

THE VISTA UNIVERSITY
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PROFICIENCY COURSE:
AN EVALUATION

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my mother and father
who have always supported my endeavours
—and who were the first of many
ESL teachers in my life

*No printed word, nor spoken plea
Can teach young hearts what men should be
Not all the books on all the shelves
But what the teachers are themselves.*

—thanks to John Logan

Opsomming

Hierdie studie is 'n evaluering van die Language Proficiency kursus (LPR 5001) wat deur Vista Universiteit aangebied is en bevat ook 'n voorgestelde raamwerk vir die herontwerp daarvan. Die kursus is 'n taalvaardigheidskursus in Engels as tweede taal wat sedert 2002 as 'n verpligte deel van die eerstejaarstudente se "Foundation" program aangebied word.

Die kursus is oorspronklik ontwerp vir studente wat vir 'n nagraadse onderwysdiploma studeer. Nou ontstaan die vraag of die kursus in sy huidige vorm vir eerstejaarstudente gebruik kan word en of dit herontwerp moet word om aan hulle spesifieke behoeftes te voldoen.

'n Literatuurstudie is gedoen om die begrip "taalvaardigheid" te definieer en om vas te stel wanneer 'n student as taalvaardig beskou kan word. Daar is ook navorsing gedoen oor modelle vir kursusevaluering en kursusontwerp.

Daarna is die kursus aan die hand van hierdie evalueringsmodelle ontleed. Verskeie meetinstrumente is gebruik, insluitend die SAT ('n taalvaardigheidstoets), vraelyste wat deur studente en dosente voltooi is, observasie en kommentaar deur studente wat die kursus voltooi het. Vyf tersiëre instansies is genader om 'n oorsig te gee van die Engelse taalvaardigheidskursusse wat by hulle aangebied word.

Die kursus is in terme van die volgende aspekte verder ontleed: die studiegids, kursusinhoud, organisering van kursus, metodiek, hulpmiddels en assessering.

Al die beskikbare data is gebruik om alle fasette van die huidige kursus te evalueer. Daar is tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat daar wel 'n behoefte bestaan om die kursus te herontwerp. 'n Raamwerk is saamgestel om as basis vir die kursus se herontwerp te dien. Die basiese struktuur en inhoud van 'n nuwe kursus is op hierdie raamwerk gebaseer.

Summary

This study is an evaluation of the current Language Proficiency course (LPR 5001) offered at Vista University, leading to a suggested framework for its redesign. The course is a language proficiency course in English as a Second Language, which first-year students in the Foundation Programme have since 2002 been required to complete.

The course was originally designed for students doing a postgraduate diploma in teacher education. The question arises as to whether the course is appropriate as it stands for first-year Foundation students or whether it should be redesigned in order to meet their needs better.

A literature study was done to define language proficiency and to determine what a student should be able to do in order to be considered proficient in a language. Further research was done into models of course evaluation and course design.

Thereafter the course was analysed in terms of these models of course evaluation. Various measuring instruments were used, including SAT (a language proficiency test), questionnaires completed by students and lecturers, observation, and comments by students who had completed the course. Five tertiary institutions were approached to give an overview of the English language proficiency courses offered at their institutions.

The course was further analysed in terms of these aspects: the manual, course content, course organisation, methodology, resources and assessment.

All available data were used to evaluate every aspect of the current course. It was concluded that there was a need to redesign the course. A framework was drawn up to serve as a starting point for redesigning the course. Based on this framework, the basic structure and content of a new course were suggested.

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SOLI DEO GLORIA

*The past is a memory
The future a fantasy
All we have is the present... which is a gift*

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1 Introduction	1
2 Problem statement	1
3 The aims of the study	3
4 Research method	3
5 Programme of study	4
Chapter 2: Language proficiency in ESL	6
2.0 Introduction	6
2.1 What is language proficiency?	7
2.2 How does a learner acquire or become proficient in a second language?	10
2.3 Language proficiency and academic needs	12
2.4 Factors that influence the acquisition of language proficiency in a second language	17
2.4.1 The learner	18
2.4.2 The teacher	19
2.5 The testing of language proficiency	21
2.5.1 Validity, reliability and practicality	21
2.5.2 Types of language proficiency tests	22
2.5.3 Approaches to test construction	25
2.6 Conclusion	27
Chapter 3: The impact of language policy on language proficiency	28
3.0 Introduction	28
3.1 Language proficiency and language policy	28
3.2 Language policy in South Africa	30
3.2.1 The history of language teaching in South Africa and its influence on language proficiency and language policy	31
3.2.2 Implications of current language policy in South Africa	36
3.3 Conclusion	43
Chapter 4: Designing a language proficiency course	45
4.0 Introduction	45
4.1 Course design	45
4.1.1 Product-orientated syllabus design	46
The grammatical syllabus	46
The functional-notional syllabus	46
4.1.2 Process-orientated syllabus design	47
The procedural syllabus	47
The process syllabus	48
The task-based syllabus	48
4.2 Designing an English for Specific Purposes course	50
4.2.1 English for Specific Purposes	50
4.2.2 English for Academic Purposes	51

4.3	Course design in practice	54
4.3.1	Alessi and Trollip's model	54
4.3.2	The Instructional System Design model (ADDIE)	56
4.3.3	Graves's model	57
4.4	Conclusion	67
Chapter 5: Models for course evaluation		68
5.0	Introduction	68
5.1	What is course evaluation?	68
5.2	When is a course evaluated?	69
5.3	How is a course evaluated?	70
5.3.1	Quantitative evaluation	70
5.3.2	Qualitative evaluation	71
5.3.3	A combined quantitative-qualitative evaluation	74
5.3.4	Reliability, validity and practicality in evaluating a course	75
5.4	An overview of relevant models for course evaluation	76
5.4.1	Pfannkuche	76
5.4.2	Lynch	77
5.4.3	Dudley-Evans and St John	80
5.4.4	Nunan	80
5.4.5	Graves	81
5.4.6	De Vos	82
5.5	Proposed model for Vista LPR course evaluation	83
	The planning stage	83
	The action stage	85
	The report back stage	86
5.6	Conclusion	86
Chapter 6: The planning stage—research method		87
6.0	Introduction	87
6.1	Who are the stakeholders?	88
6.2	What is the background and history of the course?	88
6.3	What are the aims of the evaluation?	89
6.4	What elements of the course will be evaluated and how will this be done?	89
6.4.1	Analysis of the present course	90
6.4.2	Student data	91
6.4.3	Lecturers' data	96
6.4.4	Survey of language proficiency courses at other tertiary institutions	97
6.5	Conclusion	97
Chapter 7: The action stage—an evaluation of the LPR course at Vista University		98
7.0	Introduction	98
7.1	Analysis of the present course	98
7.1.1	Course and manual	98
7.1.2	Observation	105
7.1.3	Official documents	107

7.2	Student data	108
7.2.1	The SAT	108
7.2.2	Student questionnaires	113
7.2.3	General comments by students	123
7.3	Lecturers' data	124
7.4	Survey of tertiary institutions	130
7.4.1	University of Cape Town	130
7.4.2	University of the North	133
7.4.3	University of Pretoria	135
7.4.4	University of the Witwatersrand	137
7.4.5	University of Port Elizabeth	140
7.5	Conclusion	143
Chapter 8: Report back stage—framework for designing a new course		145
8.0	Introduction	145
8.1	Why should Vista University students be proficient in English?	145
8.2	What should a Vista student be able to do to be considered proficient in English?	146
8.3	What should be changed in the current LPR 5001 course to achieve these outcomes?	149
8.3.1	General outcomes	150
8.3.2	Course organisation	151
8.3.2	Course content	152
8.3.4	Methodology	156
8.3.5	Resources	156
8.3.6	Formative and summative assessment	157
8.3.7	Grading	158
8.4	Conclusion	158
Chapter 9: Redesigning the LPR course at Vista University—report back and implementation stage		160
9.0	Introduction	160
9.1	Unit 1: Theme—relationships	160
9.2	Unit 2: Art and culture—surviving in a multicultural environment	164
9.3	Unit 3: The academic world—adapting to an academic environment	167
9.4	Unit 4: The world of science—coping with other subjects	170
9.5	Unit 5: The economy—how to get and keep a job	172
9.6	Formative and summative assessment	175
9.7	Aspects addressed in the course	176
9.8	Checklists	178
9.9	Critical crossfield outcomes and the LPR course	181
9.10	Conclusion	183

Chapter 10: Conclusion	184
10.0 Introduction	184
10.1 Literature review	184
10.2 Evaluation of the present course	184
10.3 Redesigning the course	186
10.4 Limitations of the study	187
10.5 Future research and recommendations	187
10.6 Conclusion	188

Bibliography	189
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Appendices	203
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- Appendix A: LPR Manual
- Appendix B: Student's questionnaire
- Appendix C: Lecturer's questionnaire
- Appendix D: LPR November examination paper

List of figures

Figure 1	The characteristics of ESP	Chapter 4	51
Figure 2	Alessi and Trollip's instructional design model	Chapter 4	55
Figure 3	ISD model flow chart	Chapter 4	56
Figure 4	Graves's course design model	Chapter 4	58
Figure 5	Model for evaluation of a course	Chapter 5	83
Figure 6	Model for evaluation of a course (detailed)	Chapter 6	87

List of tables

Table 1	Summary of data-gathering instruments	90
Table 2	Sub-scales of the items in the SAT	93
Table 3	Sub-scales of similar constructs in questionnaire	95
Table 4	Enrolment of students in LPR for 2002 and 2003	103
Table 5	Foundation Programme curriculum	108
Table 6	Average percentages obtained by East Rand students in the SAT in January and June	109
Table 7	Results of the SAT obtained on the East Rand campus in June as compared to January	109
Table 8	Average percentages obtained by Mamelodi students in the SAT in January and June	110
Table 9	Results of the SAT obtained in Mamelodi in June as compared to January	110
Table 10	Average percentages obtained by Port Elizabeth students in the SAT in January and June	111
Table 11	Results of the SAT obtained on the Port Elizabeth campus in June as compared to January	112

Student's questionnaire

Table 12	Cronbach alpha results	113
Table 13	Cronbach alpha values (high)	114
Table 14	Results of Cohen's d-value—Mamelodi campus compared to Port Elizabeth campus	114
Table 15	Expectations of students	115
Table 16	Listening skills	115
Table 17	Speaking skills	116
Table 18	Reading skills	117
Table 19	Writing skills	117
Table 20	Resources	118
Table 21	Classroom interaction	118
Table 22	Course design	119
Table 23	Assessment	120
Table 24	Self-study	121
Table 25	General impression of the course	122

Lecturer's questionnaire

Table 26	Expectations	125
Table 27	Listening skills	125
Table 28	Speaking skills	125
Table 29	Reading skills	126
Table 30	Writing skills	126
Table 31	Resources	127
Table 32	Classroom interaction	127
Table 33	Course design	128
Table 34	Assessment	128
Table 35	Self-study	129
Table 36	General impression of the course	129

Other

Table 37	Inventory of essential knowledge, skills, values and attitudes	147
Table 38	Frequency of skills addressed during the course	177
Table 39	Skills/aspects addressed during the course as they appear in the units	177
Table 40	Checklist of cognitive skills	179
Table 41	Checklist of grammatical skills	179
Table 42	Checklist of textual skills	180
Table 43	Checklist of functional skills	181
Table 44	Checklist of sociolinguistic skills	181
Table 45	Essential critical outcomes as they are addressed in the suggested course	183

Chapter 1

Introduction

1 Introduction

In this study, the language proficiency course currently used at Vista University is evaluated. Based on this evaluation, the course is adapted and redesigned in order to meet the needs of both students and lecturers better.

2 Problem statement

Although English is the medium of instruction in most schools in the country, many learners are second-language speakers of English and have little exposure to English outside the classroom (Kilfoil, 1990:20; Strauss, 1995a:1). Furthermore, many teachers are second-language speakers of English, and learners are often taught not through English but through the vernacular, as neither the teachers nor the learners are proficient in English (Young, 1995:107).

This state of affairs leads to problems for first-year students who want to continue with tertiary education, where the medium of instruction is English alone, such as Vista University. Learners who are not competent in the medium of instruction obviously have difficulty understanding the subject matter (Barkhuizen, 1993:77; Kotecha *et al.*, 1990:216; O'Malley, 1988:44). A survey carried out at teacher training colleges indicates that the average reading age of incoming students is equivalent to that of the average first-language speaker halfway through Standard one (present Grade 3) (Saunders, 1991:14). Webb (2002:54) also indicates that the English-language proficiency of tertiary students is problematic.

At Vista University, all education students who have not passed English as a subject at second-year level have to take a module in English Language Proficiency (LPR). The course is a practical, skills-based programme aimed at improving students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in English. The duration of the course is ten weeks (more or less 30 teaching hours). Class size usually varies between 20 and 40 students, and the course is usually presented during the first semester of each year (February to July). The course is presented at all seven campuses of Vista University in South Africa. All campuses write the same examination.

The success of the course has not yet been determined through research, but there is serious doubt about its success because of its limited duration and high failure rate. As Strauss (1995b:173) points out, the high failure rate in the course indicates that students, despite having spent three years at an English-medium tertiary institution, are still not competent users of the language.

The situation at Vista has been complicated by a change in its admissions policy. In the past, only students with matriculation exemption were accepted at the university. However, from January 2002, students without matriculation exemption have been conditionally accepted. This was decided in response to a report compiled by the Academic Development Programme of the University of Cape Town on the Standardised Achievement Test Project for Vista University. These students would be admitted, at the discretion of senate, to various academic programmes. A Matriculation Board rule (Circular U28/96) states that a certificate of conditional exemption may be issued to a candidate who, in the judgement of the senate of a university, has demonstrated—through a selection process approved by that senate—his or her suitability for further studies.

Students without full matriculation exemption are thus accepted conditionally and have to participate in a compulsory foundation programme. They are allowed into mainstream education programmes only if they pass a minimum of 80% of the modules in the foundation programme. The aim of the foundation programme is to enable students to cope with the academic demands of a tertiary institution.

Students who enter the foundation programme can register for different programmes at the university. On the Mamelodi Campus, these students are all registered for the Diploma in Education (Secondary Phase) (DESP), a three-year diploma. One of the compulsory modules in the DESP is the LPR course, originally intended for student teachers, as described above. As this is the first year that the LPR course has been offered to first-year students who are part of the new foundation programme, there is a need to evaluate the course and its appropriateness for this specific group of students. It needs to be determined whether the course is successful in improving the language proficiency of the students and whether it fulfils their expectations.

The course needs to be evaluated according to the principles of course design (Graves, 2000:3; Yalden, 1987:85; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:145). Lynch (1996:4) stresses the need to evaluate the effectiveness of a teaching and learning programme. Any teaching and learning situation is dynamic and needs to be improved constantly through critical analysis and evaluation of the content and methods used in the course. This will ensure that the

course remains relevant and of high quality. In addition, Brown (1989:44) points out that any evaluation must lead to the upgrading and modification of the programme.

Any evaluation of a course is based on three parameters: formative vs. summative, process vs. product, and quantitative vs. qualitative. An evaluation can be achieved by means of the following theoretical perspectives: the purpose of a formative evaluation is to gather information that will be used to improve the programme, while a summative evaluation is used to determine whether a programme is effective; a product perspective determines whether the goals of the programme have been achieved, while a process perspective determines what it is that is going on in a programme that helps to arrive at those goals; a quantitative analysis makes use of test scores, while a qualitative analysis makes use of observation and interviews. Brown (1989:48) points out that, in order to arrive at a comprehensive evaluation of a programme, all these dimensions need to be included. A qualitative and a quantitative approach can include the formative, summative, product and process perspectives.

In sum, the problem which is addressed in this study is how to improve the effectiveness of the Language Proficiency (LPR) course in English at Vista University.

3 The aims of the study

The aims of this study are to:

- evaluate the LPR course in English at Vista University
- design a revised English syllabus for the Foundation Programme.

4 Research method

A literature review was carried out in the areas of language proficiency, syllabus and course design, and existing programmes aimed at improving language proficiency and course evaluation at tertiary level. The goal of the literature survey was to develop a framework for course evaluation and design.

The empirical research involved an intensive analysis of data from the present course. This included an analysis of the course manual, observation of classes, and an analysis of available official documentation on the course.

The second step was to analyse data on the students. This included a separate sample pre-test/post-test design to determine the effect of the course on the language proficiency of the students. Scores of both tests were compared in order to indicate the pre-test/post-test

differences. Also included was a student survey in which—at the outset of teaching—all students enrolled for the course were requested to write down their expectations of the course. Lastly, after undergoing the course, students filled in a detailed questionnaire about their experiences of the course and their assessment of it.

The third step was to ask the lecturers involved in teaching the course to fill in a similar detailed questionnaire on their experiences and opinions of the course.

The data collected were analysed in order to focus the evaluation (Lynch 1996:141), and conclusions were drawn. A syllabus for a new course was then designed. The design was based on a study of existing models of course design.

5 Programme of study

Chapter 2 addresses the concept of language proficiency in ESL, and focuses on language acquisition and language proficiency. Factors that influence language proficiency are discussed. The chapter also deals specifically with the testing of language proficiency.

Chapter 3 discusses the impact of historical factors on language proficiency in South Africa. Historically, decisions were taken that had a bearing on the levels of language acquisition in the country; decisions which were politically motivated. The nature and effect of these decisions are discussed.

In Chapter 4, current ideas on course design are compared and discussed. The chapter briefly discusses syllabus design and syllabus types. Different models of course design are compared, and a new design model, based on a synthesis of existing models, is suggested.

Chapter 5 provides an overview of the concept of course evaluation. Various models of course evaluation are investigated, and a new model for course evaluation, based on these, is developed.

Chapter 6 discusses in more detail the method of research used in the study. The data collection and procedures that were followed are explained and described.

In Chapter 7, the data and results of the investigation are laid out. Conclusions on the present course are drawn. These form the basis of the next chapters.

Chapter 8 is a synthesis of all the information gathered from the theoretical survey as well as the data analysis. This synthesis forms the basis for a new course in language proficiency for Vista University as suggested in Chapter 9.

Chapter 10 provides a brief conclusion and makes recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2

Language Proficiency in ESL

2.0 Introduction

Success in the classroom depends on a student's discourse and interactive skills, for which effective communication skills and a high level of language proficiency are required. The ability to communicate and interact with peers and adults is central to academic and social development (Bradley *et al.*, 1997:89; Smith & Ryndak, 1996:87).

Tertiary education demands of students that they be able to think critically, to understand and be able to assimilate concepts, and to interpret and challenge the ideas of others. Students need to be able to organise their thoughts and express them in a logical way. This requires thinking skills as well as the ability to manipulate the language of instruction confidently. Higher education institutions around the world are under pressure to produce graduates with the necessary knowledge, lifelong learning skills and problem-solving ability, and language related issues are seen as a principal factor in educational disadvantage (Moore *et al.*, 1998:8).

