tertiary Education Programme- 1980.(unpublished).

they supplied the Indirect Object in one word,with a Dative termination:

Horatius Romanis pontem servavit.

They could, of course, have said "pro Romanis", or more likely "pro patria": but they didn't have to. And further, if they had wished to emphasise that part of the total concept, they could do it simply by moving the verb from its position of honour at the end of the sentence, and putting the word they wished to stress in its place:

Horatius pontem servavit Romanis.

At this point in teaching, once the class are reasonably accustomed to the use of cases, the question not merely of logical structure but of style may be taken up: of style in English, that is. Secondary students might be satisfied by rendering the last sentence "Horatius kept the bridge for the Romans." That is not exactly what is meant, however. Tertiary students need to do a little better, and perhaps we should have to translate "It was for Rome that Horatius kept the bridge" if we are to uphold the emphasis of the original. We may use the idiomatic "It was ..." where Latin cannot. Note too that we use an abstract ("Rome") where Latinists employ more concrete terms and prefer to speak of the inhabitants directly. Of course, another English translation which preserved the proportions of the original thought would be "Horatius kept the bridge - for Rome."

There is no one way of making the point in English - just good ways and less effective ways. Once a class has understood this, they have been freed from that "tyranny of words" to which I referred earlier. They are contemplating - dare I say? - the deep meaning, once they grasp a thought before they attempt to translate (that is, to re-word) it. Yet there is the thought, in some concrete form, before them. I applaud Professor Kramer's contention: study of at least one foreign language seems to me enormously important; and I myself would suggest an inflected language such as Latin because of its logical construction, and its visible evidence of logic at work in integrating the tensions within any coherent idea. One way of testing the validity of a thought expressed in an English sentence is to try to turn it into Latin; and if it won't go, the reader is not to blame if he has been confused.This

is my practice when staff ring to ask me what might be meant by some tangled remark in an essay.

As a student learns to read another language without translating it, he may have grasped the ideas presented. Yet it is generally only when attempting to cast the thoughts into his own speech that he comes to terms with the emotion generated by the foreign sentences. He then may realise that he has a second and intriguing duty when writing: to hit upon the right tone, as he selects words and devises a framework in which to set them. He becomes more aware of the influence which language exercises, and should be encouraged to explore the subtleties of his own tongue. In presenting a pure abstraction he still must be exact. We all know how many students fail to achieve a tone happily adjusted to their current purposes; though it is hard to explain this to ears unattuned to such conceptual considerations. If, however, the student while translating is required to reproduce the precise emotional impact of a given original, he may be checked and guided while he learns. He can begin early, from even such a simple example as:

Ave, nauta!

Depending on the context, and the scope of formality, elegance, risibility, or whatever else that that may demand, one may translate with equal precision "Hail, O Mariner!" "Greetings, Seafarer!" or "Hullo, Sailor!" From such small acorns, oaks may eventually grow.

Other considerations of style arise from the study of Latin. This language has many tenses, all of which clearly indicate whether an action is past, present, or future; whether instantaneous, completed, or continuing; whether actual, or conjectural. Yet once the writer decides these issues, there is little choice left. In English, a bewildering number of options still remain. Look at our idiomatic Simple Future Tenses, for instance: we can say "The train will leave at 7.00 tomorrow morning", "The train will be leaving at 7.00 tomorrow morning", "The train is going to leave at..." or just "The train leaves at ..." A student must realize that he needs a nice discrimination to sift and select from the idioms open to him.

Sometimes our idiom is quite extraordinary; and this issue, inappropriate at secondary level, may be pursued at tertiary. I had always been told that the Continuous Tenses express a continuing action, as opposed to the single action denoted by a Simple Tense. That sounds fair enough! But in this year's Latin we came on the following:

In culina laborat

It was the answer to a question, and we had to decide whether to translate "He works in the kitchen", "He is working in the kitchen", or "He does work in the kitchen". The last was out, for contextual reasons; but it was then that I realised that "He is working in the kitchen" (Continuous Present Tense) would imply a temporary state of affairs; the way we indicate a permanent one is to say "He works in the kitchen." This is true of dialectal spoken Okker as of formal written English.

English is not the easiest language to write in, but it offers immense rewards to those who explore its richness and subtleties, of form as well as of vocabulary. All this, even brief acquaintance with a foreign language may show.

"What do they know of England who only England know?" Each of the various processes I have been suggesting for whittling away the specifics to get at the pith of an idea involves applying the contrary in some way. That was just what happened to me as I crossed the courtyard from the Arts side in which I had learnt how to write; if I were to understand the requirements of my Engineering students, I had to some extent to play their role, and to view my own practice from another angle. I was surprised that the method I settled into as I attempted to teach the expression of a thought either in one sentence or in a long piece of coherent writing was to throw concrete pre-requisites out of the window except where they served the purpose of furthering conceptualisation. It was of course a typically Mickey Mouse thing to do. Yet it emerged as a reaction to thoroughgoing pragmatism, since it had never occurred to me to use such a technique with Humanities students, who deal every day in abstractions.

I now wonder if that is exactly what I should be doing in all my teaching. Certainly last year's Engineers came to enjoy their power over words, once they could think before they wrote. Liberated from the bondage of facts, they found how to extract from them a general principle before expressing its operation in other particulars. Is this the essence of literacy for University purposes?

If on consideration Study Skills Advisers think I have come up with something useful, then it is the Engineers, with their mistrust of the Mickey Mouse and the impalpable, that I have to thank.

OVERCOMING LEGAL CULTURE SHOCK

GWEN MORRIS, A.N.U.

1. The need for a course which introduces students to the world of law

The study of Law in first year often confuses new students. Many students appear to experience a type of culture shock (some would say a type of shell shock) as a result of being suddenly confronted with concepts and methods of reasoning which appear quite alien to their prior experience.

During the last 3 years, therefore, the Law Faculty at ANU has developed a course for first year students which is designed to introduce students to the world of law.

This course (known as Legal Writing and Research) was introduced as a result of student dissatisfaction over several years with the existing introductory unit, Legal Method, and as a result of the conviction of some of the staff of the Faculty that such a course was necessary. Students considered Legal Method to be not very helpful and to be almost a waste of time. Staff became tired of seeing students struggle and often fail both Legal Method and their other law subjects due to lack of basic legal skills, rather than lack of ability, hard work or motivation.[1]

1. There is a detailed discussion of the circumstances which led to the introduction of the Legal Writing and Research course at ANU in The Australian National University. Faculty of Law Report on Legal Writing and Research 1980 by Gwen Morris and Robin Creyke. For some background to this problem in legal education generally and for a discussion of attempts made at the University of New South Wales to overcome the problem, see Professor R. Garth Nettheim, University of New South Wales "First Year Teaching in Context", a paper presented at the Australasian Universities Law Schools Association Conference, held in August 1981 at Macquarie University (unpublished)

At the end of the course students should have acquired the basic survival skills required in a law course. They should have begun to look at the world as lawyers do. They should have begun to think like lawyers, solve problems and give advice like lawyers, speak like lawyers and write like lawyers.

2. Thinking like a lawyer

A lawyer's brain is an automatic sorting, debating and predicting machine.

2.1 A sorting machine

All brains are sorting machines: they sort information into categories of varying levels of abstraction. They sort information to identify something as a kangaroo, for example. They can then assign the kangaroo to the category of a mammal, or to that of an animal, up through the levels of generality or abstraction. Lawyers not only carry out this universal task, but they also constantly sort words and facts in order to fit them into specific legal categories.

2.2 A debating machine

Although all brains are constantly engaged in a sorting process, they are not all constantly engaged in an internal debate. The universal human concern with the struggle between good and evil epitomises the nature of a lawyer's daily task. Lawyers must always ask themselves the question: what are the arguments for and against this proposition, interpretation of law or fact, or proposed course of action? It is an old (and bad) legal joke that as lawyers always give advice "on the one hand, but on the other hand", if you want to get a real decision, you employ a one-armed lawyer. That joke illustrates very well the way that lawyers think.

2.3 A predicting machine

It is inherent in the nature of law that it should be uncertain. It is one of the tasks of a lawyer, therefore, to predict the principle of law which will apply, whether a set of facts falls within the principle, and the options therefore open to a client: "Like a soothsayer of the law,

a lawyer predicts a court's reaction to a given situation".[2] This is so even if (as is most commonly the case) there is no suggestion that a legal problem will go to a court for a solution.

It always seems to come as a surprise to non-lawyers to find that often no one is quite sure what the law is about a certain matter and to find, in addition, that the rules of law are often illogical and inconsistent. It seems to be expected that there is An Answer to any problem, and that all rules of law should be in the simple, concise form of the Ten Commandments,

> Thou shalt not kill.
> Thou shalt not commit adultery.
> Thou shalt not steal.[3]

And that the penalty for failure to comply with a rule shall also be in the form,

> He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.[4]

Unfortunately life is not simple and concise, so that these simple concise rules are not adequate to deal with real life. "Thou shalt not kill", will soon need to be qualified to provide for the case of a person killing in self-defence or in defence of others. People will start debating the meaning of "steal" (if someone owes you money and without his knowledge, you take it from that person yourself, are you stealing?); and others will argue about whether the rule about adultery is enforceable, and what evidence is needed to prove that adultery has been committed. What happens if you smite a man so that he does not die but is permanently incapacitated, should you then also surely be put to death?

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2. Jonathan Caplan. 1977. "Lawyers and Litigants: A Cult Reviewed" pp. 93 - 109, at p.99 in Ivan Illich et al. Disabling Professions London, Marion Boyars.

3. Exodus 20: 13-15.

4. Exodus 21: 12.

It is inevitable that any system of law should contain uncertainty because,

- it is impossible to devise rules to cover every possibility;
- rules are made of words; and words are imprecise and shifting in meaning.[5]

In terms of control theory, the system is too large to be capable of control; and the control mechanisms are inadequate for the task.[6]

2.3.1 Uncertainty as a result of the system of law inherited from Britain

The uncertainty inherent in any system of law is increased by the type of legal system which Australia and other former colonies inherited from England.

Under this type of system (known as a common law system) there are 2 sources of law: legislation and case law.

Legislation

Legislation is less uncertain than case law. It is made by Parliament in the form of statutes (Acts of Parliament); or by persons or bodies (such as the Governor General or Telecom) to whom Parliament has delegated legislative power, in the form delegated legislation (such as regulations ordinances and by-laws).

Like the Ten Commandments, rules made by legislation are in fixed verbal form, so although there might be arguments over the meaning of "steal" in "Thou shall not steal", there can be no argument about the verbal form of the rule: it remains fixed.

Rules made by legislation also all carry the same weight. There are

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5. This problem is discussed in Glanville Williams. 1945. "Language and the Law" Law Quarterly Review Vol. 61, 71, 179, 293, 384.

6. W. Ross Ashby. 1956. An Introduction to Cybernetics London, Chapman & Hall, is the standard reference on control theory.

rules for resolving inconsistency between pieces of legislation (Commonwealth legislation overrides inconsistent state legislation;[7] a later statute overrides an earlier inconsistent one[8]); and rules for determining whether legislation is valid.[9] Nevertheless, once these matters have been resolved, all rules made by legislation are of equal weight. It is not correct, for example, that delegated legislation carries less weight than an Act of Parliament.

In addition, although there is much obsolete legislation in the statute books, legislation can be changed and kept up to date simply by passing amending or repealing legislation. It can respond quite quickly to what is perceived as a community activity in need of regulation.

Case law

Case law can cause much uncertainty. It is made by judges in appeal courts in order to solve a conflict which comes before them between individuals or between an individual and the State.

Case law is often referred to as common law. England and countries which have derived their systems of law from England are known as common law countries. Included among such countries are the former colonies of Britain such as the United States of America and Australia.

This body of law originated in the customs of the early English natives and attained a more permanent status when people started writing down what had been decided by the early courts and why. These written decisions were collected in a series of books known as Law Reports and became known as "precedents". By the mid-nineteenth century the basic

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7. Commonwealth Constitution, s.109.

8. See D.C. Pearce. 1974. Statutory Interpretation in Australia Sydney, Butterworths. pp. 92-97.

9. The province of constitutional law.

principles of the doctrine of precedent were settled.[10] Under this doctrine, the law expounded in an earlier case is followed in later similar cases. If, for example, the rule is laid down that it is an assault for John to shake his spear at William thus putting William in fear of his life, then this rule is followed in later similar cases.

The rules derived from case law therefore are the sum of the rules in the cases on that subject decided to date. At any one time, the rules are,

Rules in Cases A + B + C + D = Rules on subject X

Whenever a case E on subject X occurs, reference must be made to the previous cases on subject X, and to the sum of the rules derived from them.

Unlike the Ten Commandments or legislation, case law is not in fixed verbal form. A judge in a case may say, for example, "You shall not harm your neighbour". The facts of the case, however, are that John shot his neighbour in the arm during a shooting contest. It can be argued then, that the statement of law is not - "You shall not harm your neighbour", but is rather - "A person shall not shoot his neighbour in the arm during a shooting contest". As each case has as its purpose the resolution of one dispute only, it can be argued that the correct principle is one confined only to the facts of that case. Lawyers often argue therefore that the judge's statement of the law should be wider or narrower than his actual words.

In addition not all cases (and therefore the principles of law derived from them) are of equal weight. This is the result of the doctrine of precedent. Courts are arranged in an hierarchical structure. Only the decisions of those courts at the top of the hierarchy are reported and

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10. For a useful discussion of the operation of the doctrine of precedent in Australia see R.B. Vermeesch and K.E.Lindgren. 1978. Business Law of Australia (3rd edn) Sydney, Butterworths, pp. 55-71.

have weight for the purposes of the doctrine of precedent. Decisions of those at the top of the hierarchy (for example, the High Court of Australia) are of greater weight than those further down in the hierarchy (for example, a single judge of a State Supreme Court).