As was pointed out in Chapter 1, the majority of secondary school pupils in South Africa are instructed and examined through the medium of English, while more than 90% of them have a mother tongue other than English. Teachers who are often themselves not mother-tongue speakers of English have to resort to code switching or teaching in the mother tongue to ensure effective learning (Strauss, 1995a:1; Mafisa & Van der Walt, 2002:15). An added problem is the fact that various grammatical features of typical Black South African English have become entrenched in teachers' speech without them even realising it (Mafisa & Van der Walt, 2002:15).

The question arises as to whether South African learners are proficient enough in the medium of instruction to ensure effective communication. When the issue of language proficiency is discussed, it is important to consider what is regarded as proficiency in a second or third language and how such proficiency can be accomplished.

The aim of this chapter is to define language proficiency and to look at ways in which it can be tested. Factors that influence the acquisition of language proficiency are looked at briefly,

and guidelines are laid down as to how language proficiency should be assessed during a course or after completing it. This information is used in Chapters 8 and 9 when a language proficiency course for Vista University is designed—the ultimate outcome of this study.

2.1 What is language proficiency?

In this section, a brief overview of ideas on language proficiency and how they relate to some theoretical views of language is sketched. According to Alderson (1991:12), what it means to know a language depends on “why one is asking the question, how one seeks to answer it, and what level of proficiency one might be concerned with”. Smith (1994:4) describes proficiency in a second language as the development of an “interlanguage”, which he describes as a “systematic non-native linguistic behaviour”.

Language proficiency is generally regarded as the ability to communicate in the target language and to display a “sense for appropriate linguistic behaviour in a variety of situations” by using and processing language in all four skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Bussmann, 1996:384; Williams & Snipper, 1990:34). It is a relative concept, and can range from a hesitant command to a fluent, sophisticated command of the target language.

Knowing a language goes beyond the point of simplistically taking account of views of good pronunciation and correct grammar, and mastery of the rules of politeness. It involves mastery and control of a number of interdependent components and elements that interact with one another and are influenced by the situation in which the communication takes place. Language usage is dynamic and contextually-based, depending upon situation, the status of the speakers and the topic. It requires the use of integrative skills, and is a coherent construct of various discrete elements which are used to convey meaning within a specific context (Valdes & Figueroa, 1994:34; Douglas, 2000:28; Canale, 1994:59; Arena, 1990).

Canale (1994:60) defines language proficiency as predicated upon a socio-theoretical foundation. Language is more than the sum of discrete parts such as pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary. It develops within a culture and is bound by the customs and ideas of that culture, which makes it more difficult for a second-language speaker to understand the finer nuances.

According to Spolsky (1989:43), linguistic competence is factor underlying all language skills, as the ability to speak, read, write and understand a language depends upon

knowledge of the linguistic patterns of the language. One can learn a language just as well by listening as by speaking, because the same underlying competence is necessary.

Bachmann (1990:84) describes a theoretical model of communicative language ability which identifies the different components of language ability. Communicative language ability (CLA) consists of language competence, strategic competence and psycho-physiological mechanisms, to which sociolinguistic and discourse competence can be added. Similar ideas are suggested by Candlin (1986:40) and Canale and Swain (1980:35). The theoretical model by Bachmann is now briefly reviewed.

According to Bachmann (1990:69), language competence includes organisational, grammatical, textual, pragmatic, functional and sociolinguistic knowledge.

Organisational knowledge has to do with the formal structure of language and organising grammatically acceptable utterances and sentences into text (Bachmann, 1990:67). Organisational knowledge includes grammatical knowledge and textual knowledge. Grammatical knowledge involves the organisation, production and comprehension of individual utterances or sentences. It includes a knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, phonology and graphology.

Textual knowledge is the producing or comprehending of texts, the units of language—a unit of language being two or more utterances or sentences. This also includes knowledge of cohesion and of conversational organisation (Bachmann, 1990:68).

Pragmatic knowledge has to do with interpreting discourse by relating sentences to their meanings, the intentions and communicative goals of the user, and the features of the language use setting (Bachmann, 1990:69).

Functional knowledge entails knowledge of how the utterances relate to the communicative goals of the language users. Sociolinguistic knowledge entails knowledge of how utterances and sentences relate to features of the language use setting, including register and cultural references. It includes knowledge of ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative functions (Bachman & Palmer, 1996:68; Douglas, 2000:28). Sociolinguistic knowledge also includes knowledge of dialects, registers, natural or idiomatic expressions and cultural references and figures of speech (Bachmann, 1990:68).

Strategic competence is the interaction between background knowledge, language knowledge and external context, and is the ability to assess the characteristics of the

language use situation (Bachmann, 1990:70). To these competencies, Douglas (2000:30) adds assessment (evaluating the communicative situation, engaging a discourse domain, giving a cognitive interpretation of the context), goal setting (deciding whether and how to respond to a situation), planning (deciding what elements of language and background knowledge are required), and control of execution (organising the required elements to carry out the plan).

These ideas are similar to the view of Richards and Rodgers (2001:20) on what can be regarded as “language”. They point out that there are at least three theoretical views of language: the structural view, the functional view and the interactional view.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001:20), the structural view of language is where language is seen as a system of structurally related elements defined in terms of phonological units, grammatical units, grammatical operations and lexical items. Methods such as the Audiolingual Method, Total Physical Response and the Silent Way all embody this view of language.

Richards and Rodgers (2001:20-21) then describe the functional view of language, where language is a “vehicle for the expression of functional meaning”. This view stresses the semantic and communicative functions of language by organising content in terms of meaning and function. They believe that the communicative movement falls within this view of language, one which may also be seen in notional and functional syllabuses and even in English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

The interactional view of language regards language as a means to establishing interpersonal relations and social interaction between people. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001:23), Task-Based Language Teaching, Whole Language, Neurolinguistic Programming, Cooperative Language Learning and Content-Based Instruction are all based on this view of language.

From the above it is clear that there are various views as to what language is and what may be regarded as proficiency in it. So before designing any course to improve the language proficiency of a student, the course designer will have to decide how s/he defines language proficiency and which aspects of the language the student will need most, as these decisions will determine the parameters of the course itself. This aspect is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

2.2 How does a learner acquire or become proficient in a second language?

As may be seen above, there are different conceptions of language and therefore also differing views about how it is best acquired. As pointed out by Richards and Rodgers (2001:23), different viewpoints on language lead to different approaches and methods—as may be seen in the history of language teaching. Over the last few centuries, language teaching went through the grammar-translation method, the Reform movement, Audiolingualism, and the communicative movement, each reflecting different ideas approaches to methodology and language acquisition.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in the 1980s, and became more widely accepted than previous methodologies. Its general principles are accepted around the world (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:151). All versions of CLT are based on the idea that language teaching starts from a communicative model of language use. This is then translated into an instructional system, materials and specific roles for teachers and learners (Richard & Rodgers, 2001:158). The goal of language teaching is seen as “communicative competence”.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001:161), the learning of a language is expedited through the use of activities that involve real communication—in which language is used to carry out meaningful tasks and where the language used is meaningful to the learner.

Cook (1991:116) has identified four basic models of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The first type is "knowledge models" that emphasise the importance of the individual mind in language learning. An example is the Universal Grammar (abbreviated as “UG”) model, which stresses the fact every individual has an innate knowledge of language—a universal grammar potential. This ability shapes and restricts the languages that are learnt, based on the input the learner receives (Chomsky, 1986:55). The learner has to learn the set parameters of a language and then, in order to set values for the parameters, acquires examples of the language. S/he thus needs to get positive or negative input in order to construct his/her own knowledge of the language. At the core of this model is syntax (Cook, 1991:117).

The second type is called "language processing models", such as the *competition model* and the *information processing model*. These models see language learning as acquiring ways of processing information. Language is seen as a dynamic process, rather than as static knowledge (Cook, 1991:120). These models focus more on how language is used than on language as knowledge in the mind. The main issue is communication, with four

important areas being identified: word order, vocabulary, word forms (morphology) and intonation. The processing models have a strong behaviouristic base, as practising the skills is seen as an essential element of acquisition.

The third type is “mixed models”, which see language learning as permanent learning, such as the *monitor model* or the *competence/control model* (Cook, 1991:127). The monitor model distinguishes between acquired and learnt knowledge, implying that the learner uses learnt knowledge to monitor what is being said by means of the grammatical rules s/he has learnt. The competence/control model involves the knowledge that makes up competence, as well as the control used in producing speech.

The last type is “social models”, which stress the social aspects of L2 learning. Examples are the *socio-educational model* and the *acculturation model*. Social models stress the fact that language is a social skill which takes place in a social setting, that is, both within and outside the classroom. The socio-educational model is based on the idea that a learner is motivated to learn a language. This motivation is influenced by his/her attitude towards the learning situation, as well as integrativeness, which has to do with his/her idea of the culture reflected in the L2. According to Cook (1991:128), integrativeness and attitudes lead to motivation and success. Integrativeness and attitudes arise from the social milieu of the student.

The acculturation model stresses the importance of the relationship between the social group of the L2 learners and that of the speakers of the target language. Successful learning means acculturation into the target culture. This relationship exists on various levels such as social, artistic, political, technological or religious (Cook, 1991:129). If the group of learners regard themselves as inferior or superior to the target language learners, they will not learn the language well. This model may even lead to the development of a pidgin as a solution to the problem of the two groups needing to communicate (Cook, 1991:129).

These various models suggested by Cook (1991:130) are not in conflict with one another but, instead, are necessary to cover different areas of language acquisition. UG points to core grammar; processing models stress speech processes; and social models include attitudes which stress behaviour in the academic classroom (Cook, 1991:131).

According to Ovando and Collier (1998:87), one of the latest trends in language teaching is a constructivist whole-language philosophy of learning that emphasises the integration of language and content. The four language skills are taught as a whole, and oral and written

skills are developed simultaneously. Language is developed to be used both within and outside the classroom.

Ovando and Collier (1998:90) describe the acquisition of language in terms of the “prism model”. This model identifies four aspects of language development. The first is socio-cultural processes, which include all contexts of the learner’s life, such as environment and affective factors. The second aspect is language development, which has to do with the acquisition of the oral and written systems of the learner’s first and second language, across all language domains—such as phonology, semantics, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, pragmatics and discourse. The next aspect of the prism involves the academic development of the learner, which includes school work in all subjects. The fourth aspect is the cognitive development of the learner. This process starts at birth and never comes to an end. According to Ovando and Collier (1998:90), these four components are interdependent and crucial to the development of both the first and the second language of the learner.

Ovando and Collier (1998:90) point out that academic knowledge and conceptual development transfer from the first to the second language. As the learner develops academically, his/her vocabulary, sociolinguistic development and discourse ability expand as well.

As may be seen above, there are as many approaches and methods as there are definitions of language and language acquisition. Cook (1991:131) points out that teachers have to deal with L2 learning as a whole and should not adopt one idea or method as the only solution. Spolsky (1989:104) remarks that any theory of second-language learning that leads to a single method must be wrong.

2.3 Language proficiency and academic needs

A further, more complex aspect of language development is the development of academic language learning. This term refers to a complex network of language and cognitive skills and knowledge required across all content areas for eventual successful academic performance at secondary and tertiary levels of instruction. In developing their academic language ability, students learn to use meaningful, contextualised language that stimulates their cognitive and academic growth (Ovando & Collier, 1998:93). Students may appear to be fluent at an interactive, communicative level, but may not have the advanced language skills for developing conceptual understanding in an academic context (Moore *et al.*, 1998:12).

A learner who has to cope academically in a second language needs to develop beyond basic literacy in the language (Ovando & Collier, 1998:120). Academic language proficiency includes knowledge of less frequent vocabulary, as well as the ability to interpret and produce complex language. In order to improve their level of proficiency, students will encounter increasingly difficult language, such as low frequency words and expressions, complex syntactic structures, academic discourse conventions, and linguistically and conceptually demanding texts in various context areas. They will be confronted with subject-specific jargon. They have to learn to understand the language and use it in a coherent and accurate way when responding to questions or writing their own interpretations.

Academic language learning has been termed “cognitive academic language proficiency”, or “context-reduced” language (in contrast to “context-embedded” language). Context-reduced language implies cognitively demanding use of the language, with fewer contextual clues to meaning provided (Williams & Snipper, 1990:33; Ovando & Collier, 1998:93; Cummins, 1979:224; Cummins & Swain, 1983:44). Students progress to academically more demanding content, where higher-order thinking skills are needed. These skills include the ability to classify information, generalise, infer and predict knowledge, and evaluate and hypothesise.

Adamson (1993:106) points out that ESL students who need to achieve academic competence need first to have a basic understanding of the language. This is accomplished by accessing the three kinds of knowledge: universal pragmatic knowledge, knowledge and skills in the target language—defined as language proficiency by Spolsky (1989:42)—and background knowledge of the subject area. These three types of knowledge will lead to a basic understanding of the content and, through appropriate study strategies, to an enhanced understanding of it.

The Council of Chief State School Officers in the USA defines academic language proficiency as follows:

A fully English proficient student is able to use English to ask questions, to understand teachers and reading materials, to test ideas and to challenge what is being asked in the classroom. Such a student would be proficient in all four basic skills:

1. **Reading:** to be able to comprehend and interpret text at the age and grade appropriate.
2. **Listening:** the ability to understand the language of the teacher and instruction, comprehend and extract information, and follow the instructional discourse between teacher and learners.

3. **Writing:** the ability to produce written text with content and format fulfilling classroom assignments at the age- and grade-appropriate level.
4. **Speaking:** the ability to use oral language appropriately and effectively in learning activities (such as peer tutoring, collaborative learning activities, and question/answer sessions within the classroom and in social interactions within the school).

(Council of Chief State School Officers, 1992:7)

According to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (Coetzee, 2002:31) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), learners have to be able to perform the following academic tasks and functions in their training programmes in Grades 10 to 12:

- Identify, select and extract information
- Analyse, describe, categorise/classify and synthesise information
- Generalise from information
- Compare and contrast phenomena
- Analyse cause and effect
- Solve problems by applying essential methods, procedures and techniques
- Organise and present information in a coherent manner and develop ideas logically
- Understand key terms, rules, concepts and established principles and theories
- Understand the organisation of a system
- Explain technological processes
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Interpret and evaluate information for relevance, validity, and reliability
- Explain and justify own views and support own arguments
- Identify points of departure, assumptions, inferences in a text, also about what is not said in a text
- Make own deductions, formulate conclusions
- Read critically, reflect on information and opinions, challenge opinions, judge whether a text is internally consistent, and describe what a text implies and what it does not
- Organise and manage the self
- Plan work projects
- Work effectively with others
- Negotiate with others, mediate, and handle conflict

(COTEP, 1994:3)

Based on the tasks and functions identified above, Webb (2002:4) identifies four basic areas of language knowledge and skills required by second language learners (Grade 12) before they can be regarded as proficient. These areas are *grammatical knowledge and*

skills, textual knowledge and skills, functional knowledge and skills, and sociolinguistic competencies and skills. These four areas are now briefly reviewed.

Grammatical knowledge and skills

The NQF expects learners to have a vocabulary of about 8 000 words by the time they complete Grade 12. This list includes basic “learning words” such as “describe, name, illustrate, discuss, demonstrate and explain”, as well as relevant technical terms in their content area. Learners need to be able to understand and construct derived and compound words, as well as complex sentences. They need to know derivatives, compound words, roots, prefixes, suffixes, compound derivation, synonyms, antonyms, and homophones; they need to possess the ability to use all the tenses, direct and indirect speech, modals, conditionals and the use of the passive voice. They should be able to recognise connotative, denotative, implied and multiple meanings.

Textual knowledge and skills

Learners should be able to recognise, understand and write basic classes of texts (such as work reports and instructional texts). They should be able to handle transactional writing (reports, memoranda, agendas, brochures), write narratives and descriptive, argumentative, discursive, reflective and expository texts. Learners should furthermore be able to fit textual information into existing knowledge frames (frames which are required for academic activity, that is, abstract schema for academic processing). They should be able to identify the main communicative intention of a text and to distinguish between the main and subordinate points of a text.

Furthermore, learners should be able to describe the logic of a text and organise information into new coherent wholes, write cohesively and coherently, and be able to organise their thoughts. Learners should use basic connectors (pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions and relational words) such as *and, but, thus, therefore, however, and consequently*.

Learners should be able to recognise and express basic relations in complex sentences, paragraphs and fuller texts (relations such as additive, temporal, causal, adversarial, resultative), possess knowledge and skill in using the rules and conventions of technical or vocational discourse (vocational reasoning), and be able to analyse the features and structure of texts. They should also be able to identify and evaluate the underlying assumptions in a text. Further, they should be able to negotiate meaning explicitly with a speaker, engage in interpersonal exchanges to clarify understanding, information, ideas and opinions, as well as understand or present and interpret information in tables, graphs and diagrams.

Functional knowledge and skills

As regards functional competencies in an academic context (examples from vocational training contexts could be added), learners have to be able to use the language to perform basic learning functions (to ask questions, respond to questions, express an opinion, describe, explain, understand, and so on), summarise information extracted from a text, write an academic text (including being able to write precisely), present an argument, supporting it with evidence, and convey detailed information expressing their own thoughts and feelings. They should be able to refuse, disagree, complain, interrupt politely, name and describe classes and sub-classes of objects, describe and define work-related concepts and use them appropriately in problem-solving situations. They should explain vocational activities or behaviour (for example, what the problem was with an electrical circuit and how it should be repaired), propose solutions, manage such solutions and resolve vocational problems (for example, how to design an adequate electrical system for a large building). They should be able to express a critical view, with appropriate supporting evidence and motivation, communicate effectively with members of a team (organising and managing them), negotiate about work issues, and resolve miscommunication (for example, verbal abuse or disputes between workers and line-managers) using metalinguistic skills. They should be able to persuade or motivate team-members to co-operate.

Sociolinguistic competencies and skills

Learners should be able to speak to, or write for, a specific audience and purpose, and adapt language to contexts and audiences—socio-culturally and in a technical or workplace context. They should use appropriate address and reference terms (showing respect for others), interact effectively with superiors and subordinates, communicate cross-culturally with professional and with non-professional people, and manage dysfunctional communication by distinguishing between formal and informal style. They should be able to identify and use technical registers effectively and appropriately, conduct job interviews, explain how speakers influence audiences through language choice and linguistic behaviour, project self-confidence in vocational contexts through linguistic behaviour, and portray an understanding of their place in the vocational world. They should demonstrate an awareness of cultural differences, as well as the ability to analyse the diversity of cultural values in a text.

Learners should furthermore demonstrate critical language awareness (that is, be able to identify bias, prejudice, ideological writing, and racist and sexist language), be able to recognise stereotypes in writing, and be able to challenge them, as well as handle psychological and cultural alienation verbally (Webb, 2002:4).

According to Vecchio and Guerrero (1995:4), successful academic performance requires specific linguistic abilities from students. To be successful, students need to be proficient in all four skills, and should be able to use these skills within a specific context. They must be able to respond orally to requests for information, ask probing questions, and synthesise reading material. They must be able to understand routine aural instructions in a large group setting and comments in a small group. Their reading skills should be such that they can extract meaning from a variety of text types, such as textbooks and reference books. Writing skills necessary include the ability to write short and longer answers, to answer exam questions, and to write essays. They should also understand the cultural and social rules that exist among native speakers of the target language.