Similarly, within a case, statements of principles of law are accorded different weights. The distinction is made between statements of law which are the ratio decidendi of a case (an essential step in a judge coming to his decision) and statements which are obiter dicta (statements which are not essential steps in a judge coming to his decision). As judges rarely indicate which is which, there is often room for argument over the status of a statement. Problems also arise in multi-judge courts, where it may become necessary to do a head count to determine the weight of a principle.

Lastly, old cases never die, they only fade away. Even if a case is overruled as quite wrong by a later court, it is not erased from the law reports. It may perhaps be used again for some other purpose, or even later be held to be in fact correct. No matter how old they are, cases may still be used. Thus the library shelves become more and more crowded with law reports and finding what is or is not relevant to a particular set of facts becomes more and more difficult.[11]

The uncertainty of rules derived from case law is complicated by social factors which influence the way courts make decisions. While these factors do not have the legal status of the doctrine of precedent, they often play a vital part in legal decision-making.[12]

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11. Sir Francis Bacon complained about the cluttering of the law with overruled cases in the 17th century. See David Mellinkoff. 1963. The Language of the Law Boston, Little, Brown and Co., p.192.

12. There is a voluminous literature, philosphical, sociological, historical and political, dealing with the social factors which influence the way courts make decisions. A useful start may be made with William J. Chambliss and Robert B. Seidman. 1971. Law, Order, and Power Reading, Mass., Addison - Wesley, pp.89 ff.

Although old cases never die, it is open to lawyers to argue that the historical and social context in which they were decided is so different from present social conditions that the rules laid down in them are no longer applicable. Such an argument often raises the problem of the roles of judges and of Parliament. Some would maintain that it is for Parliament alone to change the law; others argue that it is one of the advantages of case law that it is not in fixed verbal form, and that judges are at liberty to refuse to follow an obsolete rule of law.

Judges must often make value judgements in coming to decisions. This is why lawyers often discuss among themselves how certain judges of the High Court will decide on a particular matter (for or against State powers? for or against large commercial interests?); or what sort of decision a particular magistrate will come to (does he hate untidy looking young people? Is he particularly helpful to people who are unrepresented by lawyers?).

Finally in making predictions in relation to both legislation and case law, a lawyer may have to ask - is a rule of law enforceable? And what would be the most just result in a particular case? Is a rule which purports to protect the life of unborn children enforceable? Is a decision which allows a natural parent to claim back a child she has not seen for 5 years just? Obviously, different people would give different answers. Further uncertainty is the result.

The uncertainty in both legislation and case law can be removed to some extent when they interact. Thus courts give decisions on the meanings of words in legislation, and Parliament enacts legislation to clarify or update aspects of case law.

The basic problem for lawyers remains: law is uncertain.

Students find this uncertainty quite unnerving. One commented in 1981,

> One of the main points to be hammered home at the outset of this course is the element of <u>uncertainty</u> in the law: consider <u>all</u> the approaches, leave

> nothing to be implied etc. It is this concept of uncertainty which is difficult to grasp at first.[13]

Getting students accustomed to uncertainty and teaching them the skills to cope with uncertainty (that is, skills in predicting) are therefore tasks given high priority in the Legal Writing & Research Course at ANU.

3. Solving problems and giving advice like a lawyer

The process for solving legal problems then is,

What are the facts? Sort. Debate. Predict.

What is the law? Sort. Debate. Predict.

Do these facts fit into the possible legal categories? Sort. Debate. Predict.

Conclusion Advise

The uncertainties inherent in the Australian system of law have been discussed already. In practice, lawyers are faced with further uncertainty when they are attempting to answer the questions, what are the facts? And what is the law?

To find out the facts often requires considerable time, patience and ingenuity. Anyone who has interviewed people involved in collisions between cars knows that cars are always being driven within the speed limit and that both parties were completely sober at the time.[14]

It is essential, that lawyers be competent at legal research, at least within the fields of their specialisation, yet the physical task of finding the law is often quite difficult. The volume of case law and

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13. Australian National University, Office for Research in Academic Methods. 1981. Student Evaluation of Legal Writing and Research Innovations carried out by Bernice Anderson.

14. See R.E. Megarry. 1966-67. "Law as Taught and Law as Practised" Society of Public Teachers of Law Journal N.S. Vol. 9, pp. 176-178.

legislation is increasing rapidly with few technological aids to help lawyers keep pace with changes. Even after a lawyer has made a thorough search of the law, there is always a doubt - has some vital case been missed? Was the relevant legislation changed yesterday?

Nevertheless, lawyers as sorters, debaters and predicters must make up their minds what advice to give their clients. They must say - You have a very good chance of recovering your money; You have no chance of recovering your money; I am not sure whether you can recover your money or not - these are the options open to you.

It is necessary therefore that law students be taught the special skills involved in solving problems and in giving advice. Both their livelihoods and the interests of their clients depend upon them.

4. Speaking and writing like lawyers

There is a problem in teaching people to speak and write like lawyers in that many lawyers speak and write very badly. This being so, the general approach to adopt is simply to teach the principles of clear speaking and clear writing which should be used by everyone - not just be lawyers. At the same time, however, there is a technical language of the law, and a style of writing which is appropriate to legal concepts and argument.

4.1 The technical language of the law

Those with an interest in the history of the English language must like technical legal language, for much of it has its source in Latin (habeas corpus, ultra vires, mens rea), or in law French (fee simple, chose in action, estoppel) as well as in the other sources of the English language. In addition, words may be used in an unusual or archaic sense (determine = bring to an end; touch = concern; desuetude = passing into a state of disuse; emolument = profit from employment; instant = of the present moment).[15]

15. See for example, David Mellinkoff The Language of the Law cited at 10 above.

Much legal language however, is pseudo-technical. It sounds technical but it is not. In many cases, legal writing degenerates into jargon. Thus the obsession of many lawyers with such words as "abovementioned", "said" and "whereas" is unnecessary; as is also the repetition of words with a similar meaning "the Governor in Council may make such alterations, modifications and additions to the ordinance as he thinks fit"; the tendency of words to go in pairs "fit and proper", "had and received", "will and testament", "null and void" (or even "invalid null and void"); and the tendency to use enormously long sentences full of qualifications ("provided that", "notwithstanding"). A large amount of case law and legislation incorporates all of these faults. As this material is the source of legal rules, it is very easy to conclude that in order to sound like a lawyer, it is necessary to speak and write using both pseudo-technical and technical words and phrases.[16]

As Karl Llewellyn says,[17] obscurity of language is one reason why lawyers are unpopular,

> Here, then, we have three reasons why the lawyer is not loved. He practices black art. He is a trickster. Too much hereinbefore provided whereas.

4.2 The writing style appropriate to legal concepts and argument

The writing style most appropriate to legal concepts is simple, clear and concise. It avoids jargon and uses technical terms correctly. In a document intended to be read by another lawyer, a formal, indirect

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16. Even H.W. Fowler. 1965. A Dictionary of Modern English Usage (2nd edn) revised by Sir Ernest Gowers:Oxford, Oxford University Press, seems to condone pseudo-technical language. In particular the statement (at p.412) that "...it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the more readily a legal document appears to yield its meaning the less likely it is to prove unambiguous " is very questionable. The same rather deferential approach to legal writing is also taken in Sir Ernest Gowers. 1973. The Complete Plain Words Harmondsworth, Penguin Books. pp.23, 107-8; and in Kenneth Hudson. 1978. The Jargon of the Professions London, Macmillan, pp. 34-41.

17. K.N. Llewellyn. 1960. The Bramble Bush. On Our Law and its Study New York, Oceana Publications. p. 144.

style of writing is generally most appropriate, broken up by the use of headings. In writing directed to other people, a modification of this approach should be used, the emphasis being on translating legal concepts and reasoning into everyday language. Unfortunately, the achievement of an appropriate writing style by students is impeded by the generally bad models of legal writing to which they are continually exposed.

4.3 Mode of reasoning

Students must use the method explained above in 2.

4.4 Supporting argument with authority

All statements of law must be supported by a reference to either case law or legislation. This involves students in learning the methods of citation of authority which are peculiar to law.

5. Acquiring a realistic world view of the law

The idealism and concern for justice of many law students when they begin a law course frequently has become cynicism and narrow legalism by the end of the first year.

Students become aware of the conservatism of the law, its use of the adversary process as game-playing, its hypocrisy, parasitism, boredom and general irrelevance to the people it is supposed to protect and serve. This all becomes obvious from the written record of legal proceedings which they daily must read. Like newspapers, law reports rarely report the good news. A balanced law course, therefore, must attempt to present a realistic view of the law, and teach tolerance, but not insensitivity to its failings.[18]

6. Studying law

Apart from acquiring a lawyer's view of the world, students studying law have particular problems coping with the very heavy reading load,

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18. For an impassioned exposition of this problem, see The Bramble Bush, cited above, pp. 141-151.

and in working out what is important and what is not.[19] These problems are partly the result of the "case method" approach to law teaching, whereby students are forced to discover the wheel themselves, rather than have the well-known principles of wheel construction explained to them.[20]

Law students also, of course, have the general run of student problems.

7. Summary: What Legal Writing and Research is trying to Teach

Thinking Skills

- how to sort facts and law
- how to formulate balanced arguments
- how to predict results, solve problems and advise.

Searching Skills

- how to find facts and law.

Writing and Speaking Skills

- how to use language (including technical legal language) to communicate legal concepts and arguments.

Realistic view of the law

Study Skills

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19. Australian National University, Office for Research in Academic Methods and Faculty of Law. 1978. Workload Study documented the pressures on law students at that time.

20. For an interesting discussion of the different traditions of law teaching see W.L. Twining. 1979. "Legal Education For All" pp.1-13 in Papers on Legal Studies and Legal Education for Non-Lawyers ed by D.W. Mitchell, Sydney, Butterworths.

8. Devising practical work to teach legal skills

It is a fairly simple task to identify what should be taught. It is another matter altogether to teach it.

The methods devised have largely been developed intuitively, as a response to what teachers saw as the students' needs. It is only after 3 years of experience that it has become possible to analyse the course within the framework discussed in this paper. Perhaps the course should have developed from principles to practice: the fact is however that it did not. Practical concerns determined its content right from the beginning.

Legal skills are taught in the Legal Writing and Research course by means of 15 exercises and 2 written assignments.

The exercises are graded so that each builds upon the other. This enables students to acquire the necessary skills gradually and within a logical framework. There are 4 groups of exercises,

Group 1 (Exercises 1-4) These are taught in the first week ("Work and Welcome Week") and are designed to teach basic survival skills - basic legal terminology, location of case law and legislation in the library, and the special skills of reading cases and legislation.

Group 2 (Exercises 5 & 6) teach skills in analysing and sorting facts into categories so that the law applicable to those facts can be ascertained. They also teach use of community resources (such as Government departments) as a means of legal research.

Group 4 (Exercises 7-12) concentrates on teaching the skills necessary to deal with case law. Case law is emphasised in the course, not because it is regarded as a more important source of law than legislation (for it is not), but rather because the principles taught in most first year subjects are predominantly derived from case law.

Group 4 (Exercises 13-15) concentrates on legislation, principally on how to search for legislation in the library. Ideally this source of

law should be given at least equal emphasis to case law. However as students are required to deal with very little legislation in their first year, it is thought best to concentrate on teaching case law skills. Unfortunately this means that students do not acquire skills in legislative analysis and interpretation in the same structured way as they do for case law.

All exercises are chosen for their interest and relevance. No fictitious legislation or cases are used. In addition, wherever possible, the source material is chosen to allow discussion of basic legal issues, so that students can see law as it is, rather than in an idealistic or cynical way.

The 2 assignments are designed to give students practice in solving problems and giving legal advice (the process summarised at 3 above).

Students are assisted in writing their assignments by detailed notes on all matters relating to legal writing and research and by class discussion. They can also look at examples of past students' work in the library. The assignments are returned to students with detailed comments on where they went wrong (and where they were right). The work is not corrected. Comments such as "incorrect citation" and "where is the conclusion?" are marked on the work. If the assignment, or part of it, is to be re-written, then students are given detailed instructions on what is to be re-written and how it is to be re-written. They are also encouraged to discuss theory work with their teachers. The emphasis at all times is on the method of approach, rather than on whether the legal principles stated to be applicable to the problem are in fact correct. (As, however, the assignments are based on law which students are studying in other subjects, they are warned if they appear to have completely misunderstood an area of law.)

After what is mainly a chastening experience with the first assignment, students, in general, deal competently with the second.

The emphasis in the assignments at all times is on learning by practice. Although Legal Writing and Research is a compulsory unit, it earns

students no marks. Students sometimes criticise this,

> In my honest opinion I regard this subject as a "mickey mouse" unit. For the simple fact that it irritates me to have to devote so much time to what is potentially "good valued learning" for absolutely NO MARKS.[21]

Nevertheless overall student (and teachers') opinion supports this approach. Marks are detrimental to learning in this type of subject and at this stage of a student's law course.[22]

In 1981 for the first time, two optional workshops on study skills and on examination skills were held. Both were on Saturday mornings. The first workshop on study skills dealt with note-taking, organization of time, organizing notes and study methods. The second workshop on examination skills dealt with physical and psychological fitness for exams, and with specific problems of exam technique. Students attempted an exam question and the results were then discussed.

The workshops were conducted in small groups, each of which was led by a staff member and at least one later year student. Over half of the students attended the first workshop. Most students appeared to find it useful to share their problems with others and to discover that others had the same problems. The most common criticism, however, was that there were too many unresolved issues.[23] This raises the problem of the extent to which issues as to the most appropriate study method for each student can be resolved. To a large extent, responsibility

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21. Student Evaluation of Legal Writing and Research Innovations 1981 cited at 12 above.

22. In this respect it may be contrasted with the course described in James A.R. Nafziger. 1980. "Teaching Legal Writing in the United States" 7 Mon.L.R. 67-76, where a student newspaper assessment of the course, while acknowledging the course to be useful commented: "It is a rare student who does not bear some scars from the experience."

23. Student Evaluation of Legal Writing and Research Innovations 1981 cited at 12 above.

lies with the individual.

The workshop on examination techniques was also well attended. While no formal evaluation was carried out on this workshop, it appeared to be quite successful. Some students commented particularly on how valuable it was to discuss matters with later year students and with staff: and to feel that someone cared about their welfare.

Detailed information on the objectives, teaching method, texts and materials used and assessment in Legal Writing and Research is contained in the attached Appendix.

9. Evaluation

The various changes to the course have been monitored by Bernice Anderson of the Office for Research in Academic Methods at ANU. The first evaluation was of the old Legal Method course in 1979; the second of the new Legal Writing and Research course in 1980; and a third has been carried out of innovations introduced into the course in 1981.[24]

9.1 Legal Method 1979

This was a comprehensive survey of the whole course. The general conclusions of interest were,

- 60% of students thought that there should be some changes in course content
- 70% of students thought the course should be compulsory.

The evaluation indicated fairly clearly the confusion experienced by students in the course. They were confused about course content, teaching method, assessment, and the apparently conflicting goals of

24. Australian National University. Office for Research in Academic Methods April 1979 Student Evaluation: Legal Method; 1980 Student Opinion Survey of Legal Writing and Research; 1981 Student Evaluation of Legal Writing and Research Innovations.

some lecturers and tutors.

9.2 Legal Writing and Research 1980

A comprehensive and detailed evaluation of the course was carried out. Wherever possible, the same questions were asked as in the evaluation carried out for Legal Method in 1979.

The results of this evaluation compared favourably with the results in 1979,

- 40% of students thought there should be some changes in course content
- 87% of students thought the course should be compulsory.

More than 70% of students considered that the course achieved its general objective of helping students acquire the skills needed to cope with the study of law at ANU; and the 2 specific objectives of training students in methods of legal analysis and to carry out legal research. In relation to the attainment of the third objective (training in writing skills) they were not so certain, partly perhaps as they had just received back their first assignments.

Students did not appear to be at all confused about the course. They did, however, feel under pressure because of the amount of work which needed to be completed in a short time. 32% of students wished to have the sections of the course on legal research (including library work), writing and exam techniques expanded.

9.3 Legal Writing and Research Innovations 1981

This evaluated only innovations introduced in 1981. The most important of these were - an intensive first week of 6 hours instead of 2, increased emphasis on legal research, court visits and a study skills workshop.

Most of the innovations were rated by the majority of students as "very useful" or "of some use" (on a scale from "indispensable", "very useful",

"of some use" "of limited use" to "of no use at all").

The Report on the evaluation noted "the number of students who wrote enthusiastic comments about the course, or who made a point of thanking the teaching staff for their time, interest and dedication. Critical comments were well thought out and generally offered in the form of constructive suggestions for change or improvement."

The Report concluded: "In general, the course achieves its objectives very satisfactorily meeting the very real needs of beginning students in law."

9.4 Conclusion

Students seem to quite like Legal Writing and Research. Even the boring material, such as library searching, they admit to be relevant and useful.

On the whole, they seem more content and less tense than they were before the course began. They also seem less confused. Staff involved in teaching the subject are much happier. They feel that they are helping students to understand law and the way it works in the community rather than simply being part of an exam coaching team.

The Communication and Study Skills Unit is also much happier as the staff there now rarely see a law student.

The course has gained acceptance by most Faculty members, particularly the other teachers of first year subjects.

Creativity as well?

One deficiency identified in 1981 is the reluctance of students either verbally or in writing to concede that there is more than one argument. With some this is due to diffidence, with others, possibly a result of faith that The Answer does exist (if only their teachers would reveal it) - that there is certainty in the law. It is proposed next year therefore, in each class to introduce 10 minute "mini-moots" to train students to argue.

Teaching skills in argument is part of the process of teaching students to be creative. One law teacher put the problem this way,

> In the process of development of legal thinking ... we must start with the learning of the existing schemata, the rules. We should then take the empty stare, and by this means allow for the unconscious to bring up alternative schemata. Over and above this selection amongst the existing possibilities (and there is much that can be accomplished creatively within the existing rules; ...) - over and above the development of a flexibility of approach, it is possible to think creatively in the future.[25]

Perhaps the goal of trying to teach law students to be creative is unrealistic. The law is not generally regarded as a creative profession,

> It's probably a mistake to have a creative job if you want also to do your own creative work. You probably ought to take on some unrelated job - the law, say, or digging ditches.[26]

It is possible, to be creative in all spheres of life. Few, however, will choose that path for,

> To create, or organise, material energy, or truth, or beauty, brings with it an inner torment which prevents those who face its hazards from sinking into the quiet and closed-in life wherein grows the vice of self-regard and attachment ...[27]

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25. A.J. St.J. Hannigan, Reader, Department of Legal Studies, Faculty of Economics and Commerce, University of Melbourne. 1975. "Creativity in Law Teaching". Paper presented at the 50th Anniversary of the Faculty, (?unpublished).

26. From an interview with Christopher Koch, an Australian Novelist, 2 December 1978. The Age.

27. Teilhard de Chardin. 1964. Le Milieu Divin London, Fontana Books, p.71.

Appendix

LEGAL WRITING AND RESEARCH 1981

Objectives

The course has 3 specific objectives,

1. To introduce students to basic methods of legal analysis. Students will be taught skills in assessing facts and applying relevant case law and statutory law to a particular set of facts. They will also be taught to consider the various courses of action which may be available to a client, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

2. To train students to carry out legal research competently. Students will be taught how to use legal resource material both in the library and in the community.

3. To train students in the writing and speaking skills required of a lawyer. Particular emphasis will be given to training in the writing skills needed within the Faculty. Instruction in assignment technique and examination technique will therefore be included.

Teaching Method

As the course is intended to be a very practical one, a 2-hour class is held every week for the first term beginning in the second week. Each class has a maximum of 15 students.

During the first week of term, 6 hours of tuition are given. No lectures are given in the other first year subjects of Contracts and Legal System and Torts. Instead students are welcomed into the Faculty and to the study of the law. This is done by means of visiting speakers, library work and some class work to prepare students to handle the legal material presented in lectures.

During the normal 2-hour classes, beginning in week two, various methods of teaching are used, such as dividing the class into several working groups to complete a problem under supervision.

The course is linked closely with Legal System and Torts. Wherever possible, examples and problems are based on material already covered in that course.

Two optional Saturday workshops on study and exam techniques are held. The help of the Communication and Study Skills Unit, other first year teachers and students from second year upwards is sought in running the sessions.

In second and third terms, formal classes in Legal Writing and Research cease and a one hour tutorial in Legal System and Torts is held each week.

Texts and Materials

Students are issued with 3 study guides: Study Guide 1: The ABC of Legal Writing and Research; Study Guide 2: Cases, Case Analysis and Precedent; and Study Guide 3: Legislation and Statutory Interpretation. These books are both for reference and for use in class, as they contain examples of legal writing and legal documents.

A book of exercises to be completed principally in class will also be issued.

The prescribed texts are: Glanville Williams Learning the Law (10th edn), London, Stevens & Sons, 1978 (with Australian Supplement); S.E.Marantelli The Australian Legal Dictionary, Melbourne, Hargreen Publishing Co.,

1980. Strongly recommended is E. Campbell, E.J. Glasson & A.Lahore Legal Research Materials and Methods (2nd edn) Sydney, Law Book Co., 1979 and D.C. Pearce Statutory Interpretation in Australia Melbourne, Butterworths, 1974.

Assessment

Students must attain a required standard in the course (CRS), but the marks obtained do not form part of a student's total mark for the assessment of honours.

Assessment is by written assignments. Each assignment is redeemable, that is, students may rewrite the assignment. Students will be given a grade, from Fail to High Distinction on the original and re-written assignment in order to indicate to them the standard of their work. The law upon which assignments are based will be torts, contract law or an area of legislation.

The book of exercises must also be completed and must be handed in so that teachers can assess whether a genuine attempt has been made to complete the exercises.

It is possible for a student to have completed all the work required by the end of first term. If students have difficulty with the material, they may be required to re-submit work until a satisfactory standard has been attained. This may be done until the end of second term. All assessment is completed by the end of second term.

PART II

MODES OF COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

MICHAEL CLYNE, MONASH UNIVERSITY

It is a truism that the university is part of an international community of scholarship and that Australia is a multicultural, multilingual society. From this it follows that members of Australian universities are, and will be, interacting with people who, while using English, follow a diversity of communication rules - rules determined by the first language and culture. Over the past decades, people throughout the world - and certainly in Australia - have become aware of ethno-centric attitudes and tried to combat them. But in many areas of communication, in many institutions, including universities, there is a refusal to accept, or even recognize the existence of alternatives to "our own way of doing things".

The following remarks focus on a number of general and specific rules that are, at least to some extent, culture-specific and that have alternatives, when considered on a global basis. I acknowledge that there are difficulties in "quantifying" differences in communication rules. I would also like to stress that I am not arguing against clarity, logic or cohesion, but merely wish to point out that there may be different criteria for assessing these. The general rules I shall discuss relate to degree of linearity, verbality and formalism and to the rhythm of discourse.

(i) Some cultures are more <u>linear</u> in orientation than others. Such rules for meetings in Britain and Australia as only one motion being before the chair at a time or the amendment becoming the motion represent a linearity in argument discourse. So do rules

for point-by-point development in essays. From essay-writing manuals produced in English-speaking countries we have gleaned the following rules (see Clyne 1980):

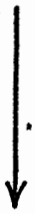
(i) Develop key ideas ensuring a lead-on from the end of one paragraph to the beginning of the next;

(ii) "Relevance" is the prime virtue in essays, i.e. anything outside the topic is (as good as) wrong.

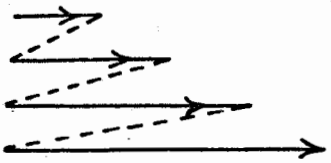
(iii) The essay should end with a "logical" conclusion satisfying "the reader that he/she has learnt something".

Such rules are not universal. A study of similar essay manuals from German-speaking countries shows that they too stress the need to proceed from the known to the unknown, and for a logical progression. But the main emphasis in German essays is on demonstrating knowledge. Side-tracking and repetition are permissible as long as they serve this end.

In his pioneering study of the essays of foreign students in the United States, Kaplan (1972) found four kinds of discourse structures that contrasted with English linearity:



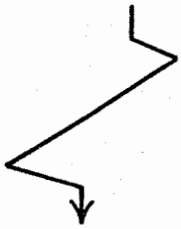
1. Parallel constructions, with the first idea completed in the second part.



2. Circularity, with the topic looked at from different tangents.

3. Freedom to digress and to introduce "extraneous" material.

4. Similar to (3), but with different lengths, and parenthetical amplifications of subordinate elements.

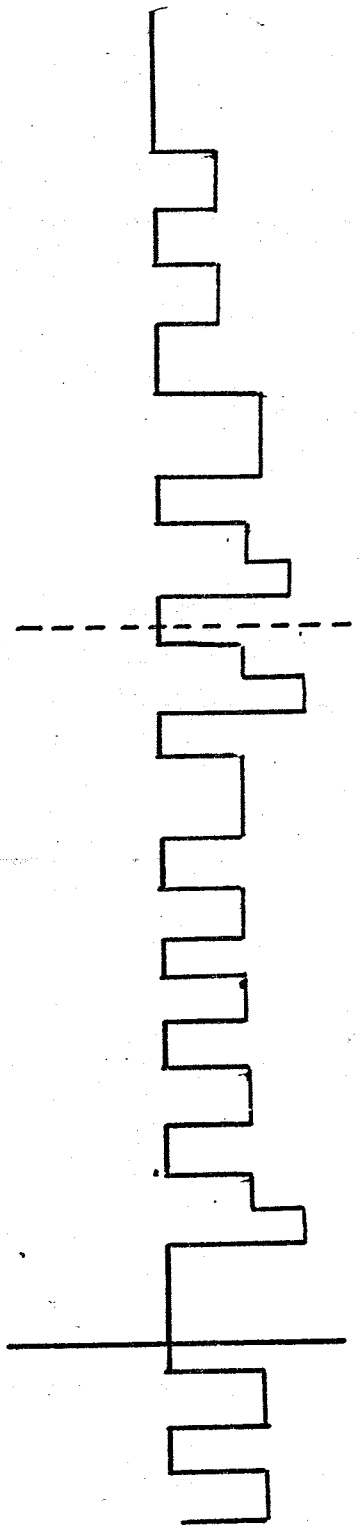


Kaplan concentrates on writing styles (rather than on the relation between form and content in discourse) and restricts his study to the paragraph (i.e. not the text) level. He equates his discourse types with genetic types of languages:

1. With Semitic.
2. With Oriental.
3. With Romance.
4. With Russian.

From our research, German (not a Romance language) appears to be an example of 3 or 4 (the boundaries between the two types being rather vague).

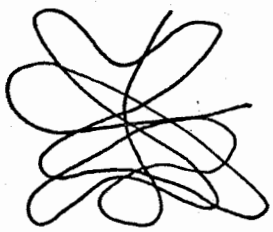
An example of such discourse is Fritz Schütze's Sprache soziologisch gesehen (1975), which has over 1000 pages and exhibits a structure something like this: (see next page)



CONCLUSION

(ONLY THE MAJOR DIGRESSIONS ARE SHOWN)

There are not only digressions but also digressions from digressions. Even within the conclusion, there are digressions. Every time the author returns to the main line of argument, he has to repeat it up to the point before the last digression, resulting in much repetition. This structure may best be represented by spaghetti.