In view of the above discussion, it can be concluded that the specified skills and competencies required of the learners should be built into the course they are required to follow, as well as in the testing instrument. It is also clear that there are various aspects to consider before selecting a specific method or approach. Brumfit (1984:84) says that any teaching involves judgements about selection. This process of selecting the most appropriate way of teaching a specific group of learners is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. It can therefore also be concluded that a wide choice of ideas is available to course designers and teachers, and that as appropriate these ideas can be applied to a specific group of learners thereby addressing their specific requirements and needs.

2.4 Factors that influence the acquisition of language proficiency in a second language

The ideal of any language teaching situation is that learners acquire the target language in the fastest and most effective way. The acquisition of a language is influenced by many factors. Krashen (1982:34) points out that acquisition of a second language is most successful when the learner understands what is expected and when s/he finds the learning situation natural, interesting, useful and not more than one step beyond his/her present level of competence.

According to Ovando and Collier (1998:91), the purposes for acquiring a second language and opportunities for exposure to that language have a significant influence on the extent of the proficiency developed. They point out that there are three important conditions necessary for the development of a proficient learner. The first is a learner who is motivated to learn the target language and who realises why s/he has to learn it. The second condition is a competent speaker of the second language who will provide necessary support and access to the language. The third condition is a social setting which will bring the learner into frequent contact with target language speakers. If any of these three components is

dysfunctional, language learning would be difficult or even impossible, whereas if they are ideal, language learning is assured. There should be a balance among linguistic, social and cognitive factors, which would include affective and social factors, as these factors all interact and influence the language acquisition process (Ovando and Collier, 1998:102).

The learner and the teacher influence the success of the learning process. When developing a course in language teaching, the course designer needs to consider these factors as they may affect the acquisition process. These two aspects are now discussed.

2.4.1 The learner

A motivated learner is essential to the learning process. Apart from the motivation of the learner, there are additional factors which will influence success in learning a language. Factors such as intelligence, aptitude, personality, motivation and attitudes, learning styles, sex differences, level of knowledge of the first language, differences between the mother tongue and target language and exposure to the target language outside the classroom can all influence the extent and speed of language acquisition (Ovando & Collier, 1998:93; Cook, 1991:88; Lightbown & Spada, 1993:37). These factors are interrelated. A learner can succeed because s/he is motivated or be motivated because s/he succeeds (Lightbown & Spada, 1993:36).

Lightbown and Spada (1993:52) point out that intelligence may influence the ability of children to acquire a language. It was found that intelligence was most obvious in formal language areas such as reading, grammar and vocabulary and less in oral productive skills. The classroom which is most communicative will thus reach all children regardless of their intelligence.

There is not always a clear relation between personality and second language acquisition. However, more inhibited learners tend to steer away from risk-taking and may not be as assertive and adventurous as their extroverted friends. A learner's lowered anxiety level, high self-confidence and self-esteem are important affective factors that influence the acquisition process (Brown, 1994:35; Krashen, 1982:41).

When adult learners have been exposed to a language for a long time, they pick up a pronunciation, lexis and grammatical features. Despite having picked up these features of the language, they may have passed what Lightbown and Spada (1993:42) in their Critical Period Hypothesis call the "critical period", and so may never achieve native-like fluency in the second language.

Second-language acquisition is also influenced by the learning strategies used by the learners. Learning strategies are the techniques learners use to understand and retain information and to solve problems (Ovando & Collier, 1998:104). If learners are taught these strategies, they become more efficient learners (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:65).

O'Malley and Chamot (1990:60) have identified three types of learning strategy:

1. metacognitive strategies: planning and monitoring one's own learning
2. cognitive strategies: ways adopted by the learner to organise the material to be learned mentally or physically
3. social or affective strategies: interacting with another person to assist learning.

Some aspects concerning learners cannot be manipulated by the teacher, such as their intelligence or aptitude; but by keeping individual differences between learners in mind, the teacher can ensure a more positive learning climate. It is clear that the teacher needs to consider these aspects as part of the teaching-learning situation. The role of the teacher will now be discussed.

2.4.2 The teacher

This study is concerned with students at the tertiary level. However, their language abilities are influenced by their academic background and the schooling they received. It is common knowledge that a teacher can have a considerable influence on learners, even at tertiary level. If the learners can relate to the teacher and respect him/her, there is likely to be a positive learning climate.

As was pointed out in Chapter 1, teachers need a very good command of the medium of instruction to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place (NEPI, 1992:18; COTEP, 1994:2; Strauss, 1995b:153; Barkhuizen, 1993:270; Mafisa & Van der Walt, 2002:23). Some teachers in South Africa do not have a good command of English, and this hinders classroom interaction and learning. In a study conducted by De Klerk (1995:8), she interviewed several teachers on language matters in their schools. They admitted that even though pupils found it difficult to communicate in English, they (the teachers) could not help them as they were not proficient enough in English themselves and experienced difficulties in understanding material prescribed for their pupils. The teacher must be able to help pupils to understand the content and cannot do so if his/her own proficiency is limited (Barkhuizen, 1993:77). Taitz (1992:65) reports that several teachers she observed while they were reading aloud to pupils did not understand what they were reading.

The ability to use English effectively in the classroom requires a specific competence which is not necessarily developed through general English programmes (Ellis, 1987:82). Teacher training programmes should include a component aimed not just at improving teachers' communicative competence but also at developing their awareness about the need for matching their choice of communicative style with the educational objectives aimed at. The teacher should be able to understand the content before s/he can explain it to his/her learners (Hicks, 1996:8).

If the teacher does not understand the language in which the subject is presented, any change—such as a new methodology—will be regarded as threatening. This is especially true of outcomes-based education, where the teacher is the facilitator and needs to incorporate a variety of sources into his/her lesson (Strauss, 1995b:153). If the teacher is not proficient, s/he will lack confidence and enthusiasm.

Different teachers use different styles and strategies. The term “teaching styles” here refers to a loosely connected set of teaching techniques believed to share the same goals as L2 learning and teaching (Cook, 1991:132). Brown (1987:47) describes the most common teaching style as being predominantly teacher-centred and product-orientated, one which contributes to high-anxiety situations.

Cook identifies six basic teaching styles:

- the academic teaching style, which is common in academic classrooms
- the audio-lingual style, which stresses oral practice
- the social communicative style, which concentrates on interaction between people
- the information communicative style, which stresses information transfer from one person to another
- other styles, which include combinations of the above.

(Cook, 1991:133)

Depending on the individual learner, the extent of his/her learning will be influenced by how congenial s/he finds the specific teaching style or combination of styles.

From the above, it is clear that the teacher is a very important factor in the successful acquisition of a language. Teachers need to be confident and enthusiastic as this will enhance learning. Above all, teachers need to be proficient in the language themselves and equipped to deal with the specific teaching-learning situation.

2.5 The testing of language proficiency

A necessary aspect of any teaching situation is assessment of whether learning took place. When a language proficiency course is designed, it has to be decided how the course will be assessed in order to determine its success. Any kind of assessment should measure what it intends to measure. This will depend on the situation and context, as each testing situation is unique and poses a particular testing problem (Hughes, 1989:2). According to Hughes (1989:8), the important aspects to consider when testing are that the test should be reliable, valid, have a beneficial backwash effect on teaching, and be practical. By “backwash effect” he means the way in which the test will influence how the course is taught.

Alderson *et al.* (1995:13) point out a number of aspects that the test designer needs to consider, such as the background of the learner who will be taking the test, how many sections or papers the test should have, the duration of the test, what target language situation is envisaged, what text types should be chosen, what language skills and elements should be tested (and how these are weighted), what sort of tasks are required, what test methods will be used, what rubrics will be used as instructions to students, and what criteria will be used by markers.

As pointed out by Douglas (2000:2), all tests are developed for some purpose, on a continuum of specificity from general language usage to very specific language testing—as in an ESP context such as English for Air Traffic Control. The most common aspects of testing to consider are validity, reliability, and practicality (Bachmann 1990:238). These aspects are now briefly discussed.

2.5.1 Validity, reliability and practicality

Alderson *et al.* (1995:188), as well as Bachmann (1990:161), point out that reliability and validity are complementary to each other as objectives in designing tests, as a test cannot be valid without being reliable. Sometimes it is impossible to distinguish between reliability and validity, and this should not be regarded as a problem. The main idea is that tests are checked in as many ways possible to ensure that they are reliable. What is most important is that proof be found that the test is a true reflection of the learner’s ability (Alderson *et al.*, 1995:188). It is fundamental when designing a test to identify potential sources of error within it and to minimise the effect of these factors on the test results, thereby enhancing the reliability of the test scores (Bachmann, 1990:161).

A test can be seen as reliable if it measures consistently. According to Hughes (1989:3), reliability is influenced by features of the test itself or by the way in which it is scored. A test

is reliable if candidates were to take the same test again and achieved the same results. Reliability looks at how much of an individual's test performance is due to measurement error or to factors other than the language ability that is measured. It does so in order to minimise the effect of these factors on test scores.

Validity looks at how much of an individual's test performance is due to the language abilities that are measured. Validity is the extent to which a test measures what it intends to measure and is therefore also relative to test purpose (Alderson *et al.*, 1995:6).

When standardised tests are used in research, as in this study, proof must be given of the validity and reliability of the tests to be used. The tests need to be practical and user-friendly as well. The validity, reliability and practicality of the language proficiency tests used in this study are discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

2.5.2 Types of language proficiency tests

Due to the variety of tests instruments which can be used, it is difficult to decide how to assess the language proficiency of a second-language learner. Many of these instruments test only certain skills. Variation in results can result due to variations in tests (Lightbown & Spada, 1993:38; Williams & Snipper, 1990:34). In this regard research results are sometimes confusing, as different abilities are measured by different tests. One cannot compare test results of grammatical accuracy to test results of communicative competence (Lightbown & Spada, 1993:38).

The nature of the language proficiency test that is used to decide whether a learner is proficient in a language will be determined by the definition of language accepted by the tester. The test designer accepts a specific theory on how language is acquired, and this will influence the way in which learners are assessed. Davies (1990:29) stresses the fact that, before testing, the language tester has to determine the purpose of his/her testing. Testing must correlate with the needs of the target group. It must be determined beforehand which outcomes have to be reached by learners in order to be sufficiently proficient. If the purpose of the course is to improve the communicative competence of the learner, the tester must be able to show proof of the learner's communicative competence (Williams & Snipper, 1990:35).

Valdes and Figueroa (1994:62) maintain that language proficiency testing requires some kind of contextualised language processing. They suggest that in the case of testing the language proficiency of students who need to cope in an academic environment, what

should be identified are the levels of demand made in such contexts and the types of language ability typical of native, monolingual English speaking students who succeed academically. From this one could then determine the criteria against which to measure the extent of proficiency needed by the non-native English speaking student required to be academically successful in the same context.

The language tasks needed by the student to cope academically are the tasks that should be tested—this is in order to ensure that the programme is successful in preparing the student for the demands of his/her academic context. Brown (1994:265) points out that testing language proficiency should include testing several distinct abilities apart from listening, speaking, reading and writing—such as organisational competence (phonology, grammar and discourse), pragmatic competence (sociolinguistic, functional) and strategic competence.

The choice of test to be used is determined by the reason for which the student is to be tested. Hughes (1989:10), Nation (2000:9) and Alderson *et al.* (1995:12) identify four types of language tests. These are general proficiency tests, achievement tests, diagnostic tests and placement tests. Each type is now briefly described.

The first type is a general proficiency test which tests the learner's general proficiency in English regardless of any previous language training or background. The content of the test is not based on the objectives of language courses which the candidates might have taken; it is based on what the candidate has to be able to do in the language to be considered proficient. Such tests are used to decide whether students should be allowed to study through a specific medium of instruction at an academic institution. They could also be entrance examinations to institutions. An example is the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) which is taken by most non-native speakers of English applying to North American universities.

Proficiency tests can also be more general, and be used by employers or institutions to decide on the level of language proficiency of potential employees. Examples are the Cambridge examinations (First Certificate Examination and Proficiency Examination), the Oxford EFL examinations (Preliminary and Higher) (Hughes, 1989:10) and Cambridge Proficiency Tests (Alderson, 1984). Such examining bodies are independent of teaching institutions. Another example is the TELP test developed by UCT which is used to determine the proficiency level of students who want to enter tertiary education (see Chapter 6).

Alderson *et al.* (1995:12) identify another kind of proficiency test which does not test general ability but rather the ability to succeed in a specific field or area. This kind of test is called a Specific Purpose test, and its content is usually based on some kind of analysis of the language needed for that specific purpose.

The next type of test is an achievement test. Whereas most teachers or course presenters are not involved in the design of general proficiency tests, they will be directly involved in the design and use of achievement tests. Achievement tests are directly related to language courses, and the purpose of these tests is to determine how successful students, groups of students or the course itself has been in achieving the objectives initially laid out (Hughes, 1989:10). Hughes identifies two sub-sets of achievement tests: final achievement tests and progress achievement tests. The final achievement test is administered at the end of a course and could be based directly on the course syllabus or books used in the course; it could also be based on the objectives set out for the course. A disadvantage of final achievement tests is that if the syllabus has been badly designed or the prescribed books badly chosen, the results of a test based on these decisions could be misleading. However, if the test is based on the objectives of the course, course designers will be forced to set out very specific and clear objectives. Teachers and course designers will then be forced to select materials that are consistent with the course objectives. The long-term interests of students are best served by final achievement tests which are based on tests where the content is based on objectives and not on course content.

Progress achievement tests are intended to measure the progress students are making. These tests will also relate to the objectives to be achieved and will indicate to the teacher as well as the student how they are progressing towards the final objectives laid down for the course.

The third type of test is a diagnostic test. These tests are used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of students and to determine where further teaching seems necessary. Very few tests are designed purely for this purpose due to the fact that a really comprehensive diagnostic test would have to be very long and detailed to include all possible items. This would make it impractical to administer.

The last kind of test is the placement test. This test helps to place students at the level in the teaching programme most appropriate to their abilities. According to Hughes (1989:14), the placement tests that are most successful are those constructed for particular situations.

For the purpose of this research, the test which is used is a general proficiency test—to determine the level of proficiency of the students. However, the test is also used in a

diagnostic way, as the strengths and weaknesses in the language ability of the students are identified and these are then addressed when designing the new course (see Chapter 8).

2.5.3 Approaches to test construction

This section briefly looks at different ways in which tests can be constructed. The way a test is constructed is influenced by the way it is designed and by the objectives of the course. It is important to revise briefly some of the options in test construction which can be used to assess the language proficiency of learners.

Discrete point versus integrative testing

Oller and Damico (1991:82) identify different trends in the testing of language proficiency. The first trend is the discrete-point approach which is based on the assumption that language proficiency consists of separable components of phonology, morphology, lexicon, and syntax.

This model suggests that ideal assessment would be the separate evaluation of each of these elements. In such a model, all the results are combined to form a total picture of proficiency. It is, however, very difficult to limit testing to a single skill, such as writing, without involving other skills simultaneously. It is also very difficult to limit testing to a single domain such as phonology without involving other domains. Similarly it is difficult to test language proficiency outside a social context.

To solve this, Oller and Damico (1991:85) suggest a pragmatic language test where language items are as authentic as possible and related to real-life situations. The task given to the student would be within the context and temporal conditions that normally characterise that specific task. They feel that this kind of test would achieve more fully the goals of discrete point items such as focus and isolation as it is put in a full and rich context.

According to Oller and Damico (1991:83), this is the integrative or holistic approach. This type of testing leads to language being tested within a context of discourse. Test items are more integrative, requiring students to integrate all four skills in the answering of questions.

Direct versus indirect testing

Testing is direct when it requires the candidate to perform precisely the skill to be measured. Questions are as authentic and realistic as possible. Direct testing consists of relatively straightforward questions which require straightforward answers and interpretations. It usually tests the skills that the student has to acquire, such as writing an essay.

Indirect testing measures the abilities underlying the skills. According to Hughes (1989:16), indirect testing is superior to direct testing in the sense that the results are more generalisable. However, due to the difficulty of deciding which abilities underlie a potentially infinite number of manifestations, there are practical difficulties involved in the construction of indirect tests. Direct tests are easier to construct.

Norm-referenced versus criterion-referenced testing

A norm-referenced test relates one candidate's performance to those of other candidates in rank order. Criterion-referenced testing refers to the extent to which a candidate is able to achieve certain outcomes laid down in advance, regardless of how other candidates perform. Tasks are set according to specific criteria against which the candidate must measure his/her progress.

Objective testing versus subjective testing

Objective testing over against subjective testing has to do with ways of scoring. If no judgement is required on the part of the scorer, the test is objective; whereas if judgement is needed the test should be regarded as subjective. Objectivity in a test ensures greater reliability; however, in a language learning situation many aspects cannot be tested by means of objective testing.

All decisions surrounding testing are subjective. The test designer decides whether to use open-ended questions or cloze questions, the reading passages are selected, time limits are set, dates are decided. Test scores are interpreted as correctly as possible but will always be subject to other factors or influences. At most, the test designer can aim to design a test which indicates as accurately as possible what the abilities of the candidate are.

According to Bachmann (1990:37), language tests are based on either course syllabi or theories of language proficiency, both of which represent the subjective judgements of the individuals who devise them. These tests are therefore subjective and cannot claim to be exhaustive or ideal.

From the above, it is clear that language proficiency can be assessed in various ways and on various levels. As with all aspects of teaching, testing has to be flexible and constantly innovative regarding content and method in order to prevent fossilisation of the test and format (Alderson *et al.*, 1995:221). The test designer has to liaise with the course designer so that the objectives laid down for the course are reflected in the assessment. This aspect is discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.6 Conclusion

It is clear from the above discussion that there is a wide variety of ideas on what language proficiency is and when a learner may be considered proficient. There are also several factors which will influence the acquisition of a language by a learner. Some of these factors can be controlled, while others cannot. The course designer will have to decide what his/her view on language proficiency is and where s/he would like to lead his/her learners before deciding on how to plan the course. Reflecting on the reasons for which the learner needs to know the language will guide the course designer in planning.

It is also clear that the teacher or course designer has to determine what s/he would like to assess and how—in order to ensure that the learners have achieved the required level of language proficiency. There is a clear relationship between course content and assessment. The outcomes set for the course will indicate the way in which the success of the learners and the course will be assessed.

Language proficiency is an essential requirement in education, especially where the target language is also the medium of instruction. Learners need to be as proficient as possible in the medium of instruction if they hope to succeed in their learning. It is the responsibility of every teacher to aid the learner in this process. A student who cannot communicate adequately with staff and fellow students will find it difficult to carry out even limited daily academic activities. Deficiencies in English will hamper the student in pursuing an academic programme at all levels. The application of these ideas to designing a course is discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3

The Impact of Language Policy on Language Proficiency

3.0 Introduction

The background and history of the language policy of a country has an important influence on the language proficiency of learners in that country. This chapter looks briefly at the concept of language policy and attempts to determine the effect of language policy on the language proficiency of learners in South Africa.