It is also reminiscent of the formula applied until recently for the addressing of envelopes in the German Federal Republic:

(Name) Herrn Wolfgang Schmidt
(Postcode and place-name) 53 Bonn
(Street and number) Struwelpeterstraße 15/14

The place-name became so obscured that it had to be underlined to assist the mail sorter.

An analysis of 4 years of HSC examiners' reports, teachers' remarks on class work in secondary schools, and of first examiners' comments on 400 HSC History scripts (Clyne 1980) demonstrates the importance placed on two main discourse features, designated as "Relevance" (i.e. the absence of extraneous material), and "Coherence" (i.e. point-by-point development).
The comments on failed and borderline work, and on essays receiving fairly low marks despite a good knowledge of the topic suggested that only "Anglo-Saxon linearity" was acceptable: Irrelevant; repetitive; rambling, jumbled, disoriented. This contrasts with Schütze's discourse pattern, which can best be represented as cooked spaghetti.

(ii) In Anglo-Saxon discourse, form is at least as important as content. This is reflected in the points of order in meetings of all kind (including student and faculty meetings), which are as incomprehensible to many people from other cultural backgrounds as a game of cricket. It is also characteristic of academic treatises, and essays in non-language subjects.

Most essay manuals from English-speaking countries recommend an introduction, which defines the terms of the topic and the scope of the essay. Usually it should be assumed that the reader/examiner is ignorant of the material presented.[1] In German-speaking countries, essays assume a sharing of thematic knowledge, and especially presuppose that knowledge is all important. This is confirmed in the marking procedures of teachers in West Germany (Clyne 1980). Topics in most continental countries are much broader than in Australia, and are not usually based on a quotation. Many overseas and migrant students experience interference from the education system in which they were brought up. They don't understand the differences between the systems and are not trained in these; in fact, many do not understand the discourse rules of their own culture. The kind of analysis of essay-type examination questions practised in Australia is unknown in non-English-speaking countries and presents mature-age migrant students with particular difficulties.

(iii) The rhythm (tempo) of discourse is more or less flexible, or structured differently, in different cultures. Many Turks, being accustomed to long monologues with no interruptions and plenty of narrative, are unable to function successfully in a society with short exchanges. They find it hard to interject, to take advantage of non-verbal cues to "take their turn". Asian students, who "suffer from" the same predicament, are sometimes regarded as unresponsive in class. Restrictions on discourse tempo (e.g. hurrying up business by moving that "the motion now be put" and referring business to a (sub-) committee) are characteristics of meeting procedures in English-speaking countries which are unusual in most continental countries.

A graduate student of ours from Belgium once showed me a letter

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[1] Johnston (1980) is an example of an English-language essay-writing manual free of cultural bias.

she was sending to the scholarships office asking for an extension. She had written about two pages about herself before she came to the actual point of the letter because she considered it bad manners to make a request too early in a letter.

(iv) Some societies are more verbal, others more literate. While students from many European countries and the U.S. are required to project themselves verbally, in Australia some of the most capable students, who write very well, are not able or prepared to express their thoughts verbally. It may be due to (pseudo)-egalitarian principles in our state schools and/or to the emphasis placed on writing in class and examinations. The same tendency has been observed in South-East and East Asian students, but there it can be attributed to other, cross-cultural factors. A significant question to ask is - How important should spoken discourse be in assessment in Australian universities? Do we really want brilliant non-verbal doctors and scientists?

Let us now consider how "Anglo-Saxon" and German scholars react to non-linear structures. Apart from the only English-language review of Schütze that I know of (Language 54; 1978; 227-8), none of the critiques of the book comment on its discourse structure. The English translation of Norbert Dittmar's book, Soziolinguistik,a landmark in the development of sociolinguistics in West Germany, was described by another reviewer in Language (55; 1979; 454-6) as "chaotic" and criticized for its "lack of focus and cohesiveness", "haphazardness of presentation" and "desultory organization". None of the reviews known to me that were written by scholars from Central European universities make any criticism of this kind.

There appear to be some disciplines in which German scientists have adopted a basically linear discourse structure and others in which German discourse patterns have influenced the structure of English-language treatises.

In brief, it can be concluded that there appears to be a marked preference, among English-speaking scholars, teachers and examiners, a preference for "Anglo-Saxon" discourse structures. This would cast some doubt on the value of translating academic publications without a reorganization of the text. It would be interesting to test whether linear discourse patterns are, in fact, easier to follow and whether the stress on "relevance" might also be a disadvantage - e.g. in disciplines requiring a good deal of cross-reference. In any case, there is a need to recognize the existence of alternative patterns.

Previous research (Clyne 1979) has investigated the realization of speech acts among Anglo-Australians and migrants from Italy, Greece, and German-speaking countries and isolated certain difficulties - e.g. in the areas of politeness, irony/understatement, and the selection of an appropriate channel of discourse. This type of research has been advanced through the papers of Brown Levinson & Goody in Goody (1978). They deal with such matters as making requests and the relation between politeness and face-threatening actions, power, and social distance. In the following section, I shall be dealing with submissions, applications, appeals and complaints written by non-native speakers in a university context.

Communication breakdown and communication conflict will often occur because the decoder does not correctly establish whether an utterance is intended to be

(a) literal or metaphorical,
(b) ironical or non-ironical, or
(c) a transactional or a personal routine.

Irony, by definition (see Muecke 1968, Clyne 1974) entails an utterance that can be either ironical or non-ironical. Verbal irony is characterized by linguistic markers, which represent an incongruence or exageration.

In some cultures (e.g. "Anglo-Saxon", Scandinavian), irony is largely expressed through understatement; in others (e.g. Central and Southern

European) it is mainly verbalized through overstatement. The two letters to the dean (see Appendix) were written by a professor who originally migrated from Central Europe. They contain numerous instances of overstatement which, if misinterpreted, could be considered quite offensive (e.g. absolutely impossible, in honour, take an affidavit signed by Justice of the Peace, I insist, a number of times over the past fifteen years, whatever anyone in the Faculty Administration may think of him, Music/Home Economics, more important things to do under the terms of our contract, rather noxious way of doing an underhand 4th year). A particular problem arises where an "Anglo-Saxon" decoder becomes so attuned to a particular person's over-statements that (s)he will interpret all that person's utterances as such, even if he/she is trying to behave in a "serene, Anglo-Saxon" way. Some Central Europeans have difficulty in producing markers of ironical understatement. I recall a conference on language teaching policy at which another Central European professor advocated the introduction of Korean language studies by saying that Korean was a potential candidate for a college teaching subject although the two Korean states between them are only the second largest secondary goods exporter in Asia and have only a population of about 52,000,000. He was contradicted by a former British diplomat, who, missing the intended irony, said that Korea was quite a large and important country which had great promise as a trading partner for Australia.

A number of different ways of realizing speech acts of promise are demonstrated in letter 3 (written by an Arab) and letters 4 and 5 (written by a Pakistani, seeking entry into a graduate English program at an Australian university) (see Appendix) - Flattery, self-eulogy, bribery and self-pity. These routines are not uncommon among people from the Indian sub-continent and the Middle East (cf.Danet 1970).

(i) Flattery, e.g. "You have aroused my curiosity and I will not try to seek admission elsewhere." "I could not help admiring the commendable attitude of Australian teachers towards their students." " The rest of the world is beginning to discover Australia through her writers."

(ii) Self-eulogy, e.g. "You will find me a man of very sweet manners on every step."

(iii) Bribery, e.g. "I request your good self to let me know what sort of gift I should bring you from Pakistan."

(iv) Self-pity, e.g. "I am so poor...."

The Pakistani letter is marked not only by a "flowery" register with ritual routines but also by overstating, e.g. "obediently", "fierce burning love", "your kind self", "dear sir" (three times), "I shall be highly pleased if you give me a chance to serve", "I pray to God for your prosperity, sound health and long life and to enable me to serve you on each step." This kind of deference stands in contrast with the kinds of demands he imposes on the decoder; e.g. "Please search out a charitable institution ... or any other rich man or woman, ...provided you promise to allow me admission to the Ph.D. after M.A."

Both the Arab and Pakistani letter-writers employ long narratives, quotes, and proverbial expressions (e.g. "Necessity knows no law", "You do not know when, how, help or needed co-operation comes from a man"). Here, and in actual requests, there is an inability to distinguish between interactive and functional discourse. In letter 5, a common "bureaucratic formula" is misinterpreted as a "promise". The transactional and personal domains have been intertwined through the extended "father-son" relationship imposed on the recipient by the written.
(I have not as yet been able to throw any light on this relationship in Pusta culture.)

In many cultures verbal humour and linguistic activity is observed in ordinary situations. People from those cultures where this is not so will thus often experience communication breakdown in lectures, seminars and meetings. Linguistic indices of irony, too, vary according to first language and culture.

In conclusion, we must stress the need for two-way sensitization to the various discourse rules employed in our society and internationally and their cultural determinants. This applies to both general and specific discourse rules, for essays and articles, meetings, and correspondence, at the levels of production (encoding) and consumption (decoding).

Appendix

Letters to the Dean

1. It is absolutely impossible for us to accept your decision re Ms E. I should like to refer you to my note of 1st March as well as to remarks which must be on Ms E's card as well as to the fact that Prof. X, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, has in honour undertaken that the unit 323 which could not be offered in 1975 due to severe staffing cuts in the department will be available at a later stage. Together with Assoc. Professor Y, I am perfectly willing to take an affidavit signed by Justice of the Peace to this effect in case the Faculty has forgotten about this arrangement.

   I would, moreover, like to state that I insist that the letter of 6th January to the Dean referring to the adverse effects of Regulation 13 be discussed by the appropriate committees.

2. I cannot accept your decision referring to Mr N. Mr N had 8 points credit in A, 4 points in B and 8 of C, as recorded by the computer. Moreover, he did D, in which he gained a credit. Mr N has a pass mark only in Unit E. We have explained to the Faculty a number of times over the past fifteen years that the Department has two streams in its Honours and Graduate courses. An honours student entering fourth year who has credits in all the (ABCD) parts of his course, is obviously eligible for honours whatever anyone in the Faculty Administration may think of him. The fact that he only achieved a Pass grading in his 3rd Year E Unit is irrelevant. I hope that Faculty would not try to stop people from doing 4th Year Music on the basis of not having achieved credit level in 3rd Year Home Economics.

   I am very disappointed about the decision taken by your committee in this matter. Memos on Mr N have been sent to the faculty on ... (various dates). I would like to emphasize that we all have more important things to do under the terms of our contract than conducting a completely senseless correspondence on matters of this kind.

I would also like to emphasize that the suggestion to permit Mr N to do an M.A. Prelim. course is unacceptable to us. This department has always tried to avoid this rather noxious way of doing an underhand 4th year.

3. Reply to a letter to unsuccessful job applicant

Thank you very much for your kind letter dtd. 18.2.80. I have been greatly shocked knowing the fate of my application in your department but I am glad that you have taken interests about me. I am really thankful to you for your kind advice of applying for any suitable post to other Universities in Australia, in the Depts. of Linguistics and where English is taught as a foreign language. May I request you, to send me some such addresses where I can apply, at your conveniences. I know, this is too much to request a person like you for such matters. But really sometimes, necessity knows no law!

So I would really be glad and obliged if you can furnish me some addresses of Universities in Australia where there are Linguistics or English as a foreign-language departments exist.

I believe, in an old Doctrine of our country, 'You do not know, when, how, help or needed cooperations comes from a man!' With due respects and humble submissions, I beg your kind helps towards a very genuine need of myself.

I wish to hear from you soon,
Thanking you,

4. Re application to take higher degree

Thank you for your letter dated ... I had written to you, for the first time, with a preconceived idea of what your reaction should be, and when I found your kind letter up to my entire satisfaction, I could not help admiring the commendable attitude of Australian teachers towards their students.

Dear Sir,

You have aroused my curiosity so much that I will not try to seek admission elsewhere. I have a great desire to study works of Patrick White, David Malouf, Less Murray and Vincent Buckley because it is a bare fact that the rest of the world is beginning to discover Australia through her writers.

One thing, which is a great huddle in my way is the heavy expenses of my study abroad, and I am sure that my Ministry of Education will not be in position to afford it due to the debtridden economy of Pakistan and as a result, I will find myself deprived of higher education.

I am so poor that my own resources can't meet the heavy expenses of my study. My pay is hardly Rupees one thousand which is even insufficient for my own requirements.

In the light of the said facts, I request your kind self, as a son, to help me financially to continue my studies. I assure you that you will find me a man of very sweet manners on every step and if I failed to do so, you will have every right to expell me from Australia at any time. I can produce any clearance to your kind self concerning my character and performances in Pakistan. I am sure that you will not find me less in any respect than your own son.

Dear sir, if however, you are unable to support me your self under any circumstances, then, please search out a charitable institution for me or any other rich man or woman who can help me on humanitarian basis.

If I get such source of financial assistance, then I am ready to resign my post and continue higher education. I am also prepared to take admission in M.A. provided that you promise to allow me admission to the Ph.D. after M.A.

In the end, I pray to God for prosperity, sound health and long life. I shall be highly thankful to you for a favour of a detailed reply at an earliest convenient date, so that I may do the needful.

Yours lovingly son,

5.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of 12 November, 1980, which, according to you is a disappointing; but for me, is a message of contentment; for I am sure that English men always keep their promises and the single sentence "I am sure you will be given strong support" in your letter is for me everythink.