Politics had a negative influence on the language proficiency of learners and has played a role in the language problems that are now being experienced in South Africa (Ngwenya, 2001:6).

This chapter reviews specific language proficiency requirements for tertiary education as prescribed in the current language policy of the South African government. The guidelines laid down in the language policy influence the design of a course in language proficiency at tertiary level, which is the final outcome of this study. An overview of the history of language teaching in South Africa is given to indicate where the present language policy of South Africa originated from.

3.1 Language proficiency and language policy

Tollefson (1991:16) describes language policy as the language planning done by governments, that is, "all conscious efforts to affect the structure or function of language varieties". Language policy further includes the standardisation of programmes and the allocation of functions to specific languages within a multilingual society.

Language in education in any country is a very sensitive area as it includes the teaching of languages as subjects, and the use of language as a medium of instruction, school administration, and interaction between school and community. In assigning to a certain language the status of medium of instruction, or by requiring a specific level of proficiency in a language either for entry into or exit from courses, a certain status is assigned to that language and, by implication, less status to the other languages used in the country.

Language policies could advantage groups speaking specific varieties of a language and, by implication, disadvantage others. Tollefson (1991:17) points out that a language in education policy may be influenced at least as much by political agendas and corporate interests as by a concern for the academic and social development of the learners of a country.

The South African policy is very clear that democratic choice will always be paramount in future. There will be a conscious redressing of historical imbalances and an active participation by and accommodation of all relevant parties in deciding on and implementing future policies. All languages should be actively promoted, without disregarding the importance of English as a means to further education and global access.

As pointed out by Ngwenya (2001:101), the national education policy of a country influences curriculum design and by implication also attitudes towards language proficiency. Language policies also affect learners' opportunities for cognitive development and have an effect on their sense of identity in shaping certain political and socio-economic structures (Tollefson, 1991:33). Language planners realise that the only effective language policy is derived from a bottom-up consensus of those who will be affected by the policy (Devlin, 1990:18; Eastman, 1990:22; Eggington, 1992:4).

The implementation of a language policy can have far-reaching implications. For instance, when learners do not have the same home language as the language medium of their school, some alienation could take place between the parents and the school. Parents may not be willing to take an active interest in the school, and may not even be able to understand formal notices sent to them. They may also feel ill-equipped to speak to teachers about their children if they are not very proficient in the language the teachers use. Participation in meetings at schools may be affected, and this may indirectly influence the progress of their children (Gough, 1996:54).

Countries such as Kenya, Mali and Senegal have revised their language policies so as to move towards recognition of their national language, which is Swahili in Kenya, Bambara in Mali and Wolof in Senegal (Heine, 1992:34). These languages are the media of national communication and are accepted by the greater part of the population. However, most other African countries have a variety of languages competing for recognition and status.

In contrast to these countries, Guinea seems to have been able to solve most of its language problems by adopting an adequate language policy. There is only one official language in Guinea, which is French. No indigenous language competes with French due to

its international and national value to the population as a whole. However, there were more or less twenty indigenous languages, of which eight were developed into national languages. These eight are Ful, Manding, Susu, Kisi, Kpelle, Loma, Basari and Kniagi (Heine, 1992: 31). These languages are spoken by 89% of the population.

In 1959, these eight languages were introduced as media of instruction in the first grades and then extended to the primary school. Literacy in these languages was promoted and they became the languages of communication between government and the public. They are used more frequently throughout the country than French. Competence in at least one of the eight languages is compulsory for employment in the civil service. Public notices and signboards are in both French and one of the eight languages, usually the one used most frequently in that area. Radio broadcasts are in all languages. French is the lingua franca of the country and proficiency in French receives a lot of attention, but the other eight languages predominate culturally, politically and economically (Heine, 1992:32).

It seems as if Guinea has found a way to solve the issue of multilingualism in their country. South Africa could look to countries such as Guinea to find a solution to the problem of equity and redress for all languages in South Africa—where a policy of multilingualism has been accepted.

From the above it is clear that policies and resulting legislation can influence the use of languages in a country. The next section will look at the background and implementation of a language policy in South Africa and the effect it has on language proficiency.

3.2 Language policy in South Africa

The diversity of language and culture is acknowledged and protected, and conditions for their promotion shall be encouraged.

(South Africa, 1996, Constitution, Principle XI)

According to the ELTIC Documents (ELTIC, 1995:2), the history of language policy in Africa since colonisation has been one of linguistic repression. This makes language policy a sensitive subject. In South Africa, language policy is applied in a multilingual situation: South Africa is a country where at least 24 languages as well as numerous dialects are spoken, of which eleven (Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sesotho sa Leboa, Sesotho, siSwati, Xitsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa and isiZulu) have been declared official languages (Schuring, 1993:208).

This language diversity in South Africa exerts a powerful influence on the content, instructional methods and outcomes of schooling (Lemmer, 1995:83). The history of South

Africa has necessitated a change in political policies which in turn has changed national language policy. To elucidate this aspect, the history of South Africa with regard to language policy will be briefly reviewed in the next section.

3.2.1 The history of language teaching in South Africa and its influence on language proficiency and language policy

The history of South Africa shows the power exerted through language by different dominant groups, especially by Afrikaans and English speakers (Hartshorne, 1992:202). The following overview indicates the development of various ideas and policies on language, which influenced the country as a whole.

The pre-Apartheid era

In pre-colonial times, the African continent flourished multilingually and multiculturally (Gough, 1996:55). Jan van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape in 1652 began the period of Dutch colonisation. The Dutch East India Company (DEIC) ordered that the official language in schools, classrooms, courts and churches should be Dutch (Geen, 1982:20).

In 1795, the British invaded the Cape and permanently annexed it in 1806. The British brought with them a policy of Anglicisation, and in 1822 English was made the official language of the Cape (Davenport, 1987:44). In 1830, the British Empire abolished slavery and former slaves had to be taught basic English language skills such as reading and writing to be able to function effectively in society (Christie, 1986:37). Schooling was through the medium of English. Proficiency in English was considered vitally important for survival in the society of the day.

After the Boer War, Afrikaner communities who were bitter towards the British established their own private schools where instruction was through the medium of Dutch. Eventually, the British began to empower the different colonies in preparation for self-government, which led to the legislation of mother-tongue instruction in the lower grades (Rose & Tunmer, 1975:164; Behr, 1978:15).

South Africa was declared a Union in 1910, and English and Dutch were assigned equality in all areas of government. Afrikaans eventually replaced Dutch as one official language. Parents now had the legal right to insist on mother-tongue instruction (Afrikaans or English) in the lower grades. Either language would be taught as a subject where it was not used as medium of instruction.

The indigenous people of South Africa had to acquire at least one of these two official languages as all official matters were dealt with in one or other of these two languages only, and no indigenous languages were acknowledged. Everyone had to be proficient in English or Afrikaans. Most indigenous people, however, preferred English to Afrikaans (Hartshorne, 1992:192).

Schools were mostly single-medium (either Afrikaans or English), though there were a few dual- and parallel-medium schools. The education of indigenous peoples (Africans) was largely the task of missionaries. Africans were taught through the medium of their mother tongue up to Grade 4 (depending on the province) and thereafter through the medium of either one of the two official languages.

The Apartheid era (1948-1976)

In 1948, the electorate—which consisted of whites only—elected Dr D.F. Malan to rule the Union of South Africa. A policy of "apartheid" or separate development of all cultural groups was enforced. The National Party set up the Eiselen Commission to investigate the issue of the medium of instruction in education. It recommended separate education systems with different standards for different race groups. Different Departments of Education were set up for each race group, as well as for each of the four provinces (Natal, the Orange Free State, the Cape Province and Transvaal).

Education for coloureds was controlled by the Department of Coloured Affairs, under the central government. The Coloured Persons Council Act (No 52 of 1968) stated that mother-tongue instruction was to be implemented according to demography. This was mostly Afrikaans, with English offered as a second language from the third year of primary school. Where both languages were equally strong, parallel-medium schools were established (ELTIC Documents, 1995:53).

Until 1966, Indian children could go to school with coloured children, but with the implementation of the Groups Area Act which enforced segregation in 1966, they had to go to Indian schools only. Education for Indians was now under the control of the Department of Indian Affairs. In Indian schools, the dominant official language in the area also became the medium of instruction, which in most cases was English.

African Education underwent similar changes. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 (Act No 47 of 1953) gave full control of African Education to the government under the Department of Native Affairs. Dr H.F. Verwoerd became the Minister of Bantu Education, and was

responsible for downgrading the curriculum to an inferior education compared to that of whites. The language policy which was brought into effect in 1953 stated that African learners had to be taught through their mother tongue, with both official languages as compulsory subjects.

However, entrance into tertiary education required a high level of proficiency in either one of the two official languages, as all tertiary education was conducted through Afrikaans or English. Black communities resented having to learn through their mother tongue as medium of instruction, and regarded this as a deliberate attempt by government to disadvantage them (Hartshorne, 1995:311). Finally in 1959, it was legislated that Africans would be taught in their mother tongue up to the end of Grade 6 and then in both official languages from Grade 7.

The passing of the National Education Policy Act (No 39 of 1967) put white education under central control. The National Education Policy Act stated that South African (white) education was to have a Christian and national character and that the mother tongue, either English or Afrikaans, was to be the medium of instruction

In 1976, the government decided that the new school-leaving examination for African schools (Grade 7) was to be written in both official languages and in the vernacular. It further laid down that Mathematics and Social Science would be taught and examined in Afrikaans, Science and practical subjects in English, and the remainder in the vernacular. This led to several riots, such as that in Soweto on 16 June 1976, which received world-wide attention. The South African government was condemned for its policy of Apartheid.

By July 1976, the Department of Bantu Education had agreed to a single medium of instruction from Grade 7, to be decided on by the school. Most schools chose English, in defiance of the Afrikaner government. In its 1977 Annual Report, the Department admitted that it was unsuccessful in its attempts to promote Afrikaans in black education (ELTIC, 1995:19).

The Department of Bantu Education changed its name to the Department of Education and Training, and repealed previous legislation under the Education and Training Act (No 90 of 1979). It was decided that there should be mother-tongue instruction up to Std 2, after which one of the official languages should be used. The language to be used would be negotiated with the learners' parents.

The interim period (1976-1994)

In 1981, the De Lange Commission was appointed by the government to investigate the state of black education. The Commission suggested a more flexible language policy (ELTIC Documents, 1995:9). The Commission further suggested one of the following three possibilities: mother-tongue instruction for all learners throughout their education; one of the official languages as medium of instruction throughout; or mother-tongue instruction in the early stages and thereafter a gradual transition to one of the official languages. Parents should be given the choice between these options. Unfortunately, the Department of Education and Training did not accept the recommendations of the De Lange Commission.

By 1982, it was common practice that African learners were taught initially in their mother tongue, with a sudden transition to English as medium of instruction at the beginning of Grade 5. With only four years of learning English behind them, learners were not ready to be instructed through the medium of English, and were often just able to name objects in the classroom.

In 1990, the House of Assembly allowed learners of other races to attend white schools on a specified quota base, provided they could cope with the medium of instruction, which was still either Afrikaans or English (Lemmer, 1995:85).

In 1991, the Report of the Threshold Project indicated the prevalence of learning problems amongst African learners due to the fact that they were not ready for the change of medium of instruction in Grade 5. A more gradual transition between the two languages was suggested. Due to the findings of the Threshold Project, Act 90 of 1979 was amended to the effect that the extent and duration of the languages used as medium of instruction would be decided on by the Minister in consultation with the parents of the relevant learners. Parents opted mostly for an English-medium system (Lemmer, 1995:85).

In 1994, Nelson Mandela was released from prison, and a period of serious political negotiations was entered into. It was agreed that all languages in South Africa should have equal status, and this was to become enshrined in the Constitution of South Africa. Multilingualism became an integral part of the Interim Constitution of 1994, as well as the final Constitution of 1996. The Constitution states that through legislation, government must prevent the use of any language above any other language for the purpose of exploitation, domination or division. It further states that every person has the right to instruction in his/her choice of language where this is reasonably practicable.

Although the NEPI (National Education Policy Information) Report (1992) pointed out that no single language policy would be educationally sound and implemented for all schools, and that the specific context of the school would always influence the situation, at least there was now more equality.

The New South Africa (1994-)

From the above overview, it is clear that decisions on language policy were determined by political agendas and events. Languages were imposed on people to exercise political control. This authoritarian imposition of language policies failed (ELTIC Documents, 1995:12). Future policies will have to be more flexible and consultative (ELTIC Documents, 1995:12).

The White Paper (March, 1996:10) stresses a culture of respect for the country's diverse language communities. It is clear that the government feels strongly that learners should, within limits, have the right to language choice in education. The policy further states that special measures should be taken to enable a learner to become competent in the language of learning at his/her school, especially if s/he has to be instructed through a medium other than his/her mother tongue. The government wants to promote a unitary system of education which will allow all learners in the country the same opportunities.

The policy further states that it is the duty of all public schools and the department to ensure that all educators acquire the special skills necessary for teaching in a multilingual environment. This would include the proficiency levels of the teachers themselves.

From the government's side, it is clear that all languages are to be treated equally. According to the Minister of Education (White Paper, 1996:7), the government does not promote the use of only one of the official languages as medium of instruction in public schools. Multilingualism is promoted as far as possible, and it is further suggested that schools attempt to offer at least two languages of learning and instruction from Grade 1, one of which should be the home language of a significant number of learners in the schools.

However, due to practical reasons, English still predominates as medium of instruction. One reason is the fact that people perceive English to be a vehicle to success and achievement. Therefore proficiency in English tends to be perceived as a valuable tool and is widely preferred as medium of instruction. It is very important that all learners who want to further their studies be proficient in academic English. Courses such as the one under investigation in this study are crucial in ensuring that all learners in South Africa receive an equal chance

to undertake and succeed in tertiary studies and receive the advantages that further education brings.

3.2.2 Implications of current language policy in South Africa

As seen above, the language policy of South Africa promotes multilingualism and equality. The NEPI Report (1992) suggests that the language policy of any department or institution should be developed in such a way as to combat sexism and racism. Sociolinguistic and language awareness components should be included in language syllabi. Through this, issues of unnecessary prejudice and discrimination can be addressed.

The Language in Education Subcommittee (LANGTAG) (1996:124) set out the following goals for the language policy in the education sector:

Language policy in education should:

- facilitate access to meaningful education for all South African students
- promote multilingualism
- promote the use of the students' primary languages as languages of learning and teaching in the context of an additive multilingual paradigm and with due regard to the wishes and attitudes of parents, teachers and students
- encourage the acquisition by all South African students of at least two but preferably three South African languages, even if at different levels of proficiency, by means of a variety of additive bi- or multilingual strategies; it is recommended that where the student's L1 is either Afrikaans or English, an African language should be the additional language
- observe and sustain the legal equality of status of all South African Languages
- promote the linguistic development and modernisation of the African Languages, as well as their equality of social status
- promote respect for linguistic diversity in the context of a nation-building strategy by supporting the teaching and learning of all other languages required by learners or used by communities in South Africa, including languages used for religious purposes, languages which are important for international trade and communication, and Sign Language
- help to equip South African students with the language skills needed to participate meaningfully in the political economy of South Africa
- harmonise with the intentions of the proposed National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by:
 - opening up qualification routes
 - facilitating the integration of education, training and adult basic education

- using language and communication skills to promote core competencies such as problem-solving and critical thinking.

(LANGTAG, 1996:124)

In South Africa, with the introduction of outcomes-based education, learners of ESL are required to achieve the following outcomes in order to be considered proficient in English:

- make and negotiate meaning
- show a critical awareness of language
- respond to values in text: aesthetic, affective, cultural and social
- access, process and use information
- know and apply language structures and conventions
- use language as a medium for learning all subjects
- use language appropriately.

Based on the above it is clear that language teaching in South Africa is skills orientated and flexible, with an emphasis on multilingualism and respect for all languages. The effect of this policy on various aspects, such as the learner, the classroom, national examinations and tertiary education, will now be examined.

The learner in the South African education system

Currently, learners in South Africa have two options: to go to an Afrikaans-medium school where English is learned as second language, and sometimes as a first-language subject, or to go to an English-medium school, where English is learned as a first-language subject. A distinction needs to be made between English-medium schools situated in towns—where the majority of the learners and teachers use English as their mother tongue—and so-called “township” schools, where the majority of learners and teachers use English as a second or third language. Lemmer (1995:88) points out that the enthusiasm of the black community for English as a language of learning is unfortunately not reflected in the quality of instruction in English offered as a school subject or as medium of instruction in “township” schools, the majority of schools in South Africa.

As it has already been pointed out that these black learners prefer to go to schools where English is the medium of instruction, this section looks at the language problems and proficiency of these learners from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. In schools in towns or cities (usually previously advantaged schools or private schools), learners with English as mother tongue and those with English as second language are placed in the

same classroom, and the English second-language speakers find themselves at risk of underachievement (Lemmer, 1995:88).

English second-language students struggle to cope with English as the medium of instruction in tertiary institutions. Most of these students, however, learnt English for 12 years at school, of which at least eight were through English as the medium of instruction. Kapp (1998:26) suggests that the reason for this could be that students have been subjected to subtractive bilingualism, and have therefore not developed the necessary cognitive academic language proficiency to cope at university. Another reason could be the different cultural and social practices in which literacy is embedded at the university, or even simply that these students never acquired sufficient proficiency in English (Kapp, 1998:26).

Cummins (1979:224) suggests that the development of second-language proficiency is dependent on the development of proficiency in the first language. According to Lanham *et al.*, 1995:35, the ex-DET system of education forced learners to switch to English as medium of instruction before they were able to manipulate academic language in their mother tongue and before their academic cognitive skills were developed. These students lack Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1979:225), and cannot interpret content that is context-reduced (see 2.3). They may also come from poor socio-economic backgrounds with negative home and community influences, which contribute to their academic development (Lemmer, 1995:92). Despite the provisions made for these learners in the language policy of the country, it is clear that there can be no easy solution to the problem of the inadequate language proficiency of these learners.

Language in the classroom

As was pointed out in Chapter 1, the majority of secondary school pupils in South Africa are instructed and examined through the medium of English, while more than 90% of these learners have a mother tongue other than English. As stated earlier, classroom teaching in all Standards is often done in the learners' first language (not English) because teachers lack English proficiency (Young, 1995:107; Lemmer, 1995:88; Strauss, 1995a:1). Kilfoil (1990:20) points out that in South Africa English is a foreign rather than a second language as there is little exposure to it outside the classroom.

Kilfoil (1990:21) points out that despite English being the medium of instruction in most schools, the abilities of teachers and pupils are often not adequate in coping with the demands made on their proficiency. This leads to teachers into code-switching and mixing languages in an attempt to communicate with their learners (Meyer, 1995:159). While code-

switching is an excellent way of learning (Peires, 1994:21), in cases where it is done to the detriment of learning the medium of instruction it may hamper the acquisition of that language of instruction (Kapp, 1998:30).

In recent times in the USA, schools have had to cope with a sudden influx of Spanish learners. Some schools resorted to bilingual education to ensure that all learners received equal opportunities (Ovando & Collier, 1998:34). In practice, an English teacher would teach through the medium of English until the middle of the school day, and a Spanish teacher would then teach using Spanish as medium for the rest of the day. This was found to be most effective where more or less half the class consisted of learners whose mother tongue was English and the other half had Spanish as mother tongue. Children became fluent in both languages in a relatively short period of time, with little alienation of their own culture and language. Although this system proved to be successful in some cases, it was clear that when there were only a few students from one language group in the class, they still did not progress at the same speed as the majority learners in the class. So such a strategy would not address the multilingual situation in South Africa.

In the situation in schools at present, the majority of black children are not given sufficient opportunity to acquire adequate mother-tongue language skills before they have to make the transition to English. Lack of proficiency in English then leads to a backlog which learners find very hard to overcome (Lemmer, 1995:88). Problems facing the average teacher and learner in the classroom include excessively large classes, few resources, limited financial and emotional support, and inadequate teacher training to support the demands of English as medium of instruction. Practices such as rote-learning and lack of writing experience and of conversational and academic discourse add to the problem (Kapp, 1998:28; Young, 1995:65). As learners need language to conceptualise the content of the subject, teacher training needs to focus on the relation between language and learning. Language is the vehicle through which learners acquire and express new knowledge. Learners use language to solve problems, explain and share ideas, and organise information. The importance of language proficiency in the medium of instruction is therefore clear.

National examinations

Although all languages are given equal status in the Constitution of South Africa, the practical implications of such equality are so immense as to all but rule out implementation. It is stated in the language policy of the Gauteng Province Department of Education that parents and learners should be given the choice of medium of instruction as far as is

practically possible. However, the Senior Certificate Examination, which allows access to tertiary education, is offered only through the mediums of Afrikaans and English.

The importance of proficiency in English is clear. Despite the intentions of the Constitution and the language policy of South Africa, students will not have access to further studies if they are not proficient in English.

Tertiary education

At present, tertiary education is offered only through the medium of either Afrikaans or English. The Working Group on Language Policy in Tertiary Education (Alexander *et al.*, 1996:2) conducted a survey of the medium of instruction in South African institutions. English is the medium of instruction in all fifteen Universities which responded, with Afrikaans used additionally in four of these institutions.

The multilingual language policy of South Africa creates an almost insurmountable problem for South African universities. As pointed out by De Klerk (2001:20), a university language policy designed to address everyone's linguistic needs and implementing complete multilingualism would have negative implications both financially and academically for the institution. However, due to the lack of English-language proficiency amongst students indicated above, students who are not sufficiently proficient in the medium of instruction find it difficult to cope with the demands made on them.

At Rhodes University, a language policy embodying English as the sole medium of instruction has been adopted. This policy makes provision for assisting students who are not first-language speakers of English by "strengthening existing English language support structures and putting additional structures in place that will improve competence in English, both as a language of learning and teaching and as a medium of broader academic and non-academic communication" (De Klerk, 2001:1).

According to Beeld (17 July 2001), the University of Pretoria has found that poor language proficiency amongst students contributes to their poor achievement—30% of black students operate at the language proficiency level of Grade 5 learners. Lockyear (2002:1) points out a discrepancy between the requirements of tertiary education and the lives and educational experiences of students from historically disadvantaged environments. This discrepancy makes academic skills training essential. A sample of students taken from Border Technikon had an average reading rate of below 100 words per minute at an average comprehension rate of 74%, instead of the reading rate required by college students of 286 words per

minute. A survey of the student intake at Border Technikon further indicated that the average high school final examination symbol was an E for English Second Language (Lockyear, 2002:2)

Lecturers at a black teacher training college pointed out that due to their lack of proficiency in English their students did not understand the subject matter clearly (Kotecha *et al.*, 1990:216). A survey carried out at teacher training colleges in the former Bophuthatswana indicated an average reading age of incoming students equivalent to that of the average first-language speaker half way through Standard one. Within three to four years these students are teaching pupils and by then have to be proficient in the language (Saunders, 1991:14).

Widdowson (1994:382) argues that English is an international language which is not standardised by speakers of the language in Britain. It is a world language which will have variations as it is used around the world. However, English used in a second-language setting should be broadly acceptable and not hamper communication. This is the standard that the second language user should have achieved before s/he can be considered proficient. In South Africa, Standard English is the acceptable norm. Although this is questioned by some critics (Butler, 1996:18), it remains the accepted norm, and other variations such as, for example, Black English are not yet acceptable in professional or academic contexts. Students could be disadvantaged locally and internationally if they are not proficient in Standard English.

Students at university level require an advanced level of English. An advanced learner should be able to display an adequate command of the structure and vocabulary of English, and should be able to handle para-linguistic aspects such as style and register, as well as subject matter. It is assumed that such a learner would have full mastery of the structural possibilities of the language (Van der Walt, 1982:189). Ngwenya (2001:211) surveyed twenty South African universities where practical English courses are offered. According to his survey, these courses aim to equip students with academic literacy, emphasising reading and writing skills, the discourse of mainstream subjects, and note-taking. These courses furthermore aim to improve the general language skills that students will need later in their lives.

Most courses are one year in duration and compulsory for first-year ESL students. They are usually credit-bearing at these universities and are presented mostly by a specific faculty or department, such as the English Department or Education Faculty (Ngwenya, 2001:218). According to Ngwenya (2001:32), an English language course aimed at

developing ESL tertiary students in South Africa usually includes listening, speaking, vocabulary, reading, writing, and grammar components.

It is clear that despite South Africa's policy of multilingualism, students who want to enter tertiary education need to be proficient in English. Most universities in South Africa which have students studying through a medium other than their mother tongue have bridging courses or support systems in place to help those students. These are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

The merging of tertiary institutions in South Africa

The Minister of Education, Kadar Asmal, decided to reduce the number of universities in South Africa in order to make tertiary education more efficient. Several tertiary institutions have been merged with, or incorporated into, larger universities. The new system comprises 21 institutions: 11 universities, six technikons, and four comprehensive tertiary institutions:

- the University of North-West, Potchefstroom University and the Sebokeng campus of Vista University
- the University of South Africa (UNISA), Technikon South Africa and the Distance Education campus of Vista University
- Technikon North Gauteng, Technikon Northwest and Pretoria Technikon
- the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal
- the University of Fort Hare was incorporated into the East London campus of Rhodes University
- the dental faculty of Stellenbosch University was incorporated into the dental school of the University of the Western Cape
- the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University was incorporated into the University of Port Elizabeth
- the East Rand and Soweto campuses of Vista University were incorporated into Rand Afrikaans University (RAU)
- the Mamelodi campus of Vista University was incorporated into the University of Pretoria
- the Bloemfontein campus of Vista University was incorporated into the University of the Free State
- the Welkom campus of Vista University was incorporated into Technikon Free State.

Planned for 2005 are the following mergers:

- the University of Port Elizabeth and the Port Elizabeth Technikon
- Rand Afrikaans University and Technikon Witwatersrand
- the University of the North and the Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA)

- Border Technikon, Eastern Cape Technikon and the University of Transkei
- the Durban Institute of Technology, Mangosuthu Technikon and the Umlazi campus of the University of Zululand.

The University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand will remain as before. Rhodes University, Stellenbosch University and the University of the Western Cape will undergo minor changes.

As may be seen above, all the campuses of Vista University have been incorporated into universities near them, as outlined in Notice Numbers 858, 859, 860, 861, 862 and 863 in the Government Gazette (No 23550) of 24 June 2002. The merger of Vista campuses was effected in terms of Section 24 of the Higher Education Act (Act No 101 of 1997).

According to the Minister, this step will contribute to the stabilising and strengthening of the higher education system, and will enable the development of a higher education system that is sustainable, of high quality and responsive to the national development agenda. At the time of writing, this transformation is still in the process of negotiation, and the implications for course development and curriculum planning have not yet been established. However, these institutions will have to consider the background and language proficiency levels of their new intake of (previous) Vista students.

The current transformation of tertiary institutions will impact on the courses and academic support offered at these institutions. Kapp (1998:27) points out that the medium of instruction at most tertiary institutions will remain English for the time being. The introduction of African languages as medium of instruction is unlikely. Reasons for this are the lack of material and teaching capacity, and because the students themselves do not want this. While black students now have access to formerly whites-only tertiary institutions, they now find themselves at a disadvantage because of the medium of instruction (Kapp, 1998:25).

3.3 Conclusion

As may be seen above, South African language policy aims to promote multilingualism. However, as discussed in 3.3.2, national examinations are conducted in English, tertiary institutions use mainly English—and sometimes Afrikaans—as medium of instruction, and English is regarded by the general public as the *lingua franca*.

The social function of English in South Africa is, first, access to educational and job opportunities. It is regarded as an important key to knowledge, science, world literature and

cultural affairs (Branford, 1996:36). English is still the most commonly used language in Parliament and is the dominant language of the black press.

South Africa has a history of political upheaval, in which the issue of language in education played a large role. It is important to look at the past and build on the successes achieved to improve the quality of education for all citizens of the country. However, it is clear that, despite the current language policy of South Africa, proficiency in English is essential for all South African citizens but especially for students who want to further their studies. Even though the country aims for multilingualism and equal status for all languages, it remains imperative that students are proficient in English which is still the medium of instruction in most tertiary institutions. A course such as the one under investigation in this study needs to be relevant and advantageous to the students who need to take it.

Chapter 4

Designing a Language Proficiency Course

4.0 Introduction

As pointed out in Chapter 2, before a course designer can develop a language proficiency course for a specific group of learners, it has to be determined who the learners are, what their current level of proficiency is, what their communicative needs are, and in what context they will be using English. Only when these questions have been answered can course objectives be determined and choices made about course content, methods and teaching materials (Richard & Rodgers, 1986:156).

In this chapter, the basic principles of course design will be reviewed to determine a set of guidelines which can be applied in re-designing the course analysed in this study. Various suggestions for course design are reviewed and evaluated to define the basic elements of course design.

According to Graves (2000:15), course design is a grounded process in that a course is designed for a specific group of people, in a specific setting, for a specific amount of time and in a specific context.

4.1 Course design

For the purposes of this study it is relevant to define the concept of "course".

A course is a programme of study selected for a specific period of time and designed for a specific group. It refers to the selection and organisation of content and material to be used for instructional purposes (Graves, 2000:3; Nunan, 1988a:5; Brumfit & Roberts, 1983:147).

Course design is often based on some sort of choice of unit around which lessons and teaching materials are organised (Long & Crookes, 1992:30). These units can be structures, notions, functions, topics or situations, or they can be more analytic and include a variety of task-based designs (Yalden, 1987:21; Wilkins, 1976:2; White, 1988:44; Long & Crookes, 1992:27).

Nunan (1988a:27) distinguishes between product and process syllabuses. Product syllabuses are syllabuses in which the focus is on the knowledge and skills which learners should gain as a result of the instruction. Process syllabuses focus on the learning experiences themselves. These two syllabus types are now briefly reviewed.

4.1.1 Product-orientated syllabus design

Product-orientated syllabuses include items such as structure, lexicon, vocabulary or functions and notions.

The grammatical syllabus

The most common product-orientated syllabus is the grammatical syllabus, where content is selected and graded according to grammatical items (Nunan, 1988a:28). A grammatical syllabus consists of a list of grammatical items which are introduced one after the other. It is assumed that language consists of a finite set of rules which can be learned one by one (Wilkins 1976:2; Nunan, 1988a:29).

Obvious problems with the sequence and selection of items arise. There is no one-to-one relationship between form and function (Nunan, 1988a:31). A grammatical syllabus design does not cater for the communicative needs of the learner, although grammar remains essential in any language situation. The disadvantage of this syllabus type is that it does not give learners sufficient opportunity to use the language. Syllabuses need to emphasise communicative usage of the language and not only correct grammar.

The functional-notional syllabus

Another attempt at syllabus design features in the development of functional-notional syllabuses. Functions may be defined as the communicative purposes for which language is used, while notions are the conceptual meanings expressed through language (Nunan, 1988a:35).

Finocchiaro and Brumfit describe the advantages of the functional-notional approach as follows:

- it sets realistic learning tasks
- it provides for teaching of everyday, real-world language
- it leads to emphasis on receptive activities (listening, reading) before performance activities are attempted (speaking, writing)
- it recognises that the speaker has something to say

- communication is intrinsically motivating because it expresses basic communicative functions
- it enables teachers to exploit psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and educational principles
- it can develop naturally from existing teaching methodology
- it leads to a spiral curriculum which reintroduces grammatical, topical and cultural material
- it allows for flexible, modular courses
- it provides for the widespread promotion of foreign language courses.

(Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983:17)

The functional-notional syllabus provides opportunity for communication in the classroom. However, syllabus designers found that it is very complex to select and grade items when designing such a syllabus (Nunan, 1988a:37). It is not always possible to say which function—for example “apologising”—should be taught before another—such as “requesting”.

Widdowson (1979:11) points out that any inventory of language, whether based on lists of grammatical items or of functions and notions, leads to a misrepresentation of the communicative nature of language. Although the functional-notional syllabus provides more opportunity for communication than the grammatical or structural syllabus, functions and notions are still linguistic units of analysis (Markee, 1997:17). Whatever the unit of syllabus design is, a synthetic syllabus remains product-orientated and static, with units which have to be acquired separately (Long & Crookes, 1992:33).

4.1.2 Process-orientated syllabus design

In contrast to product-orientated syllabuses, process-orientated or analytic syllabuses are syllabuses in which learners are exposed to language that has not been linguistically graded. Examples of process-orientated syllabuses are procedural, process and task-based syllabuses.

The procedural syllabus

The procedural syllabus is associated with the work of Prahbu and the Bangalore Communicational Teaching Project (Prahbu, 1987:70). Prahbu argues that learners acquire a language subconsciously, when their attention is focused on meaning and not on form. The basis of each lesson is not any pre-selection of language items, but a problem or task (Prahbu, 1987:275).

In practice, two tasks are given in class. The first task is a pre-task in which the teacher demonstrates to the class what to do and introduces the language to be used. The second task is to be done by the learners. After they have completed the task, the teacher gives feedback on their answers. Tasks have to be intellectually stimulating enough, with the focus on meaning.

Information-gap activities are used or tasks such as the planning of itineraries, calculating distances or using maps and charts. Activities are usually pedagogic tasks and not necessarily tasks determined through a needs analysis given to the learners. Task and content selection may not be relevant to the learners.

The procedural syllabus has been criticised for failing to include an evaluation component in its design. The grading and sequencing of tasks is very difficult (Long & Crookes, 1992:37).

The process syllabus

The process syllabus is similar to the procedural syllabus, as tasks are given to learners in the form of differentiated, sequenceable, problem-posing activities (Candlin, 1987:10). The process syllabus does not pre-select the linguistic content of instruction, but uses problem-solving tasks to develop learners' innovation and creativity. Content, materials, methodology and assessment are negotiated between the instructor and the learners (Markee, 1997:20). However, in practice, learners make these choices within fairly well-defined parameters, and tasks are selected from a bank of pedagogic tasks (Long & Crookes, 1992:39).

The process syllabus has been criticised for its lack of evaluation procedures, the redistribution of power and authority in the classroom, and the wide variety of learning materials and resources which are needed (Long & Crookes, 1992:39). Long and Crookes (1992:40) point out that the process syllabus, like the procedural syllabus, lists only pedagogic tasks and not tasks based on a needs analysis. The grading and sequencing of tasks remains a problem.

The task-based syllabus

Historically syllabus design has progressed from grammatical, functional and notional syllabuses to a more eclectic and task-based approach. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is regarded by some syllabus designers as an umbrella term that subsumes the process and the procedural syllabuses (Markee, 1997:35; Long & Crookes, 1993:44).

The organisation of a syllabus around tasks has been suggested by Prabhu (1987:25), Breen (1987:42), Richards, Platt and Weber (1985:289), Long and Crookes (1992:39), Candlin (1987:34) and Nunan (1988a:42). The syllabus is organised around tasks and activities rather than grammatical or lexical items (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:222). This provides the learner with a purpose for using and learning the language. Tasks activate an immediate need to understand and express meaning, and can be completed by learners in groups quite independently of the teacher (Long & Crookes, 1993:45; Richards & Rodgers, 2001:223).

By using language for completing tasks, learners develop an underlying language system, add to it and deepen it progressively, often through reorganising the system. Learning is more successful when individual learners make their own hypotheses and receive feedback from teachers. Learning is learner-driven and not teacher-driven (Skehan, 2002:295; Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1989:235; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:32; Long, 1985:89). Structured tasks and tasks based on familiar information produce higher accuracy, especially if learners are given planning time before they do tasks and if post-task are added (Skehan, 2002:293).

Candlin (1987:33) has compiled a list of criteria for selecting tasks. Tasks should:

- promote attention to meaning, purpose, negotiation
- encourage attention to relevant data
- draw objectives from the communicative needs of the learners
- allow for flexible approaches to the task, offering different routes, media, modes of participation, procedures
- allow for different solutions depending on the skills and strategies drawn on by the learners
- provide opportunities for language practice
- promote sharing of information
- provide monitoring and feedback of the learner and the task.

(Candlin, 1987:33)

Long and Robinson (1998:15) argue that tasks should be chosen according to the needs of the learner and should be based on real-world tasks determined through needs analyses. Tasks should promote “negotiation of meaning” by forcing learners to clarify as they go along, something which will lead to collaboration between the individual competences of two learners (Long & Crookes, 1993:15).

The use of tasks has been criticised by linguists such as Bruton (2002:284), who feels that not all instances of communication can be converted into tasks, in the same way that not all

communication can be encompassed by, for example, situational syllabuses. He feels that tasks could be used for oral language practice, but that there is little evidence that tasks as core activities have led to language extension or correctness of use in oral production (Bruton, 2002:286). Bruton (2002:287) further argues that there is no evidence that learners acquire a language task by task any more than they do one structure at a time.

However, tasks provide an informal “vehicle” for the presentation of appropriate language samples to learners in a natural way, which is much more beneficial to learners than formal instruction which seems to have little or no effect on the developmental progress of ESL learners (Long & Crookes, 1993:39). As pointed out by Skehan (2002:295), a task-based approach is a learner-orientated approach which emphasises the ways in which the individual needs of the learner can be addressed, while language-based approaches are teacher-orientated and not very meaningful to the learner. Learners can see the utility of tasks as they have immediate relevancy (Nunan, 1993:18).

It can be concluded that a task-based approach is most relevant to the needs of learners. The needs of the specific group of learners can be addressed and the course can be designed within a specific context.