First of all, I beg pardon for engaging such a great man like you in my personal affairs. I have once called you with a very sweet name of a father and therefore expect fatherly behaviour from you.

My this letter is a private one, concerning only your kind self and need not be kept on the record.

Being a son, I request your good self to let me know that what sort of gift I should bring you from Pakistan. I shall be highly pleased if you give me a chance to serve.

In the end I pray to God for your prosperity, sound health and long life and to enable me to serve you on each step.

With regards.

Your loving son,

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LANGUAGE IS NOT ENOUGH . . .

- - RESPONSES TO THE ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES OF OVERSEAS STUDENTS

BRIGID BALLARD, A.N.U.

As a study skills adviser I am always uneasy about the quality of the assistance I give to overseas students. Whenever an anxious Asian student comes into my office saying "I want to improve my English because I am failing my courses" or an academic phones me to say "I'm sending an overseas student across to you people as he seems to have a problem in his work, it's probably his English", my heart sinks. Why? Because I know that the problem is never simply one of poor command of English, yet so often this is the only level at which I actually offer help: it is so much easier to correct the grammar of an assignment than to work at the more basic causes of the student's unsatisfactory academic performance. Talking with colleagues about their responses to overseas students, I realize I am not alone in my dissatisfaction with this area of our work.

The problem, for me, is how to break the stranglehold of "improving the student's English". I need to look at alternatives to the never-ending tinkering I can do with verb tenses and the use of the definite article. As a starting point for reflection on this weak point in my work, I want to focus on three factors: the motivations which overseas students bring to their studies; the ways in which both students and staff diagnose the problems of overseas students; and the ways in which we, the study skills advisers, typically respond to requests for assistance from non-Western students.

1. Student attitudes to study

As a starting point we must recognize that overseas students come to Australian universities to gain a qualification, not to improve their fluency in English. Moreover, there is great pressure from home upon these students to succeed: to pass their courses with high grades and in the minimum of time. In this process English is a tool, not an end in itself. It is an essential tool but it has much less value to the student than the final degree certificate. These students, if they begin to do poorly in their studies, will most readily blame the poor tool, attributing all their failure to weaknesses in English. Yet they are quick to reject suggestions that they might undertake a course in intensive English if this takes time away from their degree programme - and their judgement here is largely justified, since there are few intensive courses which genuinely meet their specialised academic language needs. So they come to the study skills adviser for instant magic, for more and better English. (ADAB officials have a comparable view of language competence and refer to students whose language courses have been curtailed as "students who have not had the English to which they are entitled".)

This ambivalence towards additional formal training in English suggests that we must look to other areas of academic skills where help may more usefully be given. Language is never the only key to success. Here I have found the typology of overseas students developed by James useful in clarifying those areas of academic experience where a change of attitude might be feasible and those where no shift is likely to occur. (See table next page.)

Although James' vertical "profiles" of student types seem to me too neat to be very convincing, I do find his horizontal classification of varying reactions to academic life provides me with a useful model on which to base my approach to the problems of individual students. The first three categories -- institutional behaviour, English language competence, and view of degree course -- are not areas in which I would readily try to change a student's attitude; these are

areas in which the student's personal and cultural identity are involved. I find the last two categories helpful because the attitudes a student has towards staff and towards other students can affect his approach to his studies. I often do try to suggest ways in which the student might alter these relationships, regarding this as one aspect of assisting him to improve his study habits.

TYPES OF CULTURAL INTERACTION IN AN ACADEMIC SETTING[1]

Crucial Areas of academic interaction	Overseas Students' Attitudes/Expectations		
	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3
British University Institutional and academic behaviour	Aims to make minimal changes	Aims to be bi-cultural	Aims to identify totally with British University
Working in a Foreign Language	Aims to achieve minimal communicative competence in special subject matter only	Aims to achieve general communicative competence	Aims to approximate to native-speaker in all aspects of language
Special Subject	Viewed mainly as a means of gaining a qualification	Viewed mainly as a means of professional improvement	Viewed mainly as a source of personal/ intellectual satisfaction
Learning Process	Interpreted primarily as knowledge processing ie comprehending, sorting, storing and relating facts	Interpreted primarily as developing techniques to solve problems	Interpreted primarily as criticising, exploring creating and discovering
Fellow Students	Seen mainly as helpers	Seen mainly as independent colleagues	Seen mainly as competitors
Tutor	Thought of mainly as director	Thought of mainly as an adviser	Thought of mainly as an assistant

1. K. James in : British Council, ELT: 109, p.13

However, the area which is of central importance to me is the student's attitude towards the learning process because it is here that the student's needs and my own skills most usefully intersect. Students from other cultures bring their own social attitudes and culturally-determined cognitive styles to their academic studies in Australia. Australian universities are, similarly, bound within the Western cultural traditions of approaches to knowledge and learning. Academic staff can be as culturally blinkered as any overseas undergraduate, and the scope for misunderstanding is great. I find that the skill I need here is two-fold: to make explicit for the student the cultural values that are deeply implicit in each academic system, and to interpret for both the student and the academic staff member across this cultural divide.

2. Diagnosis of problems

At the end of 1980 I sent out a simple questionnaire to all overseas students of non-Western origin at ANU in an attempt to find out their own views on the difficulties they face in their studies. They were asked to reply, anonymously, to the question:

> Please explain, in as much detail as you like, the problems you have had in adapting to study at ANU.

The responses ranged from a polite "No trouble whatsoever, thank you" to a three-page saga of one student's progress over her three year course. In general the answers yielded few surprises and fell largely within the following categories:

1. adjustment to the Australian environment: weather, food, entertainment, etc.
2. unfamiliarity with the Australian university system: degree structure, role of academic and administrative staff, library and laboratory systems, etc.
3. student/student and student/staff relations (especially relationships with supervisors and professors).
4. "language" in general: comprehension, social inter-actions, need for more time to complete assignments, etc.
5. Australian accent and idiom: initially a great problem not

only for students whose earlier education had been in another language but also for students already fluent in British English who found the need to adjust totally unexpected.

6. tutorial/seminar presentation and participation: particularly problems in following quick conversational argument and the difficulty of asking questions in an appropriate style.
7. organizing and presenting written assignments/theses: need for many rough drafts, problem of time constraints in exam essays, etc.

At first glance it would seem that the first three categories are problems related to cultural differences and the remaining four are language-based. Yet such a division is misleading. It is based on superficial differences. Cultural differentiation underlies all the categories, for culture and language are inter-dependent. We are only attempting a partial solution if we work on language problems in isolation from the culture from which the student comes and in isolation from the Australian culture in which he must now work. Certainly "language" was the most regularly listed source of problems; it was also the one area in which some students indignantly rejected criticism ("One lecturer keeps referring to my 'inferior' English all the time. I don't think it is inferior at all. What do you think?") In fact many students themselves emphasized the link between language and culture, as, for example, the Malaysian student who commented:

> Honestly, I do make a few Australian friends - unfortunately the relationships are superficial in the sense that when we meet we just say "Good-day, how's it going, mate?" and all those jargon. There is a kind of barrier - probably culture - that inhibits me from knowing local students better.

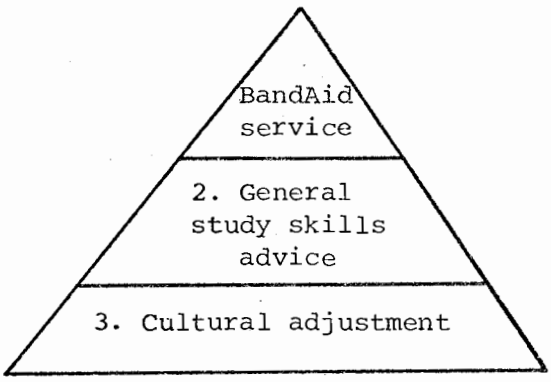
Just as most students express their problems initially in terms of language competence, so also do academic staff tend to assume that if an overseas student is in difficulty, it must be because of his poor English. On the basis of this diagnosis, the academic then refers the student to the study skills adviser for treatment. Less frequently an academic may decide that there has been some

deficiency in the student's educational background - "no grasp of scientific methods", "can't think straight" - but the student still turns up at the door of the study skills adviser as there is nowhere else to go. At ANU, which I assume is reasonably representative of Australian universities, staff attitudes to overseas students range from the sentimentally sympathetic ("I always ignore his poor English and lack of logic and I give him credit for his ideas and the hours of work he seems to have put in - but maybe he could do with a spot of help from you too?") through the more usual dismissive ("He's an overseas student but he seems a bright enough lad - although he'll need a lot of help with his English") to the knee-jerk negative (- on the phone - "I've got a couple of these Asian types sitting here in my office and they seem to have trouble in my course, so can I send them straight over?"). In other words, if overseas students do not perform like Australian students, they are tagged as "special" problems and sent elsewhere. Usually to the study skills advisers. Usually to "get some help with their English".

3. What can the Study Skills adviser do?

By whatever route they have come, whether voluntarily or on referral, and for whatever reasons they are seeking help, these students end up at our door in genuine need of assistance. Where, then, do we start?

From my experience, I'm likely to respond at one of the following levels:



BandAid service: This can be my response to an emergency, in which I patch up the surface features of an overdue assignment by judicious editing; unfortunately it can also be a conditioned reaction to the stereotyped definition of the student's problem as being "poor English". It can, too, be an avoidance of the slow time-consuming and patience-consuming process of clarifying the student's ideas and sharpening the organization of his argument. On my bad days, when a student appears with a draft essay and pleads, in a mixture of frustration and despair, "I don't have the words to say what I want to say", I fall into the trap of attempting to supply the words. As I feverishly correct points of grammar and style and provide the linguistic precision which has eluded the student, I may at best draw his attention to some general guidelines for improvement - usually admonitions about verb tenses, pronoun agreement, singular/plural concord, and the use of the definite and indefinite article. Prepositions I alter silently because I never know how to explain them . . . The student is torn between shame at his errors and relief at the first aid - and returns regularly for similar treatment because my cosmetic surgery has done little to improve his capacity to handle written academic English.

I can supply BandAid services for most problems, when I'm not trying. If a student seeks help in improving his aural comprehension so that he can "make better notes in lectures", I can suggest that he gets permission to tape the lectures and then replays them, ad nauseam, in his own time. I do not probe the surface and discuss whether it is important to take lengthy notes in the particular lecture course, or whether time would be better spent reading more widely . . . I can dispense tips, based on ponderous research in educational psychology, about strategies for memorizing facts, formulae and figures; but I may not raise the question of whether these facts are worth memorizing . . . I can refer eager students to books on how to punctuate, how to write a thesis, how to master English grammar, how to succeed at university...

Such forms of assistance are comparatively easy to provide and, superficially, they may seem to be an accurate response to the problems which are presented to us. But it is precisely because these responses are superficial that we should be profoundly uneasy as we churn them out to our politely grateful overseas students.

General study skills advice: At this level of assistance I am treating the overseas student, essentially, as an Australian student. I work on our stock-in-trade skills, suggesting improved strategies for skim reading, note-taking, essay planning, referencing, etc. and largely dismissing any additional problems of linguistic competence in English. I deliberately cover this work at a slower pace, making my explanations clearer and my examples more explicit. I am also more careful to follow the student's progress over the course of the next few assignments than I would be with most Australian students. But in general I am proceeding as though the overseas student starts with the same assumptions about and attitudes towards his work as his Australian counterpart.

I am more confident of my work at this level than at the BandAid level, if only because I know it is feasible to show students how to improve various strategies for study. And certainly the overseas students who receive this treatment return less frequently for more than do the BandAid victims - and I hope this is because it is effective, and not irrelevant. Yet, whenever I have the stamina to be honest in assessing my work, I know that I am still avoiding the basic sources of the problem. I know it is just not true that the overseas student and the Australian student start from the same educational experience and the same premises about learning even though they are involved in the same academic process leading to the same final degree.

Cultural adjustment: Here I have come to the base of the triangle of study skills approaches: the root of the real problem which overseas students encounter lies in the necessity for adaptation

to a new academic culture and cognitive approach to knowledge. The other levels of assistance are superstructure; they are of little value if they have no firm foundation. This is not to suggest that the student should abandon his own culture and adopt Australian/Western culture uncritically. Rather he must become consciously aware of the differences between the two cultures which are significant for his current purposes - getting an Australian degree - and then adapt at least temporarily to the most appropriate style of learning.

There are two aspects of cultural adjustment which are crucial for overseas students. First, there is the need to make a conscious shift in the patterning of written academic discourse; more simply, the student must learn to develop a theme or an argument or a critical analysis according to the linear pattern preferred in the Australian academic tradition. He must learn to shape paragraphs as intellectual stepping stones which compel a reader to the desired conclusion; he must analyse, not merely describe; he must reach some point of evaluation and judgement, not merely admire.

How can the simple study skills adviser assist this re-orientation? Well, for a start, we have to become aware ourselves of the nature of cultural differences in writing styles. Kaplan (1965; 1972) provides an excellent starting point for analysis of the cultural influence on thought patterns; the British Council publication Study Modes and Academic Development of Overseas Students (1980) contains interesting papers on the application of this approach; and Clyne (1980) suggests an elegant methodology for identifying the cultural imperatives underlying essay-writing. Starting from this basis of understanding, I find my most successful approach has been to work together with the student, analysing a successful essay or thesis written by another student in the same course or programme, or a piece of academic writing in a relevant journal or textbook, looking less at what is said than at how the writing is structured. The student himself can then often provide examples of the contrasting style in which he has been trained. Once the

student can perceive the structure underlying an essay or an argument, he can then begin to adapt his habitual style to fit the new patterning of thought.

The second aspect of cultural adjustment is even more fundamental: there may have to be an epistemological shift, a change in the student's whole approach to learning and knowledge. I can best explain what I mean here by examples from my experience at ANU. I was recently working with an Indonesian postgraduate student on her thesis, which involved literary criticism of an Indonesian author. After we had struggled through the thickets of imprecise grammatical constructions and the problems of paragraph construction, we began to examine closely a critical review of this writer by an Australian academic. After thirty minutes of reading and discussion, she suddenly commented, "I didn't even know the questions to ask about literature, did I?" and at the end of the hour she concluded "What I'm really learning is a new way of thinking." My own criticism of the writer is as good as anything I have read by Indonesian critics, but now I see there is a totally different way of going about it." A Malaysian Chinese demographer, after a confusing struggle with the problems of eliciting hypotheses from statistical tables, came to the point of recognition: "Up till now I thought data were ideas, or at least that data was all that was necessary in a thesis."

I realise that my attempts to explain how we should handle this base level of cultural differences seem too vague to be useful in the everyday routine of the study skills adviser. That is because I am still fumbling in my own efforts to work at this level. But I seem to be on the right track when I am keeping my eye on confusions arising from the need for intellectual - cultural adjustment rather than on weak spots in linguistic competence. Let me give one final, and slightly mystifying, example from my ANU experience. This year I decided to try out this approach with a Japanese undergraduate who was referred to our Unit after failing all four courses in his first year of study at the university. He came to me having changed Faculties and now working in courses with a heavy load of essay

assignments. His control of both written and spoken English was extremely poor (he had taken a long time to scrape through the Department of Education English Proficiency test) and his confidence in his capacity to handle Australian academic study was nil. We met for an hour a week, working always and only on the readings that he was assigned in his courses, the essays that he was in the process of writing, and the tutorial presentations he had to prepare. We worked almost totally at the level of cultural adjustment, analysing the organization of a reading passage, of his own writing, of essays by other students. We focused on the questions that should be asked within each discipline, rather than the answers that emerged. We worked particularly on the linear development of an argument and different strategies for presenting comparative analyses and for summarising the opposing points of view of other writers. In one particular essay topic he was required to "show the significance" of two opposing scholarly views of economic development. His initial response was to dwell in great detail on the personal background of each scholar in order to explain why each held the view he did. He neither summarised the separate views nor commented in any way on their significance. His aim was to justify both scholars to the reader, to pave the way for a harmonious understanding of their positions. It took a major shift of attitude to appreciate that he was required to analyse, compare and then evaluate the scholars' views and finally to organize the essay with an introduction that foreshadowed the final assessment which he himself had made on the basis of his reading. The only slight effort I made to suggest improvements in verb tenses and spelling were ignored - for the very good reason that none of his lecturers commented on his mistakes in these areas. At no stage did I supply "words", much less "ideas"; I never saw, much less edited, his final drafts. At the end of the first semester this student had received a Credit average in all three courses, getting favourable comments on his essays for the organization of his ideas and receiving the highest mark of any student in his group for his oral tutorial presentation. It is interesting that, despite this astonishing improvement in academic grades, his linguistic

competence in terms of grammar and sentence structure is still noticeably weak; his lecturers are rewarding his capacity to think in accordance with Western patterns and to organize and present his ideas in a style appropriate to Western cultural traditions. I suspect, on the other hand, that if he had improved his fluency in English but retained his Japanese styles of academic writing, he would still be failing his ANU courses.

Why I should be so surprised by the effectiveness of this approach, I don't know. It is, after all, only a further development of the way we work with our Australian students. With these students too we move as quickly as possible from the initial "My lecturer sent me because of my poor expression" or "This essay is illiterate" to a consideration of the thinking underlying the piece of writing - the terms of the topic, the appropriate questions to be raised, the evidence and methods of analysis particular to the discipline of the course, the most effective organization and presentation of the whole argument. We are always, in our work, consciously moving the student towards a clearer recognition of the different styles of thinking appropriate to the sub-cultures of the different disciplines he is studying. With overseas students I am only adding a further cultural dimension - the habits of thought and exposition peculiar to Western academic culture. So long as I am clear myself about this intellectual objective, I can help the student to become more consciously aware of the shifts he must make in his approach to his studies. Only after he has begun this cultural transition will we turn to the correction of his present participles and prepositions . . .

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ROLE-PLAY AS A MEANS TO BRIDGE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the use of role-play as a strategy to bridge cultural differences in effective communication at university. Language and cultural factors influence the way we perceive our reality; as our perceptions of reality are different - each one of us is unique - we have difficulty in communicating to others; and if differences are great, communication may not be effective. Role-play is used as a means to understand the communicators' perceptions of each other and their environment as well as to achieve goal behaviours in effective communication.

Role-play is regarded here as a process that not only performs a remedial function which helps the client to avoid misunderstanding and ineffective communication in speech and listening, but hopefully assumes also a preventive and developmental function to the extent that it increases the client's coping and learning skills at university.

Communication as meaning-sharing

Dean Bainlund writes, "communication, then, is 'an effort at meaning', a creative act initiated by man in which he seeks to discriminate and organize cues so as to orient himself in his environment and satisfy his changing needs". (Bainlund, 1968:6) To communicate is, thus, to process stimuli from raw data into meaningful information. To communicate interpersonally is to share meanings with others by providing them with stimuli or cues to which they will assign meaning,

hopefully similar to ours. Whether our communication is effective or not depends on the number and kind of stimuli we perceive and on how we develop meanings.

Metacommunication

This term covers our non-verbals such as smiles, laughs, frowns, voice inflections and facial expressions; they carry messages, telling us how to interpret the words we hear. We learn our non-verbals from social modelling and imitating our environment. Although most non-verbals are universal, people from different cultural backgrounds show different intensities.

Difficulties arising from cultural differences

The Australian society has generally a homogeneous ethnic population, that has minimal social contact with people of divergent, social background and few opportunities to interact with members of other cultures; as a result, the Australian culture remains unaffected in many ways. Placed in an Australian environment, students that are non-English speaking and not Anglo-Saxon find themselves in a vacuum of interaction, for most of them have not had the same kind of cultural influences as the Australians. Areas in which these differences are felt include the following:

1. Family system : different from the Australians' nuclear family system, most of the students from another culture are from extended family systems with a number of authority figures in the family network. Respect to authority figures is highly observed. The mould of their communication to these figures is different from that of their Australian counterparts. Any scrutiny, questioning or argument is considered as disrespect.

2. Academic areas : the Australian education system encourages a questioning and problem-solving approach, whereas students from other cultures have learning styles comparatively more directive and dependent on lecturers' guidance. The distance between lecturers and students is greater than in Australia. They therefore tend to be more self-reliant and less inclined to seek

help from tutors and lecturers when difficulties arise.

3. Language : for students from non-English countries, the language remains a barrier to effective communication, establishing friendships, seeking entertainment or any other forms of interaction. Being in a vacuum further creates secondary problems such as loneliness.

The aims of role-play

1. To explore the client's perception of the situation and of the other person's experience.
2. To recognise the goal behaviours in effective communication so that these can be rehearsed and practised after they have been demonstrated.
3. To learn new meaning to words in context and to realize that others do not necessarily react to them the way the client does.

Role-play situations in effective communication

1. Visiting friends
2. Making conversation with Australian students
3. Talking to lecturer about academic difficulties
4. Dating
5. Seminar situations

Procedure of role-play (talking to lecturer about academic difficulties)

1. Deal with the client's feeling of frustration and shame caused by the need to talk to the lecturer.
2. Identify the purpose of visiting the lecturer and content of communication.
3. Counsellor acts as the client to demonstrate what needs to be communicated to the lecturer. Content covers subject area, degree of difficulty, seeking help in the area, negotiating time and frequency for future contact.
4. Counsellor acts as the lecturer and the client as himself. Counsellor also conveys to the client that the lecturer in fact is

sympathetic towards his difficulty and that he can talk to the lecturer as an equal who welcomes questions and discussion.

5. The procedure may need to be repeated.

Conclusion

The overseas students often find rehearsing the simulated situations helps them to understand how to get across what they mean and how to receive important messages; moreover, as a result of improved communication with their lecturers and friends they find their learning and social skills enhanced as well. Most overseas students consider role-playing as non-threatening and are enthusiastic in participating in it as a learning process.

This "actual experiencing" in a simulated environment gives the student a chance to practise the social and communicative skills that they have already got in a manner appropriate and acceptable to the host culture.

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ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH: A SURVEY OF MALAYSIAN CHINESE AND JAPANESE OVERSEAS STUDENTS AT LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

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Both within the Language Centre and in the University at large, two rapidly growing groups of overseas students at La Trobe are the Malaysian Chinese and the Japanese. How do these students view the task of learning English? Are they optimistic or pessimistic about it? Do students from both groups have similar attitudes in spite of their cultural differences? If not, in what ways do their attitudes differ? In an attempt to answer such questions, a survey was carried out among these students. After a short description of how this was done, the results of the survey will be examined and commented upon.

Once the questionnaire was drawn up (see p.137), 30 Malaysian Chinese and 26 Japanese overseas students were approached and asked if they would fill out the questionnaire as honestly as possible. The students were assured that their individual answers would remain strictly confidential, and no other information was requested of them so that they felt sure their identities were well protected. All of the 56 students approached filled out a questionnaire and answered all 13 questions.

We can consider the results of the survey in a number of ways. First we can look at the overall picture in terms of percentages of positive and negative answers for each group and compare them. Then we can have a look at some of the answers to individual questions which might be of special interest. Lastly, because of the large number of questions which have to do with how the individual sees himself in relation to

members of his own ethnic group with respect to English, it might be interesting to consider the results from this angle.

Because it was felt that only questions 1-11 were relevant to the subject of attitude towards English, the overall percentages shown on page were calculated for the answers to those questions. If students answered questions 1-5 with a "yes", their answers were considered to be positive. If they answered questions 6-11 with a "no", their answers were also considered to be positive.

As we can see from the graph on page 139,75% of all answers to questions 1-11 given by Malaysian Chinese students were positive while only 45% of all answers given by Japanese students were positive. This quite considerable difference in response might be explained by cultural and linguistic factors. The Malaysian Chinese students come from a multi-cultural, multi-lingual nation which previously had colonial ties with Great Britain. English is still widely spoken throughout Malaysia although it is no longer the medium of instruction in Malaysian schools. Japanese students, on the other hand, come from a mono-cultural, mono-lingual nation. Moreover, the Japanese language itself has a highly original way of dealing with foreign words. Foreign words and phrases are written in KATAKANA, which are special "letters" used particularly for this purpose. This very special way of incorporating but yet keeping foreign influences at a distance may function on a psychological as well as on a linguistic level.

There is room for conjecture that the difference in response might be attributed to a difference in level of proficiency in English. In answer to question 3, "Are you able to think in English all day long?" 90% of Malaysian Chinese responded in the affirmative while only 12% of Japanese did so. In response to question 6, "Have you often been disappointed in your command of English since you came to Australia?" only 17% of Malaysian Chinese answered "yes" as opposed to 69% of Japanese. Responses to questions 5 and 11 would further tend to support this view.

However, in the light of the above, responses to questions 1 and 2 become puzzling. While 63% of Malaysian Chinese felt their English had improved since entering Australia, 86% of them were optimistic about improving further. We notice just the reverse reaction in the Japanese. While 77% of them acknowledged having improved their English since entering Australia, only 42% were optimistic about improving further.

How can we interpret this response? Does it mean that those Japanese students who were not optimistic about improving their English felt they had already reached a plateau level? Does it mean they felt they lacked the ability to make further progress? Or is it in fact an expression of a hidden negative attitude towards English, in a sense a refusal to want to make further progress? If the latter were true, one possible way of explaining it would be by the response to question 11. Thirty-four percent of the Japanese said that they had sometimes felt more patriotic because of a lack of ability in English. (All of the Japanese students who answered positively to question 11 had also answered positively to question 6 whereas the only Chinese Malaysian to answer positively to question 11 had answered "Don't know" to question 6.) This type of ethnocentric reaction is not uncommon among migrants but we are surprised to find it expressed so clearly among overseas students.

Another way of explaining the Japanese response to question 2 is by imagining that some of the students had already felt the pangs of "anomie" - feelings of homelessness and chagrin which sometimes beset the language learner when he is no longer sure to which cultural and linguistic group he really belongs (Lambert, Gardner, Barick, & Tinstall, 1963; Fishman, 1966). A reaction to "anomie" can be a reassertion of identity with the mother-tongue group.

Responses to questions 7,8,9, and 10 give us an insight into how individuals are influenced by other members of their ethnic group with respect to English. It is disquieting to note that the fear of rejection by their own group members for establishing strong ties with other Australians affects some students (MC, 17% and J, 12%). The feelings of embarrassment experienced by some Japanese (19%) when

speaking English in front of their compatriots can probably best be explained by the response to questions 10 in which 46% of the Japanese students admitted to constantly comparing their English to that of other Japanese. This constant comparing and hierarchical ranking of oneself and one's abilities is a feature of Japanese culture. At one and the same time, the Japanese wants to know where others stand on this hierarchical scale while keeping his own position secret. This might explain the feeling of embarrassment expressed in answer to question 8.

Before closing, there is one more remark of some importance to be made about the way in which the questionnaire was answered. As we look at the "Don't know" column, we note that far more use was made of it by the Japanese than the Malaysian Chinese. This tendency to remain uncommitted, to remain comfortably in the middle between the poles of "yes" and "no" is also of cultural origin. Surveys carried out among Japanese management personnel have revealed the same propensity to answer in a non-commital way. (Tsuda, 1980).