4.2 Designing an English for Specific Purposes course

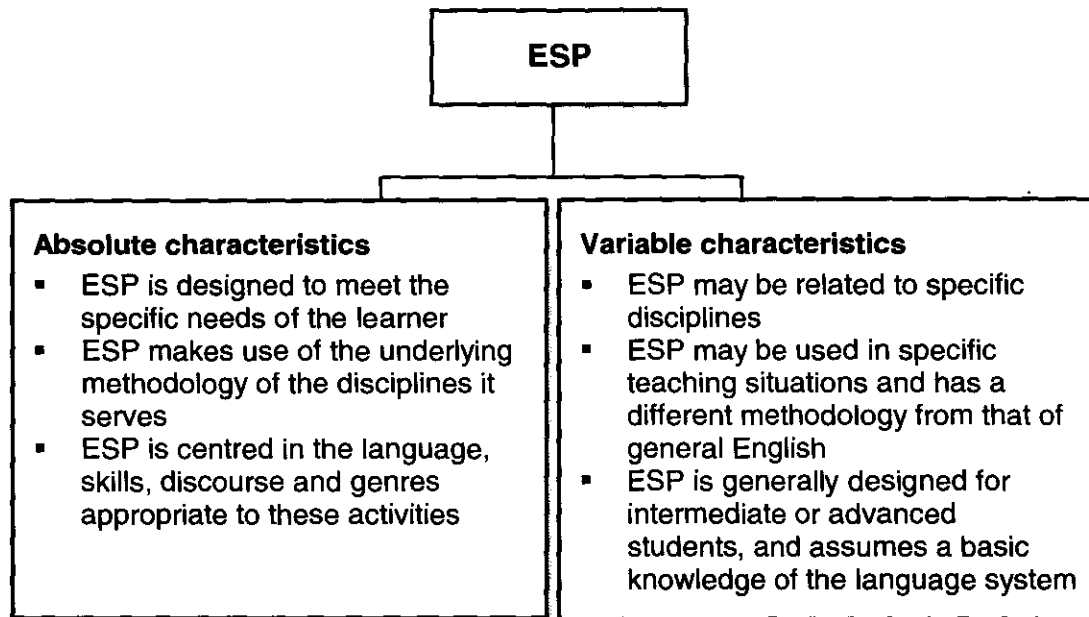
Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:3) point out that teaching ESL to a specific group of students, with specific needs, constitutes an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course (see Chapter 2). ESP has several possible variations: EAP (English for Academic Purposes), EOP (English for Occupational Purposes) and EBP (English for Business Purposes). ESP and EAP are now briefly reviewed, as these two variations are relevant to this study.

4.2.1 English for Specific Purposes

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:4), ESP course design is based on the notion of a “common core” of language and skills that belongs to all academic disciplines. If the needs of a group of learners can be accurately specified, this specification can be used to determine the content of a language course that will meet those needs (Widdowson, 1987:96). Robinson (1991:3) specifies that ESP is goal-directed, developed from a needs analysis, constrained by a time limit, and taught to adults in homogeneous classes.

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:121) describe the key stages in teaching an ESP course as follows. In the first place, a needs analysis is done, then the course is designed, materials

are selected and produced, and the course is presented and then evaluated. These stages are not separate but overlap and are interdependent. The emphasis is on practical outcomes and preparing learners to communicate effectively in the tasks prescribed by their study or work situation. In their definition, Dudley-Evans and St John describe ESP in terms of absolute and variable characteristics (see Figure 1).



(Dudley-Evans & St John 1998:5)

Figure 1: The characteristics of ESP

Strevens (1988:44) suggests that it may be more beneficial to some students to focus on an ESP course than a general language course. Being focused on the learner's needs, it wastes no time, is relevant to the learner and is cost-effective.

The teacher of an ESP course needs to be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of the learners. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:13) see the role of the ESP practitioner as teacher, course designer and materials provider, collaborator, researcher and evaluator. The course under investigation in this study may be regarded as an ESP course.

4.2.2 English for Academic Purposes

As pointed out above, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a variation of ESP, and refers to any English teaching that relates to a study purpose. Students whose first language is not English but who are studying through the medium of English may need help with both the language of the academic discipline and the specific "study skills" required during their academic course, such as problem-solving. A course in EAP should prepare learners for problem-solving and academic study.

Cummins and Swain (1983:21) specify three abilities that are important for academic success: students need to be able to use the target language structures that are characteristic of academic prose, they need to be able to use general language structures, and they need to be able to reason. They further identify four different scenarios for EAP at tertiary level:

An English-speaking country, such as UK or USA [to which] students may come from another country to study... and find a different academic and language culture in which they have to cope:

- An English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) situation where English is the official language of education and is widely spoken. Education is mainly in English, but people use their first language in everyday life, such as in Africa or South East Asia.
- A situation where certain subjects (for example, medicine, engineering, and science) are taught in English, while for other subjects and at other levels of education, the national language is used.
- A situation where all subject courses are taught in the national language, but English is important as an auxiliary language.

(Cummins & Swain, 1983:21)

The second scenario is what most students in South Africa face. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:37) point out that students in this category have most likely received their education in English, often from primary school level, but although their language level may be high, they require help in adjusting to the demands made on them when they begin an undergraduate course. These students may come from rural areas where they have had limited exposure to English (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:37). The needs of these students are in the area of study skills and adjusting to the abstract nature of the language of theory which they may encounter on a large scale for the first time when they start an academic course.

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:37), there can be different focuses in these courses. They point out that some courses in Nigeria or Kenya have concentrated on developing "common-core" study skills courses for students from a mixture of disciplines, focusing in particular on reading and writing skills. The problem is that it is often difficult to find material and activities that are sufficiently challenging for these students. The University of Zimbabwe (Mparutsa *et al.*, 1991:33) and the University of the Witwatersrand (Starfield, 1994:21) have found that specific and subject-related courses are more successful in motivating these students. Other courses, such as those in South-East Asia, have concentrated more on the skills students will need once they enter the workforce.

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:38) make another important distinction within English for Academic Purposes when they distinguish between English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). EGAP refers to the teaching of skills and language common to all disciplines, while ESAP refers to specific features of one discipline.

The skills to be taught in EGAP include activities such as listening to lectures, participating in seminars, reading textbooks, and writing essays and assignments. This means that practice is needed in all four skills. Apart from these skills, other skills are implied, such as skimming and scanning, distinguishing main ideas from detail, and writing reports.

ESAP integrates the skills work of EGAP with actual subject tasks. Students are shown how they can transfer skills they have learned in the EGAP classes to their actual lectures, or in writing reports or essays (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:39). Widdowson (1983:42) sees ESAP courses as more concerned with training and EGAP courses as more concerned with education. This study is concerned with an EGAP course, enabling students to transfer the skills acquired to their specific subject areas.

Weideman (2003: xi) specifies academic language competence in the form of a number of specific outcomes:

- understand a range of academic vocabulary in context
- interpret the use of metaphor and idiom in academic usage, and perceive connotation, word play and ambiguity
- understand relations between different parts of a text, be aware of the logical development of an academic text from introductions to conclusions, and how to use language that serves to make the different parts of the text hang together
- interpret different kinds of text type (genre), and have a sensitivity for the meaning they convey, as well as the audience they are aimed at
- interpret, use and produce information presented in graphic or visual format
- distinguish between essential and non-essential information, fact and opinion, propositions and arguments, cause and effect, and classify, categorise and handle data that make comparisons
- see sequence and order, and do simple numerical estimations and computations that are relevant to academic information, that allow comparisons to be made, and can be applied for the purposes of an argument
- know what counts as evidence for an argument, extrapolate from information by making inferences, and apply the information or its implications to other cases than the one at hand

- understand the communicative function of various ways of expression in academic language (such as defining, providing examples, arguing)
- make meaning (for example, of an academic text) beyond the level of the sentence.

(Weideman, 2003: xi)

These outcomes can be applied when designing a course for students as in this study (see Chapter 8). Tasks should be selected that require students to seek information, process it and produce it in an academically acceptable format (Weideman, 2003: xi).

4.3 Course design in practice

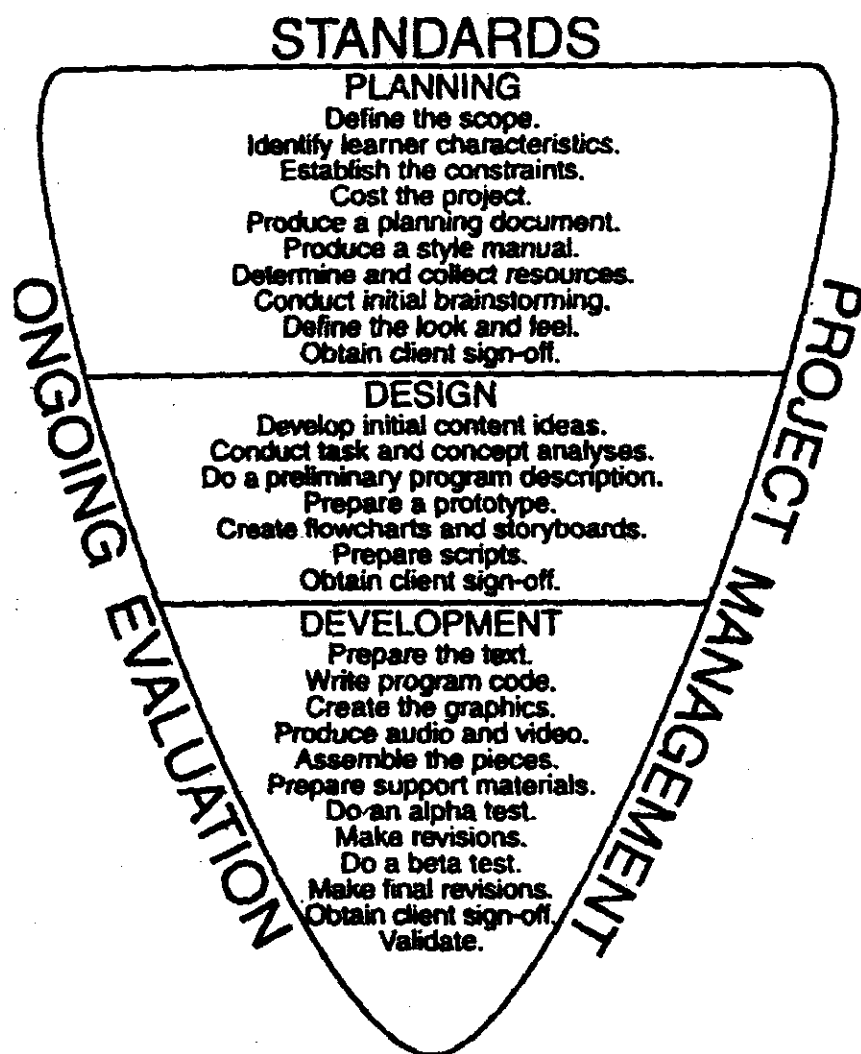
Classic models of course design (Stenhouse, 1975; Taba, 1962; Tyler, 1949), as well as recent models (Brown, 1995; Graves, 2000; Johnson, 1989; Nunan, 1988a; Nunan, 1988b; Richards, 1990; Yalden, 1987), all identify more or less the same components in course design, although terminology may differ. These components include the needs of the learners, setting goals and objectives to determine the planned outcomes of the course, designing a syllabus, selecting content, selecting materials, deciding on methods, and selecting ways to evaluate learners and the course.

According to Ngwenya (2001:97), designing a curriculum requires sensitivity to the academic environment, knowledge and appreciation of the relevant subject discipline, an awareness of the abilities and preferences of the student, an understanding of where available resources may be accessed, and an understanding of the mission statement of the university, as well as the national education policy of the country. These are aspects that need to be considered before a course is designed.

Three models for course design are now discussed which are representative of the most common trends in course design.

4.3.1 Alessi and Trollip's model

Alessi and Trollip (2001:411) propose four stages in designing and developing a course (see Figure 2): the planning stage, the design stage, the development stage, and the evaluation stage.



(Alessi & Trollip, 2001:411)

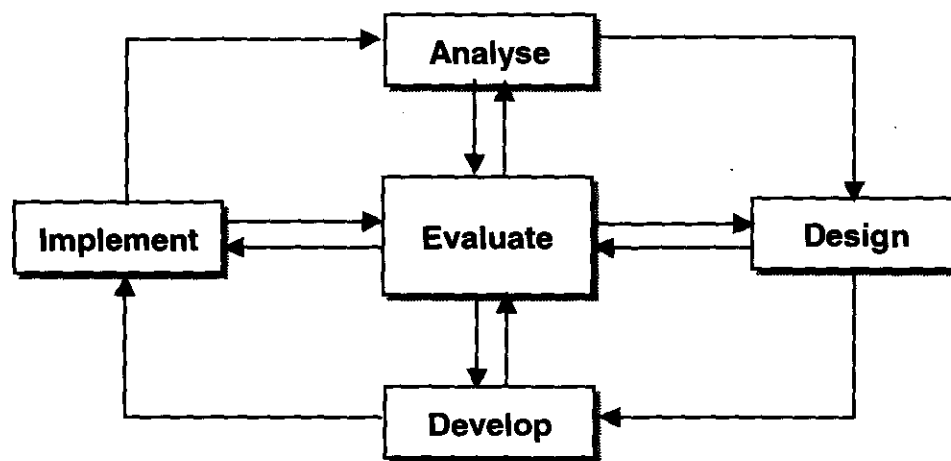
Figure 2: Alessi and Trollip's instructional design model

This model is similar to several models on instructional design specifically developed for training in a variety of areas, and provides the essential elements of course design. It does not provide enough detail because the elements are merely listed. There is not enough guidance on actual course design, which takes place during the development stage.

4.3.2 The Instructional System Design model (ADDIE)

The Instructional System Design model (ISD model) proposed by Clark (2000:6) is similar to the model by Alessi and Trollip (see Figure 3), but provides more detail on developing a course in a specific training area. The ISD model is also known as SAT (System Approach to Training) or the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implement, Evaluate), and is used worldwide in the development of training programmes. In this study, the model will be referred to as the ADDIE model, as the term "ADDIE" is indicative of the five steps to be followed.

Figure 3 below illustrates the interactive nature of the processes identified in ADDIE for developing a course. It also highlights the importance of evaluation and feedback throughout the learning period. The five steps are interactive, ongoing activities which are never static (Clark, 2000:7):



(Clark, 2000:7)

Figure 3: ISD model flow chart

Clark's (2000:6) model is now discussed with reference to ESL where necessary.

Analyse

According to Clark (2000:6), step one is to analyse the system, department or job to gain a complete understanding of it. During this phase, all relevant information is gathered in order to gain a complete understanding of the task at hand and to compile a task inventory which indicates exactly what needs to be done.

Design

The second step is to design the course. During this phase, goals and objectives for the course are formulated and decisions made on how these will be assessed. A course starts

with the objectives and ends with tests to determine whether the objectives were achieved. The course designer has to decide how to get from the one to the other, and those decisions will form the course content. A task inventory is compiled to indicate all the tasks the learners should be able to do at the end of the course.

Develop

Step three is the development phase, where the course itself is developed in more detail and materials are developed. Activities are listed that will help students to learn the task. Decisions are made on handouts, materials and methods. Existing materials are reviewed and adapted where necessary. The course is then validated to ensure that the goals and objectives are met.

Implement

Step four is when the course is implemented and made available to students and lecturers or trainers. Decisions are made on how and where the course will be presented.

Evaluate

Step five is when the course is evaluated and each phase is reviewed. Thereafter external evaluations are done to ensure that the learners have acquired the prescribed knowledge and skills and that the outcomes of the course have been reached. The course is re-evaluated and redesigned where necessary.

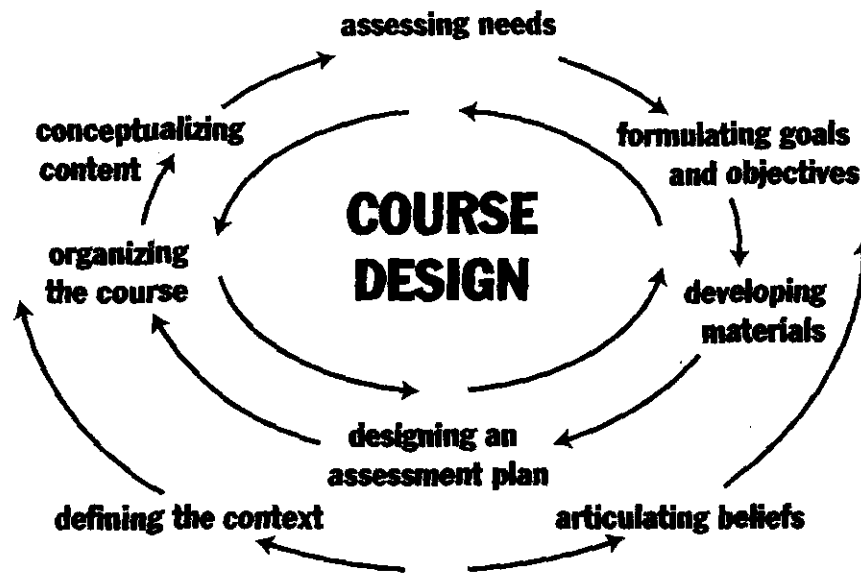
According to Clark (2000:8), this model should be regarded as a proven method in building a viable training course, yet should not be regarded as rigid and concrete. Modification may be required depending on the specific context. He further suggests a constant process of implementation, testing, feedback, evaluation and change which should be repeated constantly to ensure the highest quality.

The following model proposed by Graves (2000:3)—which is similar to the ADDIE model—is more detailed and can be applied specifically to ESL. This model is now discussed.

4.3.3 Graves's model

The following framework (see Figure 4) by Graves (2000:3) illustrates the design of a course by means of a “flow chart”, with each stage described as an interactive process, thereby stressing the fact that there is no hierarchy or set sequence between each stage. The stages are interrelated, and each process influences or is influenced by another. Planning

one component will contribute to others and can be described as a “thinking process” (Graves, 2000:5).



(Graves, 2000:3)

Figure 4: Graves's course design model

The flow chart suggested by Graves does not indicate any specific sequence in the process. Each element interacts to form a whole, grounded in the beliefs and understandings of the course designer and similar to the interdependence of elements described by Dudley-Evans and St Johns (1998:122). Graves (2000:4) points out that course design does not necessarily follow a logical sequence, and course designers may feel they are doing something wrong if they find it impossible to adhere to a prescribed, logical, rational sequence of steps. If a course designer follows the systems approach as suggested by Graves (2000:5), while s/he works with one element, s/he is simultaneously working with .. other elements.

Course designers need to make choices about each of the elements in the framework in order to convert their experience and knowledge into a course programme (Graves, 2000:5). It is an active, thinking process which involves pedagogical reasoning. This process is not necessarily a logical, rational series of steps where one component must be “correct” before moving on to the next.

Graves's model (2000:5) is now discussed in detail, with reference to other models where relevant. As the components of the model are interactive, there is not a fixed, predetermined starting point.

The first component that is discussed here is “defining the context”.

Defining the context

The course designer has to define the specific context in which the course will be taught—including the people involved, the physical setting, the nature of the course and the institution, the teaching resources available, and the time allocated to it (Graves, 2000:13). The course designer needs to know as much as possible about the context in which the course will be taught in order to make the appropriate decisions.