Even though we cannot regard the results of this survey as providing conclusive evidence, there is reason to believe that Malaysian Chinese and Japanese overseas students differ considerably in their attitudes towards English. Not only are the Japanese less optimistic in their outlook, they seem to have a greater tendency towards ethnocentricity. We might deduce from this that they would tend to be less successful language learners (see Lambert et al., 1963). However, the authors of this paper feel that the findings of this survey are primarily important because they sensitize us to some of the more subtle psychological processes which might be affecting overseas students as they grapple with English.

Questionnaire

1. Do you think your English has improved since you arrived in Australia?

   Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

2. Are you optimistic about improving your English?

   Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

3. Are you able to think in English all day long?

   Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

4. Do you willingly speak to Australians to improve your English?

   Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

5. Do you try to avoid contact with other Japanese so you can practise your English?

   Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

6. Have you often been disappointed in your command of English since you came to Australia?

   Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

7. Do you think that other Japanese students will avoid you if you are very friendly and spend a lot of time with Australians?

   Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

8. Do you feel embarrassed if other Japanese see you speaking English with Australians?

   Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

9. Do you feel inferior to other Japanese who speak English better than you?

   Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

10. Do you constantly compare your English to that of other Japanese?

    Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

11. Have you sometimes felt more patriotic because of a lack of ability in English?

    Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

12. Do you think the way of teaching English in Japan is good?

    Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

13. Do you expect to obtain a job in which you will use English in the future?

    Yes _____ Don't Know _____ No _____

Summary of Answers to Questionnaire

Question No.	YES				DON'T KNOW				NO			
	M		J		M		J		M		J	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1	19	63	20	77	3	10	6	23	8	27	0	0
2	26	86	11	42	2	7	7	27	2	7	8	31
3	27	90	3	12	0	0	4	15	3	10	19	73
4	16	53	15	57.6	3	10	2	7.69	11	37	9	34.6
5	1	3	5	19	0	0	4	15	29	97	17	65
6	5	17	18	69	2	7	6	23	23	76	2	8
7	5	17	3	12	2	7	7	27	23	76	16	61
8	0	0	5	19	0	0	2	8	30	100	19	73
9	1	3	6	23	0	0	5	19	29	97	15	58
10	3	10	12	46	1	3	5	19	26	87	9	35
11	1	3	9	34	2	7	3	12	27	90	14	54
12	12	40	6	23	3	10	2	8	15	50	18	69
13	26	87	14	54	4	13	9	34	0	0	3	12

M = Malaysians (N = 30)

J = Japanese (N = 26)

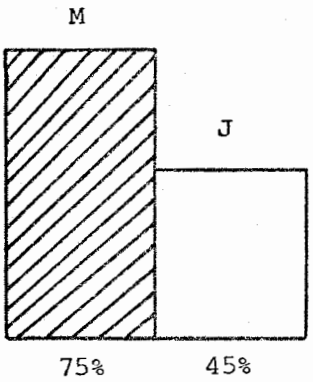
= No. of response

% = Percent of response

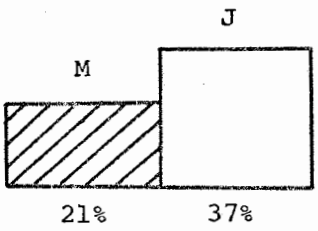
Summary of Results for Questions 1 - 11

M = Malaysians

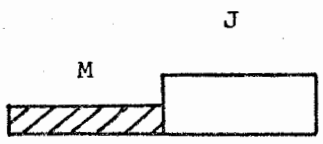
J = Japanese



Average percentage of positive answers



Average percentage of negative answers



Average percentage of "Don't know" answers

UNIVERSITY ESSAYS AS CULTURAL BATTLEGROUNDS: THE PROBLEMS OF MIGRANT STUDENTS

HANNE BOCK, LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

> I said it in Hebrew, I said it in Dutch,
> I said it in German and Greek;
> But I wholly forgot, and it vexes me much
> That English is what you speak! (Lewis Carroll)

Much work has been done on preparing contrastive language material[1] for English teachers of new Australians to aid them in understanding the kind of problems that each language group may experience when first confronted with English. However, interference from a parent language and culture is by no means a transitory phenomenon, quite the reverse: when teaching second generation Australians[2] and migrants of long standing, it will often be found that the apparent assimilation is only a skin-deep veneer.

And how could it be otherwise? Even though most of these students consider themselves Australians and regard English as their first language, it is typical that they do not speak English at home, or that they speak English mixed with, or alternating with, some other language; also, they predominantly mix with peer groups from the same ethnic minority, which gives a common cultural background, although they communicate in English. Further, and probably crucial in this context, is the fact that these students, as a whole, have very little experience

1. See for example, Asian Language Notes: some likely areas of difficulty for Asian learners of English No. 1-7, prepared by: Language Teaching Branch, Commonwealth Department of Education, Canberra 1976-79; and English: a New Language, Serials, published for the Commonwealth Department of Education by The Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

2. For the purpose of this paper classified as migrant students.

of reading in English outside of school textbooks. The result is that certain patterns of language and thought from the students' home language and culture become established parts of the students' English, forming, it appears, a specific dialect.

This is rarely distinguishable in the students' spoken language, partly, no doubt, because we allow a much wider range of structures in spoken than in formal written English, and so the odd unusual structure will pass unnoticed; partly also, because the students to some extent can vary their spoken language to fit circumstances while they do not have the same flexibility in their written expression. So when these students write essays, their thinking, as well as the structural and syntactical patterns their thinking takes, when committed to paper, expose undercurrents of the parent culture and language which reveal these students as "disguised foreigners".

Why the "disguise" should break down in the process of essay writing becomes more evident when it is noticed that the spoken language is exercised in situations of social interaction. Surrounded by their host culture, as happens for instance in a tutorial, these students' Australian side becomes the predominant one, except when they are faced with a new or difficult situation for which they do not have an appropriate Australian response. But sitting alone, struggling to gain an understanding of the material for an essay and to give expression to that understanding, they will draw on every resource they have and are, therefore, without the directing influence of the surrounding host culture, much more likely to oscillate between the conflicting formative influences of their two backgrounds.

For these students, then, university essays become cultural battlegrounds, a kind of border fighting area. The battle is evident at every level of essay structure. This paper will be concerned with outlining such instances, moving from examples of grammar and sentence construction to question analysis and essay structure while pointing to implications for the teaching of these students.

To start with punctuation, one of my students, born in Australia, who reads and writes Greek, as well as speaking it at home, often uses a dot above the line instead of a semicolon or colon. She often also confuses semicolon and question mark. This is a case not of mindless sloppiness, but of language interference.

The same student wrote an essay for Modern Greek History on Kolokotronis. In the course of the essay she kept changing the ending of his name. This had given the teacher the impression of carelessness and faltering ability. However, the problem was, simply, a spill-over from the Greek case system for nouns - including proper nouns. The affinity between subject matter and underlying language had forced the student to decline "Kolokotronis" according to its Greek grammatical pattern. Being consistent in English terms would in this case have meant violating what she felt to be "right". Others must have experienced the same feeling, or why do we still have to write "criterion" - "criteria", for example? Avoiding unfair criticism in cases such as this one does not require a thorough knowledge of Greek, but a simple check of the internal consistency in the essay of the occurrence of each form.

One of the subtler traps in nouns appears to be that there is a difference from language to language in the kind of concept we will accept as agent in a sentence. Thus a Cambodian student with a highly sophisticated use of English - along with some terrific howlers - will insist on constructions like the following: "This case evolved the principle of" where English would prefer, "From this case evolved the principle of".

On a different note, students of Greek and Slavonic origins tend to avoid "of" constructions by overusing the possessive case as in the following example: "the outcome of dominating parties' effort" for "the outcome of the effort of the dominating parties". Similar examples are, "Migrants' overseas qualifications were not recognized in Australia due to lack of employers' knowledge". They also prefer complex noun phrases to an adjective and noun phrase, for example: "In the religion context". Furthermore, students of Greek origin also prefer a complex adjectival premodifier to a noun phrase and relative clause. It is thus common to

find, "This hard-to-solve issue", or similar structures. Finally, instead of writing "For this/these reason(s)", they will generally condense the causal unit in the preceding sentence into a key-phrase and use it for "this/these" : "Kolokotronis feared that, if he attacked the city, the enemy would massacre the people; for the people reason, Kolokotronis decided not to attack". The problem with mistakes of this kind is that they give the unsuspecting teacher the impression of clumsy childishness, which in turn influences in a negative direction his expectations of the student's intellectual capabilities, and thereby often the student's performance.

As is well known, Asian students, but also many second generation Greek and Slavonic students, have problems with the definite and indefinite articles. The problem is again that the omission of articles may create an undeserved impression of a child's perception of the world full of personified, individualized entities as in "Dog said to Rabbit ..." Neither is it helped by what appears to be the standard advice, "There are no rules for the use of articles, you've just got to listen to the Australians and learn to use them that way". Of course there are rules governing the right use of articles, otherwise it would be impossible to use them wrongly; and the students sense this logic even when it escapes their teachers. The difficulty is to find the rules.

Verb tenses present their own difficulties, many of them caused by the fact that tense distinctions carry far more complex grammatical aspects than gradations of past and present, while no two languages seem to have managed to associate identical bundles of meanings with the same grammatical tense. Thus a Chinese student, who has had all her secondary schooling here, was referred to us with what appeared to be a reasoning problem: her essay did not distinguish between specific examples and general principles. The question read: "When do the conditions on a ticket form part of a legal contract?" It turned out, however, that what had actually baffled her was the simple present tense "do" which, according to its grammatical name, ought to mean "now", but here in fact meant "always".

The need for the teacher to be aware, at least, that he may meet problems of this kind is apparent, partly as stated above, because these constructions cause the unsuspecting teacher to form the wrong impression of his student, which has a negative influence on the communication between the two and becomes counter-productive to the learning process; partly also, because explanations must address themselves to the student's angle of perception in order to be useful. If a student believes he has done the right thing, it is not enough to tell him he was wrong; the teacher and student are in such cases applying different principles. It is such differences which have to be taken into consideration for teaching to be effective. An example will illustrate.

A student, originally from the Philippines, brought a paper with very little subject-verb agreement. He specialized in the following type of construction: "Several man have", "Many politician think". When we came to the first of these, I pointed to "man" asking, "Why don't you have the plural here?" He said, "But it is plural" and he might as well have added, "Dumb!" for he obviously meant it. So I had to think again, and, looking at "several" and "many", it occurred to me that these words might to him serve as plural markers, especially as the verbs had the correct plural forms; so I said, "Yes, but in English, the nouns have got to show it too". The student fell back in his chair in a moment of revelation and burst out, "Is that what they're always talking about!" We went through the rest of the essay, the student now being able to correct himself. This was all the teaching he received. A later essay by the same student was much improved. To set students like this remedial English exercises is a waste of their time; it is not the rules they need, but the sense of the rules.

Now let us turn to the area of vocabulary especially in regard to metaphor. In an article on contract law the following phrase occurred: "Justice wielding her sword"; such fossilized remnants of long lost beliefs crop up with depressing regularity in university texts and cause tremendous reading problems, mainly, of course for overseas and migrant students of non-European background, but quite frequently also for other groups. In these cases dictionaries - even The Concise Oxford - are of

absolutely no use; the meanings of "justice", "wield" and "sword" can be looked up independently, but the meaning of the unit will not appear,and the student is left to puzzle over what an abstract concept is doing poking around with a weapon in the middle of a legal contract.Expressions such as "to put the cart before the horse", "the chicken and egg debate" and countless others belong in the same category. A slightly different problem was caused recently by the unit, "The underlying rationale". The word "underlying" was easily understood in its concrete but not in its figurative sense. When, however, the unit was changed into "the rationale behind..." it was immediately understood. In this case the obstacle appeared to be the difference which different languages will allow in the spatial relationship between a cause and its consequences. By offering as an explanation "be the basis of", which implies the same spatial relation as "underlying", the Concise Oxford was again of no use.

Generally speaking, the usefulness of a dictionary depends on the student's pre-existing familiarity with the concepts involved and with the social/cultural/geographical environment in which the dictionary defines them. Naturally, then, the further removed the student's sphere of experience is from that of the author of his dictionary, the greater will be the student's difficulty in making sense of the explanations.

Yet, it is not necessary for a student to come from overseas to experience cultural displacement at university. An Australian student from a farming community was asked in a History essay to "take one of the First Fleet narratives, and discuss the writer's dominant responses to N.S.W." Naturally, the student's first point analyzed his chosen author's assessment of the land. The student wrote:

> Tench imagined he would see "some of the finest meadows in the world". A meadow by my dictionary is a "low well-watered grassland especially near a river". The implication is, land capable of producing food easily, with no worries about water supply .... In other words, Tench reckoned upon a sparsely populated place where food (after cultivation of the land) would be plentiful.

The tutor wrote in the margin: "Relevance? you seem to stray off the point here, you must structure your essay more tightly"; but the student did have a point, and he did go on to draw out the relevance. Being used to operating with dry paddocks only, the student knew from experience that a piece of land with "no worries for water supply" should be used for cultivation, not just for grazing, as Tench had ended up advising. So the student used this point to illustrate how totally inept Tench's assessment had been. In the margin beside this point, the tutor had written "you seem to be confused. I can't follow you here". Perhaps the tutor was English. The dictionary's explanations certainly are, and teachers in Australia cannot always afford to overlook that.

Now, let us move up the hierarchy to essay structure. It has been demonstrated[3] that discourse structures are highly culture specific, that, for example,the linear pattern we teach our students is not universal but specific for English. This is another problem the study skills teacher may find himself confronted with, in the form of a conflict between subject teacher and migrant student over the amount of structure an essay evinces. One such case was a mature-age German student with mixed German-Australian schooling. He came because he had failed an essay. According to the tutor's comments, no effort had gone into structuring the essay, it included irrelevant material and was constantly straying off the point. The student was irate. He claimed the essay was structured - anyone could see that - so the tutor had obviously not read it very carefully. He also claimed that the content was the same as that of a friend's essay which had been given an "A"; he knew because the two of them used to pick the same questions and take turns researching their essays. In this instance, the friend had written his essay based on this student's notes.

At that stage, I found it hard to believe that structure alone could make such a difference in marks; but the following day the student was proved right when his friend, in support, brought in his essay for

3. See for example the article by M.G. Clyne in the present volume.

analysis. The interesting part was that the German student found his friend's essay shallow because it excluded all the extra material which the tutor had marked "irrelevant" in his own essay.

Helping these students requires that one does not simply assume that the student did not structure, when his paper looks unstructured. It is important to point out to such students that there is a particular structural pattern which they must follow. Apart from that the teaching process itself may be much the same as for students who genuinely cannot structure. My way is to analyze good models with them, reinforcing the teaching by relating this analysis to skimming techniques and essay planning. This student found the required pattern easier and less sophisticated than the one he had been using, so it is obviously not always a difficult thing to grasp. But I found that, for him to accept it, it had to be explained as one specific pattern, not just as "structuring" in general.

A closely related problem is the fact that different cultures have different perceptions of the proper approach to essay questions. English demands a fairly literal and democratic interpretation requiring equal treatment of all main elements, while the freedom of interpretation generally amounts to being able to answer "yes", "no" or "both and". This,however, is not at all a universal approach. My own experience as a secondary and tertiary student in Denmark will serve as an illustration: it is there accepted - indeed expected - that the student twists the question in order to answer only certain aspects of it, or interprets it in order to answer from a particular angle; it is possible even to answer that the problem posed in the question cannot be answered until a claimed underlying problem has been solved and to devote the essay to solving that other problem. The introduction in this kind of essay is the place where the initial twisting is carried out.

There may well be other approaches to answering a question which I do not recognize as a pattern. I have had two Slavonic students, both mature age; one had had the major part of her schooling overseas; for the other one, I do not know. In both cases the students were referred because they failed to answer the questions. In both cases, the students'

oral contributions had led the tutors to expect much from their essays and, being disappointed by their written work, had given much advice and direction and allowed re-submission. In neither case did the tutor succeed in getting through to the student, and neither did I. Yet both students left those who became involved with the uncomfortable feeling that the problem lay somewhere in our communication; it was not a lack of intelligence on the students' part.

Both students came early in my study skills career, and it was in fact the uncomfortable feeling generated by their patient overbearing manner which made me first suspect that there might be students working within a different set of criteria oblivious of the fact that their set was not universal, just as we took it for granted that they knew what we meant by the sentence: "You must structure your essay". Later experiences have tended to confirm this. I have noticed that students working according to different patterns will become quite impatient with advice on structuring unless it is explicitly acknowledged that they themselves do structure and that the acceptable pattern is not inherently better. The problem is that, as in the case of the German student, when first confronted with Anglo-Saxon styles and structures students used to different patterns often react by finding the new model childish and too simple for serious writing; and so, unless a certain distance from the material is taken by the adviser they will tend to identify the adviser with the advice and think you childish. This may have been the reason for the two Slavonic students' polite listening but absolute lack of response.

On the level of structuring there is one further important aspect to consider. The weaker a student's grasp of English is, the stronger is a tendency to repetitiveness. This is often due neither to a different pattern of structuring nor to a half-hearted effort, but to a certain emotional insecurity in handling the language. It is a close relative of the well-known beginner-translator syndrome: a fear of not covering everything in the original, resulting in a wordy and cumbrous translation. Generally speaking, in one's native language, the utterance of a thought or feeling is accompanied by a feeling of certainty that what one wanted to say has been said. In a foreign language, even for

some in the written form of their own spoken language, that feeling is lacking. It follows that if a student is making a point in an essay which he feels to be very important, he will often repeat it over and over because the words he is using do not reverberate in him on that deeper level of consciousness, and until he can build up that feeling of having said it, he is not convinced that the reader will get it. It is exactly the same phenomenon as that which makes it extremely easy to swear in polite company in a language other than one's own. It takes practice and long familiarity with a language even to start to build up that emotional certainty of the sense of sounds and letters which will stop the student from being repetitive. In the meantime, however, it is a great help to the student if the language teacher can help him build up a sufficient theoretical knowledge of the language for the student to be able to rely on the intellectual certainty that if he does this, the "natives" will think he has said it. Teaching patterns of essay structure is only treating the symptoms in these cases.

The last level to be discussed here is that of socio-cultural differences which indirectly influence students' essay structuring, their ability to judge between relevant and irrelevant material, as well as their feeling for the completeness of their sentences.

One instance concerns a Lebanese first-year student, who earns his living as a court interpreter while studying. He was set the following question:

> "Citizens, throughout history two political systems have confronted each other, and both of them can be supported by good arguments. According to one, the state should do a great deal, but it should also take a great deal. According to the other, its double action should be barely perceptible. Between these two systems, one must choose". (Bastiat).
>
> If limits should be placed upon the state, of what kind should they be?

The student came to get help with interpreting the question, because he could not work out "what the lecturer wanted". I asked what <u>he</u> thought he would have to do. The answer was: "I suppose I'll have to praise America and condemn Soviet". I asked what made him think so, and he said, "Well, then I'll obviously have to praise Soviet and condemn

America". It is easy to laugh at, but when one considers the political situation he left in Lebanon, guessing the "right" answer could well mean more than marks.

It is easy enough to brush his problem aside with "things are not like that here, and he should realize that". His question itself is evidence that he realizes that "things are different here" and also that he has not yet found out how they are. All newcomers to any country have to adopt values which are not their own if they want to fit in. How does a foreign student know which values he has to adopt and which he can retain? Which value he may question and which he had better at least appear to accept? The problem an Asian student had with an essay question in legal studies will provide a convenient illustration of this dilemma. The question asked:

> What would be the most defensible formulation of Lord Devlin's account of the relationship between law and morality? To what extent (and on what grounds) would that formulation still be open to criticism? You should illustrate your answer by reference to some particular area in which the relationship between law and morals has been controversial, or appears to you to be problematic.

The formulation of this question implies that Lord Devlin's account is indeed open to criticism. In the student's words: "he [the teacher] wants you not to agree with Devlin". The element: "the relationship between law and morality" was meaningless to my Muslim Asian student because, according to his upbringing, law <u>is</u> morality and morality <u>is</u> law. So the question arose, "defensible - to whom?" To the student, therefore, the answer had to be not "what do I think" but "what would the Australians think?" and this included even picking a controversial area. This was not one "I" recognize as controversial: it was a question of finding one "they" squabble over.

In relation to this student's social reality to which he intends to return, this exercise was felt to be futile and therefore not well suited to inspire him with great motivation. Answering it therefore became an exercise in discovering the values belonging to a different identity, then to assume that identity and answer from inside it. He did

not really question his own values; he kept them distinct and separate. Many students have to do this in order to answer their essay questions. If they are successful at it in the sense that they pass their essays, they then start interpreting this displacement process as "objectivity".

To a student of different cultural origins it must indeed be difficult to understand the logic of having to assume a certain attitude to the law and not having to assume a certain attitude to political systems. We take it for granted, outsiders need to develop an anthropologist's skills to sort it out. Of course the facile answer to this student is that the common denominator behind these apparent contradictions is that in general in this society and especially at university we question everything; but do we?

A student, the child of Balkan migrants, sought help with an essay from Sociology. Unfortunately I do not have the exact question, but it centred on the importance of the socialization process in determining sex roles. The student had ploughed through the full reading list - which is quite exceptional, for my students at least - and was panicky. The student wanted to know how one states a point of view one does not believe in. The student explained that her reading all seemed to agree that women's role was determined purely by the socialization process. But although the student - a girl - wanted to believe it, she could not convince herself that the evidence was conclusive. She had ended up with this question: "is there not after all a biological component playing some part in the determination of sex-roles?" I suggested answering the question from that angle, but she said no. She felt that not to say "purely environmental" would be to miss the point of the course. Whether this girl was right or not, I do get the impression that on occasion we all as teachers may succumb to the temptation of becoming the fundamentalists of the post-Christian era, substituting our theory for original sin as the one inescapable factor.

As the last example indicates, the students from migrant homes have most of the problems of the overseas students, but combined with the necessity to resolve the conflicting values and demands of their two cultures on a personal level, which overseas students do not have. These conflicts

often lead to an inability to build up an answer to their essay questions, which they invariably describe as an inability to "find the answer". As they consequently often appear to be lazy and unmotivated students, their dilemma is worth exploring a bit.

These students generally have the full support of their families until they start at university. But once they are there, a change sets in.At home there is great prestige attached to having been accepted, while after acceptance the students' enthusiasm begins to wane as they develop a more realistic idea of what to expect. The sheer size of the institution numbs them, the enrolment procedure they find frightening, and many find themselves thoroughly alone because few if any of their old school friends have followed them. Many find, then, that old friendships are lost faster than new ones are formed, and the prevailing mentality stressing the importance of belonging to a peer group has made them ill-equipped to handle the highly individualistic process that university study is.

At this stage also, the prestige gained in the home environment from having been accepted into university starts to backfire, as the parents begin to think that their children will now start to look down upon them. This is felt by the students when enthusiastically they try to tell their parents about their courses. This suspicion and lack of interest on the parents' side many students find hard to cope with. Paradoxically, in the early stages it is often only made worse when they meet sympathy and readiness to discuss on the part of their teachers, because they still consider the teacher a complete stranger; so to meet the response from a stranger which they had expected from their parents makes them feel that their world has turned upside down.

The students' reaction is in many cases to attempt to remain in the old parent-child relationship. Ways of doing this are for instance to attempt to blot out any changes that have happened; thus they will talk about "going to School" rather than "to Uni". The more the difference between school and university is emphasised by teachers here, the more of a personal dilemma these students experience.

Another point is that the students associate a gain in adulthood with their change from school to university, and, with the added responsibility they expect with their studies, they also anticipate greater social freedom, but often this does not eventuate. Especially the girls, then, around the middle of their first year, often start to consider job prospects at the end of their courses, in the hope that financial independence will gain them social independence as well. However, in the present job climate these considerations have a tendency to dampen rather than fire enthusiasm for study.

Furthermore, for these students considerations of job prospects link up with parents' concepts of success. And, generally, those concepts are very limited. These parents tend to see their sons as future doctors, lawyers or psychiatrists irrespective of what courses their children are taking. While insofar as the parents want to see their daughters pursue a career at all, teaching, which is regarded as a second rate achievement, is good enough for them. This view makes teaching anything but an attractice prospect for the girls.

A daughter's university degree is, moreover, often seen as a dowry to be got and then forgotten in preference for marriage and motherhood. The main concern of these girls during their three years of university life, as impressed on them by their parents, is to find a future husband with career prospects from within the university milieu. As time wears on, they come under increasing parental pressure to achieve this.

Place against these motives the expectations, assumptions and demands which meet these same students here. Their lives at home are sheltered in most respects. Here they are expected to be able to take initiative, to organize and plan their lives in regard both to study and social activities independently and with personal responsibility. It is assumed - and constantly conveyed to them - that what they are doing here is for life, they are required to think and - inevitably - to change.

Under these circumstances it should not surprise anybody that so many students are thrown into periods of often agonizing self-analysis. The question so often uppermost in the teacher's mind, "What are they doing here?" is in the student's mind, "Did I want to go to uni, or did my parents want it for me, only I never realized?" For many girls, it is: "Would my parents have wanted me to go to uni, if they had had a boy?"

There is a constant demand for objectivity in analysis at university. Another demand which is generally seen as complementary to this is to "expand your mind". It is inherent in the subject matter in social sciences, however, that these two demands are experienced as counter-active by these students. To analyse the subject matter here and make the material "their own" inevitably means self scrutiny and reflecting back on their own environment. The need to find out their personal stand and aims then assumes an urgency which dwarfs the need for good marks, and leaves objective analysis in the ordinary sense a dead, irrelevant academic exercise.

When students realize that to do well and to secure a career in accordance with their study they must change, they also realize that this means alienating themselves from their families and friends and through study and career identifying with a group whose way of thinking is, as yet, alien to them. As their problems are so deeply personal, they fail at first to understand that there are many like them.

Advice often given to students in these circumstances is "leave your family, this is your life"; and a student is seen as weak if he or she misses a chance to do so. It should be remembered, though, that these students still love their parents, that there is indeed often a very strong bond fostered by the sense of isolation resulting from cultural and language displacement. The parent-child bond is moreover often ambiguous, since for communication many of these parents are dependent on their children. The children seem to have a strong sense of their parents' vulnerability due to their faltering grip on the social reality surrounding them, and the children feel protective towards and responsible for them because of this. Whatever advice is given to these students towards solving parental and study problems should take this into consideration.

When I first started as English Adviser, it was expected - and I myself assumed - that I would be teaching essay writing and remedial English grammar: It seemed straightforward. However, the more students I see of different cultural origins and the more I listen to what they try to explain to me, the more I find my role shifting: Only rarely do I teach essay structure or grammar, mostly I find myself attempting to interpret to the student the environment in which the essay is to be written. Language rules, too, I interpret but only secondarily, and then never from the standpoint of "good" or "bad" grammar, but from the point of whether this particular sequence will be accepted in the linguistic and cultural environment for which it is meant. I am finding in short that language and culture cannot be separated in teaching.

Looking at the migrant students' "language problems", therefore, I find myself wondering if our universities really are the centres of universal enquiry that we are accustomed to consider them, except perhaps as defined within the limits of our own culture. Could it be that university problems, questions and answers are highly culture-specific and thus, like hell, of our own making? Does "objectivity" exist, or are we merely dealing in subject-acceptable and subject-unacceptable subjectivity?