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:126), an important aspect that is sometimes neglected is whether it is a short, intensive course, or a long, extensive course, or something in between. The course designer will have to select the most essential course content according to the time available and the needs and requirements of the learners themselves.

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:145) pose a number of questions which should be asked with regard to the planned course:

- should the course be intensive or extensive?
- should the learners’ performance be assessed or non-assessed?
- should the course deal with immediate needs or delayed needs?
- should the role of the teacher be that of the provider of knowledge and activities or should it be as facilitator of activities arising from learners’ expressed wants?
- should the course have a broad or narrow focus?
- should the course be pre-study or pre-experience or run parallel with that study or experience?
- should the material be common core or specific to learners’ study or work?
- should the group taking the course be homogeneous or should it be heterogeneous?
- should the course design be worked out by the language teacher after consultation with the learners and the institution, or should it be subject to a process of negotiation with the learners?

(Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:146)

Defining one’s context can be seen as part of “pre-course needs assessment” (Graves, 2000:19) when choices have to be made about the planned course. It gives one the background against which the course will be designed.

Articulating beliefs

The course designer has to consider his/her own beliefs on language proficiency and language teaching. These beliefs refer to the theories and the nature of language and

language teaching accepted by the course designer that influence the decisions and choices to be made (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:20). One's beliefs are also influenced by past experiences and one's background (Graves, 2000:26).

Conceptualising content

Conceptualising the content is the process during which the course designer decides what the students should learn in the course, as well as what to include and what not, and during which s/he organises the content. Decisions are made on objectives, materials sequence and evaluation (Graves, 2000:28). Graves (2000:38) refers to this as a kind of structure or "syllabus" indicating what is to be taught in the course.

Graves uses three of Stern's concepts (Stern, 1992:44), namely, *language*, *learning and learner* and *social context* as a framework for conceptualising content. The concept of *language* refers to linguistic skills (pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary), situations, topics or themes, communicative functions, competencies, tasks, content, speaking, listening, reading, writing and genre. *Learning and the learner* refers to aspects such as affective goals, interpersonal skills, and learning strategies. *Social context* refers to sociolinguistic, sociocultural and sociopolitical skills. All these aspects are combined into a system from which the rest of the planning will follow. These concepts are not fixed, but overlap and connect with one another (Graves, 2000:52). Conceptualising the content gives the course designer a basic framework within which to decide what to include in the course.

Graves (2000:53) suggests that course designers start with a mind map which enables one to see the whole picture. The first step in designing such a mind map would be to brainstorm everything that one wants to include in the course, rather than merely listing items. After drawing a mind map, she suggests organising this into categories, providing examples for these categories, and looking for ways in which they connect. This initial brain storming can also be done by using flow charts or journals. Each designer will develop a uniquely creative way of brainstorming the course according to their different personalities, contexts and students.

Assessing needs

In recent years, a major trend in language syllabus design has been the use of information from and about learners in curriculum decision-making (Nunan 1988b:13). One way of gathering more information is to do a needs analysis. A needs analysis focuses on the learner's present level of proficiency and what this level should be by the end of the course. This will determine what type of language skills and level of proficiency the course should be able to deliver. As the goals of learners differ, these have to be determined before decisions

on content and method can be made (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:156). Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:123) feel that a needs analysis is the cornerstone of ESP and leads to a focused course.

Nunan (1988b:14) identifies two types of needs analyses, a learner analysis and a task analysis. The learner analysis indicates the purpose for which the learner is learning a language. This will aid the course designer in the selection of content. Learner analyses include objective and subjective data. Objective data are factual information and do not include the attitudes and views of learners but rather biographical data on age, home language and nationality. Subjective information includes the perceptions, goals and priorities of the learners, their reasons for taking the course, and the tasks and activities they would prefer to do (Nunan 1988b:18). Nation (2000:3) refers to an "environment analysis", which includes similar aspects such as the nature of the learners and the teachers, and the teaching situation. He suggests that the course designer should consider constraints on a course such as time, content required by learners, and whether the course is suitable, practical and realistic (Nation, 2000:3).

Nunan (1988b:49) identifies proficiency level, age, educational background, previous courses, nationality, marital status, time in the country, occupation, first language, other languages, preferred course length, learning arrangement, methodology, learning style, language goals, and life goals as relevant aspects which influence the planning of a course.

Munby (1978:23) mentions several elements to consider when attempting a needs analysis. They are similar to those mentioned above, such as the participant (specified information on the learner, age, nationality, command of language), the purposive domain, the purpose for which the language is required, the setting or environment in which the language will be used, the people with whom the learner will be interacting, the medium that will be needed (spoken, written, receptive, productive), the mode (whether the communication will be monologue/dialogue, written/spoken, to be heard/read), and the channel (face-to-face or indirect). He furthermore refers to the dialect to be used, the degree of mastery which the learner needs to gain in the target language, the productive and receptive skills the learner needs to master, and the interpersonal attitudes and tones the learners are required to master. All these aspects may be taken into consideration.

When analysing the needs of the learners, one can distinguish between "general" and "specific" language needs of the learners. General needs include obtaining data on who the learners are, their present level of proficiency, teacher and learner goals and expectations, the teacher's teaching skills and level of proficiency in the target language, constraints of

budget and time, available instructional resources, and societal expectations. Specific needs would be, for example, the specific training needed for a specific purpose such as teaching listening comprehension skills to foreign students attending graduate seminars in Biology (Richards & Rodgers, 1986:156).

A needs analysis can thus be seen as the identification of as much information as possible about the learners and their expectations of the course—such as their communication requirements, personal needs, motivations, relevant characteristics and resources (Yalden, 1983:90; Oliva, 1982:229). Hutchinson and Waters (1989:45) divide the learner's needs into necessities (what the learner has to know to function effectively), lacks (what the learner knows and does not know already), and wants (what the learner thinks s/he needs).

The course designer can determine the needs, wants and requirements of learners for the course in various ways. Questions should be asked about the students' needs and wants, the expectations of the institution, and the features of the actual teaching situation. These may be determined by the course designer through testing, questioning and interviewing, studying previous performance, consulting employers, teachers and others involved, collecting data such as textbooks and manuals the learners will have to read and analysing them, or investigating the situations in which learners misuse the language (Nation, 2000:5; Graves, 2000:102).

Designing a needs assessment plan requires the course designer to consider the kind of information s/he wants to get and what s/he hopes to do with it, the types of activities s/he plans to use to get the information, and when s/he wants to conduct these activities (Graves, 2000:120).

Formulating goals and objectives

The next component to be discussed is goals and objectives (Graves, 2000:74). By using as much as possible of the information gathered so far, the course designer will be able to determine learning goals, the reasons for which a course is being taught, and what the learners need to get from it (Nunan, 1988b:24; Nation, 2000:7). These decisions include the length of a course and the requirements specified by the relevant authorities in charge of the course.

Graves (2000:78) defines goals as a way of putting into words the main purpose and intended outcome of the course, whereas objectives are statements about how the goals will be achieved. If the objectives are achieved, the goal will have been reached. The first step in formulating goals is to list all the possible goals for a particular course, based on the

conceptualisation of the intended content, the beliefs of the course designer and the needs of the students. The next step is to prioritise and organise these goals.

Goals should be general but not vague. They should be transparent. The success of the course will be determined by the goals that are reached. Goals should be realistic and relatively simple. Based on the goals, objectives are determined. Objectives are more specific than goals. They should relate directly to the goals as the two should be in a cause-effect relationship. Objectives should focus on what the learners will learn and not simply be a statement of the nature of an activity. They are relatively short term, while goals are relatively long term. Objectives form the building blocks of the course.

Course objectives identify the kind and level of language proficiency that the learner needs to achieve through the programme (Richards & Rodgers, 1986:157; Nicholls & Nicholls, 1978:23; Wheeler, 1979:79). The objectives further determine the content of the course, the focus in presentation, and assessment (Nation, 2000:7). Nation suggests that a short statement be written by the course designer to help clarify what the course is trying to achieve, and this could be shared with the learners.

Graves (2000:92) suggests that objectives have a built-in criterion and condition which will be helpful in forming an assessment. Both goals and objectives should be stated in terms of the learner, not the teacher, and will provide a basis for evaluation of the course and the assessment of students. Clear and well-structured goals and objectives will indicate a clear and purposeful vision underlying the course.

In the South African context of outcomes-based education, it might be preferable speak of outcomes, general and specific (see Chapter 3.2.2).

Organising the course

When a course is organised, underlying systems are chosen that will pull together the content, material, goals and objectives to give the course structure (Graves, 2000:125). This occurs on different levels: the course as a whole, sub-sets of the whole (units, modules) and individual lessons. It involves the choices and decisions that the course designer has to make. Graves (2000:126) points out that one has to make choices about content, as one can obviously not teach everything.

The way in which a course is organised depends on the course content, the goals and objectives, past experience, the students' needs, the researcher's beliefs and

understanding, the approach or method adopted, the prescribed textbook or syllabus and the teaching context (Graves, 2000:127). There is not a single correct way to organise a course.

The organising of the course furthermore involves five overlapping processes: determining the organising principle that drives the course (for example, topics, texts, tasks), identifying units or modules, sequencing the units, determining the language and skills content of each unit, and organising the content within each unit (Graves, 2000:125).

Nation (2000:2) states that the selection of content can be derived from an existing course or from a set of resources (such as course books or learning materials), or based on an idea of the designer's. The course designer has to decide what form the course will take; for example, linear, modular, cyclical or matrix (Nation, 2000:9).

After organising the course content, the course designer also needs to look at the sequencing of content. Sequencing involves deciding the order in which units and their sub-sections will be taught. According to Graves (2000:135), one may choose to determine the sequence of units and within units after the course has begun, depending on the flexibility of the context. Sequencing of units can be based on the principle of building, where step A provides the foundation for step B; or it can be based on a chronological sequence; or it can be in the form of spiralling, where something learned once is reintroduced and learned in more depth. The sequencing of units is thus a flexible process. However, the course designer must be able to justify the sequencing chosen for his/her units.

There is also a process of sequencing within the units. Units can be organised in the form of cycles, a matrix, or a combination of both. A cycle means that some elements occur in a predictable sequence, and that once the sequence is completed, it starts over again. A matrix means that content is selected from certain categories of content, but not in a predictable order. A combination of a cycle and a matrix means that within a given unit the course might follow a predictable sequence of activities, but will include learning activities drawn from the matrix as well (Graves, 2000:141).

The course designer has to decide in what format the course will be presented. The presentation will include suitable teaching techniques and procedures, which are put together in lessons (Nation, 2000:9). Some lessons could consist of a series of activities, while others could be based on a set format which makes it easier to design the lessons. As Graves (2000:148) points out, organising a course is not like a "jigsaw puzzle" where every piece falls in place, but is rather a flexible process which needs to be reflected on. The best

way, suggests Graves (2000:149), is to decide on an organising principle, such as topics, themes or skills, and develop coherence in the course around that principle, integrating into it aspects such as the four skills, while bearing students' needs in mind.

Developing materials

The next aspect discussed by Graves (2000:149) is materials development, which is the process of creating and putting together the content of the units and lessons to carry out the goals and objectives of the course. Graves points out that materials development exists on a continuum of decision-making ranging from using a textbook (the least decision-making) to developing all the materials to be used in the classroom oneself. She recommends that the teacher does not only stick to a textbook, as it does not give him/her any opportunity to apply his/her professional skills and experience. However, it is also not desirable to expect of a teacher, with limited time available, to design all the material needed for the course him-/herself (Graves, 2000:149). The solution is to modify existing materials and to add new materials where necessary.

In a course, there is a close link between materials, techniques and activities. Materials development includes decisions about the actual material to be used—such as a textbook, pictures, worksheets or videos as well as the activities students are to participate in, and how the materials and activities are organised into lessons. It involves putting all the previously outlined design steps into practice.

Graves (2000:150) identifies the following important aspects to bear in mind when designing activities. Activities should:

- draw on what students know
- be relevant to the students
- focus on their needs outside the classroom
- be as authentic as possible
- build their confidence
- allow students to discover, analyse and solve problems
- help students to develop specific skills and strategies
- develop specific language and skills needed for authentic communication
- integrate all four skills
- enable students to understand how a text is constructed
- enable students to understand cultural differences and context
- enable students to develop social awareness

- be of various types and purposes
- employ a variety of materials.

(Graves, 2000:155)

Graves (2000:170) points out that developing materials is a creative and flexible task, which must be handled with responsibility. Decisions in this regard are influenced by resources, the circumstances and context, and the objectives to be achieved by the students.

Designing an assessment plan

Assessment can refer to assessing the needs of the students, assessing the success of their learning, or assessing the course. In this section, assessing the students and their learning is discussed. Assessing the course is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Assessment of students can be either formative or summative (see Chapter 2). It can be a continuous process or a once-off test. It can be done for various purposes, such as determining students' progress, the success of a lesson, or the potential of learners.

Assessment can be done in various ways: it can be in the form of written tests, oral examinations, discussions, observing and monitoring, using checklists, studying feedback from learners, and collecting samples of their work (Nation, 2000:10). Other examples are essays, letters, diagrams, diaries, telegrams, research papers, reports, projects, models, presentations, journals or illustrations. It is pointed out in Chapter 2 that the type of assessment to be used is determined by the purpose of the course and the purpose of the assessment itself.

Any activity which has an element or aspect which can be evaluated or graded during the course is a form of continuous or formative assessment. The aim of continuous assessment is to get a clear picture of the abilities of the learner. The more opportunities used for the assessment of students, the better the profile that will be formed of their abilities.

Assessment is an important tool which can be used on a daily basis by the teacher in the classroom, as it provides a way of observing students' performances and giving feedback to the teacher (Brown, 1998:4).

Assessment is the natural conclusion to any teaching situation. If a teacher wants to find out if s/he has achieved what s/he has set out to do, s/he will decide on a form of assessment—whether it is a test or merely homework given to students. Some sort of feedback is needed so that the teacher as well as the learner can determine what progress has been made. The

Chapter 5

Models for Course Evaluation

5.0 Introduction

Evaluation is concerned with assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning (Murphy, 1993:146). It is a process which begins with determining what information to gather and ends with bringing about change in current activities or influencing future ones (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:128; Alderson & Beretta, 1992:19).

Although many researchers and writers refer to “programme evaluation”, in this study the terms “course” and “course evaluation” are used. In this chapter, the concept of course evaluation is defined and various models of course evaluation are briefly reviewed in order to determine a basic set of principles on which to base the evaluation of the course under investigation. Any teaching-learning situation involves an evaluation of the success of the course. The aim of this chapter is to develop a set of guidelines which will enable the course designer to evaluate a course.

5.1 What is course evaluation?

Course evaluation is any judgement made on a specific course which can be implemented in order to improve the course. As much information as possible is collected in order to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of a course, resulting in evaluation, decision making and redesigning the course in such a way as to achieve the aims of the course more effectively (Nunan, 1993:185; Richards, 1990:17; Graves, 2000:215). After any course has been designed and implemented, it should be adapted according to the limitations identified in the course evaluation. This should be done on a regular basis to ensure that courses remain effective, relevant and contemporary.

There can be different reasons for evaluating a course, such as providing relevant information to funding agencies in order to justify financial support, or the teacher wanting to reflect on the success of the course (Richards, 1990:17). Based on this information, changes could be made where necessary. Teaching should never become stagnant, but should rather be seen as a dynamic process (Nunan, 1993:185).

teacher should go back to his/her original goals and objectives to decide how and when assessment will be done.

Finally, assessment gives the teacher the opportunity to reflect on his/her own teaching, and from the conclusions that s/he draws, s/he can adapt his/her course content or teaching methods in such a way that the teaching will be more successful and the learners will benefit more from the course.

4.4 Conclusion

Graves (2000:9) points out that course design is a work-in-progress; the teacher should not try to plan every detail and aspect of the course prior to actually teaching the course. The complete cycle of course development includes designing the course, teaching it, evaluating it, re-planning it (based on the evaluation) and then teaching the re-planned version, constantly reshaping the course (Graves, 2000:9). Any teaching-learning situation is unpredictable, and the teacher has to be flexible in his/her approach to address this. In the next chapter, the concept of course evaluation is discussed.

For the purpose of this study, the ADDIE model (Clark, 2000:3), used for instructional design worldwide, is combined with Graves's model (2000:9). These models are current, practical and time-efficient, and are used in the private sector as well as a variety of training areas.

This means that the *analyse* stage of ADDIE (Clark, 2000:4) includes *assessing needs, formulating goals and objectives, articulating beliefs, defining the context, and conceptualising the content*, as suggested by Graves (2000:19).

The *design* stage of ADDIE (Clark, 2000:6) includes *designing an assessment plan* (Graves, 2000:5).

The *develop* stage of ADDIE (Clark, 2000:6) includes *developing materials, designing the assessment plan again, and organising the content* (Graves, 2000:29).

Graves's model (2000:29) does not refer specifically to the implementation and re-evaluation stages as specified by Clark (2000:6), although it is implied that the process of designing the course is repeated when re-evaluating the course (Graves, 2000:30). It is clear from both models that designing a course is an interactive and ongoing process, building on the mistakes of the past and constantly improving the course to suit the needs and requirements of learners and employers, and meeting market demands.

Various sources of data can be used when evaluating a course, such as the learners, people the learners work or study with, any documents and records that are kept, researchers, colleagues or independent authorities appointed by the institution (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:132). The role of the evaluator will be determined by the goals of the evaluation and can vary from objective consultant to decision-making facilitator. If more objectivity is required, evaluations can be done by external evaluators or by internal evaluators who have a better understanding of the course context (Lynch, 1996:3).

5.2 When is a course evaluated?

Evaluation of a course can be done at the completion of the course to determine how effective it was in attaining its goals (summative evaluation), or it can be carried out during the development and implementation of a course, leading to adjustment of aspects of the course (formative evaluation) (Richards, 1990:17; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:128).

According to Richards (1990:17), summative evaluation may be used to support decisions about the modification of the course, and involves criterion-referenced or other achievement tests based on the course objectives. Pre-test and post-test scores are typically used as evidence of course effectiveness. Other methods could be interviews with students and teachers who have been involved in the course.

Formative evaluation addresses the efficiency of the course and can be seen as a continuous process. It involves subjective and informal data, such as those obtained through questionnaires or observation (Richards, 1990:18). It furthermore involves aspects such as the appropriateness of the aims and objectives of the course, the degree of preparation by the teachers, teachers' competence in the classroom, the usefulness of the syllabus, text and materials, the effectiveness of scheduling and organisation, and the selection and use of test instruments. It can be done periodically at natural intervals such as the end of a week or a unit, at the midterm, or at the end of the course (Graves, 2000:215; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:128).

When a formative evaluation of a course is done, the involvement of the facilitator as well as the students is required, whereas in a summative evaluation process, the institution involved may decide to follow a different route such as involving external evaluators (Graves, 2000:214). Each aspect of the course could be assessed and evaluated, including goals and objectives, course content, the way the course is organised, materials and methods, or even an assessment of the course evaluation plan.

From the above, it is clear that a course can be evaluated either as a product (summative), or as a process (formative), or as a combination of both. Traditionally, courses have been evaluated in a summative, positivistic way, making use of quantitative data collection, but the trend is now towards a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection, with a combined summative-formative approach (Lynch,1996:39), as discussed later in this chapter.

5.3 How is a course evaluated?

Lynch (1996:70) refers to quantitative designs as “positivistic”, and qualitative designs as “naturalistic”. These paradigms are discussed briefly in terms of the definitions of researchers such as Lynch (1996:69) and De Vos (2001:77).

5.3.1 Quantitative evaluation

The quantitative approach is highly formalised and explicitly controlled, with a range that is clearly defined, and is relatively close to the physical sciences. Quantitative research designs require specialised statistical analysis to provide valid and reliable results (De Vos, 2001:15).

Quantitative methods of data collection include tests and questionnaires (mailed, telephonic, used with groups), checklists (series of statements requiring yes or no responses), indexes and scales (scaling instruments) such as nominal scales, ordinal scales including summated rating, graphic rating, numerical scales, itemised rating, comparative rating, self-anchored rating scales, and Likert scaling, interval-ratio scaling such as Thurstone scales, and the semantic differential (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:131; Hudson, 1989:259; Lynch, 1996:93; Bachmann, 1990:290; Nunan, 2001:186).

The quantitative approach may be seen in different research designs. Examples of qualitative research designs are pre-experimental (hypothesis-developing or exploratory) designs where data collection is done through observations and/or unstructured or semi-structured interviews. A second type of design is the quantitative-descriptive (survey) design, where researchers make use of questionnaires and respondents are selected by means of randomised sampling.

A third type is the quasi-experimental or associative design where data collection is done by means of questionnaires or index scales which are not necessarily standardised. In a quasi-experimental design, no control group is present. All the students take the course and write a pre-and post-test. It is impossible to make a statement about what would have happened

had the students not taken the course. The evaluator can state only that there was or wasn't an effect on the students. A variation on this design is the non-equivalent control group design, where students are not randomly assigned to groups but are in pre-existing classes. This design is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

The last type is the true experimental (cause-effect or explanatory) design where there will be an experimental group and a control group, with students randomly assigned to either the experimental group or the control group. Students are randomly selected from the population under study. Data collection and research can be based on a pre-test and a post-test, or only a post-test. The design is a true experiment in that sampling is randomised with a very clear built-in strategy for comparison, and data gathering often uses standardised measures such as indexes and scales (De Vos, 2001:77).

Assessment data, especially in the form of a pre-and post-test, provide the researcher with information on what learners can do that they were not able to do before taking the course. However, assessment data do not provide information on why some objectives were achieved and others not. For that the researcher needs information on what went on in the classroom and as much other information as possible, such as the institutional facilities, the intellectual and emotional climate, and the relationships between staff and learners (Nunan, 2001:189).

All the above can be seen as the main designs and data collection procedures which can be considered. The data collection method or design which is selected will depend on various factors such as the research design, the circumstances, or the goals of the evaluation.

5.3.2 Qualitative evaluation

Qualitative data collection includes discussions and interviews, but results of data collection are not necessarily expressed statistically (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:128; Lynch, 1996:2). The qualitative approach is not as strictly formalised as the quantitative approach and has more of an undefined scope and philosophical mode of operation.

Qualitative methods of data collection include checklists, questionnaires, discussions, record keeping, observations, feedback (oral, written, individual or group), dialogue journals, and the ranking of activities (Graves, 2000:215; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:132). Other methods include gathering data about the teaching and learning processes themselves: systematic observation, learner diaries, self-reports, interviews, questionnaires, protocol analysis, transcript analysis, stimulated recall, and seating chart observation records. If a

number of techniques and instruments are used, multiple perspectives can be obtained (Nunan, 2001:189).

As pointed out by Lynch (1996:130), the aim of an interview is to arrive at the participants' perspective on the programme in their own words. Interviews can be recorded on tape or notes can be taken by the interviewer. Interviews can be structured or unstructured, depending on the evaluation goals, context and type of design. The most unstructured form is an informal conversation interview, with natural conversation in which questions arise spontaneously. Structured interviews consist of questions which have been carefully selected and put together. Everyone who is interviewed is asked the same key questions and answers can be compared. These interviews should be recorded and analysed afterwards. Interviews can be done in groups or with individuals.

The second type is observation and record keeping, which can be very sensitive, as teachers or course presenters may not want to be observed and may feel threatened. The purpose of the observation needs to be explained. Observation can also be done by the course presenter him-/herself to determine the success of classes. This will be in the form of a journal or diary, where the teacher will reflect on the success of every lesson and aspect of the course as the course develops. Records should be made immediately and information can be gathered at similar points in the course. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:136) suggest that the teacher designs an evaluation form which is simple, quick, easy-to-use and suitable to the context.

Observation varies from non-participant to participant observation. True non-participant observation is done from behind a one-way mirror, while participant observation varies from passive to complete involvement. Passive observation would be observing someone who is teaching while sitting in the classroom, whereas complete participant observation would be observing one's own class (Lynch, 1996:15; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:134).

Observation can be seen on a continuum, with structured observation at one end and unstructured observation at the other. The more structured the observation, the less naturalistic the information gained. Structured observation includes various types of checklists and schedules. Unstructured observation includes instruments such as a standardised form to guide open-ended note-taking (Lynch, 1996:108).

Lynch (1996:108) provides a list of questions to serve as an observation guide:

- who?—how many participants, what are the individual and group identities?
- what?—what are the participants doing, are there repetitive behaviours, irregular behaviour, what resources are used, what activities are organised and how, what is the nature of participant interaction, what roles are evident, status, content of conversation, form of language used, who talks, who listens?
- where?—what is the physical setting like, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, feelings?
- when?—time of interaction, duration?
- how?—what is the interrelationship of events and activities, how is change initiated, managed, what norms and rules can be observed?
- why?—what meanings can be attributed to the activities and events?

Ethnographic observation is also referred to as “field notes” and is descriptive and detailed. The goal is to observe as thoroughly as possible what is happening in the observed context (Lynch, 1996:16). It involves the observation and description of the behaviour of a small number of cases. Data analysis is interpretive, and aims to write objective accounts of lived experiences.

Qualitative data can be collected by analysing the learning material used in the course to determine its relevance and usefulness or by discussing the success of the course with learners and course presenters. Valuable data can be gained from their opinions.

Journals can be kept by the presenter of the course or by the students to record data about their experiences during the course, and which they might otherwise forget. A log is a highly structured and abbreviated journal (Lynch, 1996:137). Retrospective narratives can be collected from teachers after the end of the course using a set of questions designed to guide them in their account of the course.

Course documents can be studied. This involves gathering all available documentation on the course. Documents such as course programmes, official press releases, newspaper articles on the course, advertisements, curriculum descriptions, policy statements, memoranda, organisational charts and correspondence can all provide valuable information on the course (Lynch, 1996:139). Significant time needs to be spent on gathering the appropriate data. Various methods from a variety of sources can be used. Unlike quantitative analysis, there are no set and detailed procedures as to how the evaluator should analyse qualitative data.

Data should be checked for completeness and quality. For example, field notes need to be checked for legibility. Data needs to be systematised in categories of relevance and coded accordingly, after which it is reduced by using classification systems such as category systems, typologies and display matrices. This is done by looking for recurring patterns and themes. After this, data are interpreted and conclusions reached.

Qualitative research designs differ from quantitative designs in that there is not a step-by-step plan (De Vos, 2001:80). In quantitative research, the design determines the researcher's choices and actions, while in qualitative research the researcher's choices and actions will determine the design.

Qualitative research can also be done through applied and action research where data is collected in co-operation with research participants. Research can lead to some sort of social change, by making research humanistic and more relevant to the lives of people. In qualitative research, the researcher is more prominent and his/her preferences will influence choices made about the design and data collection. Again, choice of this option would depend on the context and circumstances under which the research needs to be done.

5.3.3 A combined quantitative-qualitative evaluation

The quantitative approach is more highly formalised, defined and explicitly controlled than the qualitative approach, where procedures are not that highly formalised, the scope is not clearly defined, and a philosophical mode of operation is accepted (De Vos, 2001:357). Some researchers feel that these two research paradigms cannot be combined (Creswell, 1994:7).

However, researchers such as Lynch (1996:59), De Vos (2001:358) and Posavac and Carey (1989:242) feel that the best approach is to combine qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, especially when evaluating a course. As Lynch (1996:39) points out, the history of course evaluation shows a move away from research based on the final product only and on quantitative data collection, to one of describing and analysing the process of the programme as well, based on qualitative data.

Triangulation refers to the gathering and reconciling of data from several different types of sources or using different data-gathering techniques, and is described by some researchers as a way of combining the quantitative and qualitative designs (Lynch, 1996:59; De Vos, 2001:359; Silverman, 1993:156; Alderson & Beretta, 1992:44; Posavac & Carey, 1989:242).

5.3.4 Reliability, validity and practicality in evaluating a course

Data collected for research should be checked for validity, reliability, practicality and factors that may influence results, such as bias or subjectivity. Lynch (1996:66) describes validity as “the notion of how we establish the veracity of our findings”. One can distinguish between positivistic validity, which aims for an objective truth, and where one can establish conditions that will allow the evaluator to be certain about his/her conclusions concerning the relationship between the course and his/her observations of its effect and naturalistic validity, which concentrates on investigating the research without attempting to manipulate or control anything.

Traditionally researchers have distinguished between internal and external validity. Internal validity means whether the programme being evaluated caused the observed effects, while external validity is the extent to which the effects caused by the course can be expected to occur in other course contexts.

According to a positivistic perspective, validity is the search for an objective truth, focusing on certainty and generalisation. Internal validity is concerned with certainty; that means making accurate inferences as to whether it really was the course itself that caused the effect measured and not some other factor. To achieve such certainty, there has to be control over both the students and the context. External validity is concerned with generalisation; whether the specific instances from one evaluation may validly be transferred to other students and other settings. The accuracy of the approximations made is improved by experimental and statistical control.

The naturalistic perspective concentrates on investigating the course without attempting to control any variables. It would mean reaching a consensus on the nature and value of a course, as embedded in people’s experiences. Data analysis is much less fixed and preordained than the statistical data in positivistic research. Naturalistic validity is the degree to which the evaluator and evaluator’s audience can trust the analysis and conclusions (Lynch, 1996:65).

The measurements and means of collecting data should be trustworthy and reliable. The way in which it is done should also be practical and logical within the specific context.

The term “practicality” covers a range of issues such as cost, test length, ease of marking, time required to conduct, ease of administration, availability of suitable reviews, and availability of venues and equipment (Davies *et al.*, 1999:148).

Any judgement should be as objective as possible. It is difficult to be wholly objective when evaluating anything, as any evaluation in life includes an element of the evaluator's personality and judgement. According to Nunan (2001:187), there are strategies which a researcher can use to limit bias, such as the use of standardised tests, especially when the researcher needs to compare two different programmes.

As may be seen from the above discussion, a course can be evaluated quantitatively, qualitatively or by combining both approaches. In this study, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research designs is used (see Chapter 6) as this provides a more detailed description of the course under investigation.

5.4 An overview of relevant models for course evaluation

A number of specific models to evaluate a programme have been proposed. The models of Pfannkuche, Lynch, Graves, Nunan, Dudley-Evans and St John, and De Vos are now discussed. These models are all variations of and elaborations of the three basic stages in language evaluation described by Alderson and Beretta (1992:20). These stages are:

- negotiation between the evaluator and all stakeholders
- data collection and analysis of the evaluation
- report back to the stakeholders.

5.4.1 Pfannkuche

Pfannkuche (cited in Omaggio *et al.*, 1979:254) proposes a model for formative evaluation that focuses on the attainment of goals. This model includes the following processes:

- identify a set of course goals and objectives to be evaluated
- identify factors relevant to the attainment of these objectives
- for each factor in step 2, develop a set of criteria which would indicate that the objectives are being successfully attained
- design appropriate instruments to assess each factor according to the criteria outlined
- collect the data that is needed
- compare data with desired results
- check for match or discrepancy
- prepare an evaluation report.

(Pfannkuche, cited in Omaggio *et al.*, 1979:254)

According to Pfannkuche, these basic steps will guide the evaluator when planning the evaluation of a course. The steps identified by Pfannkuche are similar to the model of Lynch

which is discussed in the next section (5.4.2). Pfannkuche's model is a good introduction to the process of course evaluation and is elaborated on in the models that came after his.

5.4.2 Lynch

Lynch (1996:4) proposes a context-adaptive model (CAM) for course evaluation, which is flexible and adaptable in nature. He identifies the following steps for evaluating a course, which are similar to those proposed by Pfannkuche:

- identify the audience and goals
- put together a context inventory
- put together a preliminary thematic framework
- collect data
- analyse data
- write an evaluation report.

(Lynch, 1996:4)

These steps are briefly discussed below.

Determine the purpose of the evaluation by identifying the audience and goals

The first step of the CAM model is to identify the target audience, which is the "client" for whom the evaluation needs to be done. The course evaluator needs to determine who requests the information and why, as well as who will be affected by the results. The audience can include anyone who would be interested in the results of the evaluation: students, teachers, funding agencies, curriculum developers or researchers from area courses.

After determining the audience, the evaluator needs to consider the goals or purpose of the study. The evaluation goals may differ, depending on the audience. The answers to these questions will determine the role of the evaluator. Decisions have to be made as to whether evaluation will be done by external or internal parties.

Determine what is being evaluated by compiling a context inventory

A critical issue identified by Lynch (1996:5) are the essential features that characterise the course and its setting. Lynch (1996:5) suggests the following dimensions or features that should characterise a programme and its settings:

- availability of a comparison group in a similar setting
- availability of reliable and valid measures of language skills, such as criterion- or norm-referenced tests, tests which are programme-specific or programme-neutral
- availability of various types of evaluation expertise, such as statistical analysis or naturalistic research
- timing of the evaluation, such as when the course starts and ends and how much time is available for the evaluation
- the selection process for admitting students into the course, such as random selection or selection according to pre-established criteria
- characteristics of the course students, such as their native language, their culture, age, sex, socioeconomic status, previous education, previous academic achievements, and previous experience with the language and culture being taught in the course
- characteristics of the course staff, such as job descriptions, experience, availability, competence and attitude towards the course
- the size and intensity of the course, including the number of students, classrooms, proficiency levels, and number of hours per week/term
- instructional materials and resources available to the course, such as textbooks or other materials, human resources, office supplies
- perspective and purpose of the course, including notions, beliefs and assumptions concerning the nature of language and the process of language learning as expressed in explicitly stated and informally articulated curricular goals
- the social and political climate surrounding the course, including perceptions of the course by the surrounding academic and social community, student and community attitudes towards the language and culture being taught in the course, and the relationship of the course's purpose to the larger social and political context.

(Lynch, 1996:5)

Such an inventory will have to be adapted to the specific context and background of the course being evaluated.

Compile a preliminary thematic framework

The next step would be to organise all this information into a framework, which Lynch calls the "preliminary thematic framework" (Lynch, 1996:6). This will narrow down the focus of the evaluation. A preliminary thematic framework provides a conceptualisation of the programme in terms of the salient issues and themes that have emerged from the determination of the audience and goals and the elaboration of the context inventory (Lynch, 1996:6). This framework will give direction to the collection and analysis of data.

Collect data

After the evaluator has put together the thematic framework, s/he has to decide what data is needed (qualitative, quantitative or both) and how this data will be collected. S/he has to ascertain which data collection methods will provide the most relevant information.

After these decisions have been taken, data collection will follow logically, based on the design chosen for the evaluation. The evaluator has to make sure that s/he follows correct procedures when gathering his/her data.

Analyse data

When the data have been gathered, the evaluator has to interpret these and draw conclusions. Data analysis will depend on the data gathering procedure that was followed. In the case of quantitative data collection, different techniques could be used such as chi-square analysis, effect size analysis, standardised change-score analysis, analysis of covariance or value-added analysis. These analyses could be analysed by means of computer programmes and statistical interpretations.

Qualitative data can be analysed by focusing on the evaluation and by organising, coding, classifying and reducing data to make relevant interpretations and reach conclusions. The most efficient way to do this is to develop a modified thematic framework that represents the most important evaluation questions to be answered in comparison to the original preliminary thematic framework.

Write an evaluation report

The findings have to be communicated as clearly and honestly as possible to the stakeholders concerned. According to Lynch (1996:7), the evaluator may find it necessary to provide multiple reports, highlighting different aspects of information, depending on the different stakeholders.

Although Lynch (1996:6) gives a structured model for evaluating a course, he does not give enough detail on exactly what elements of the course should be evaluated and how. The following two models are in the form of questions to be asked and are more specific.

5.4.3 Dudley-Evans and St John

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:130) identify several questions to be asked before the evaluation of a course, which are user-friendly and can be used as a checklist:

- who is the audience and for what purpose is the evaluation done?
- who are the stakeholders?
- why do you want to evaluate the course?
- what do you want to change?
- what are your criteria for evaluation, and what are the objectives you are evaluating against?
- what are the criteria for analysis of results and what will you do with the answers?
- who will be your sources of information, such as the learners, people the learners work or study with, documents and records used, the evaluator himself, colleagues?
- when would it be appropriate to do the evaluation?

(Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:130)

After these issues have been addressed, the evaluation process can be started. These questions are similar to the concepts identified by Nunan, as discussed in the next section.

5.4.4 Nunan

Nunan (2001:198) proposes similar key questions that need to be dealt with when evaluating a course:

- *What is the purpose of the evaluation?*
The aims and objectives of the research need to be clarified in the beginning.
- *Who is the audience for the evaluation?*
Different stakeholders will have different purposes and different requirements. The audience may also be subject specialists or, on the other hand, know little about the field, which will influence the way the research is done.
- *What principles and procedures should guide the evaluation?*
A comprehensive set of principles needs to be drawn up before the research is started. All parties involved need to agree on this to prevent disagreements later in the research. These principles need to provide clear statements on the rights and responsibilities of all participants in relation to the data, outcomes and recommendations.
- *What tools, techniques and instruments are appropriate?*
A wide range of instruments and techniques is available, such as the analysis of existing information, tests, observations, interviews, meetings, and questionnaires.
- *How should the data be analysed?*
Should the analysis be statistical, interpretive or both?

- *Who should carry out the evaluation?*
It can be done either by outsiders or the facilitator within the course.
- *When should it be carried out?*
It can be done either during the presentation of the course (formative) or at the end of the course (summative) or both.
- *What is the time frame and budget for the evaluation?*
The time frame and budget must be determined, in line with the requirements of the funding body.
- *How should the evaluation be reported?*
The final draft of the report needs to be circulated to the relevant parties to negotiate agreement on the findings of the report to prevent delays or problems. This can delay the final report and needs to be considered in the initial planning.

(Nunan, 2001:198)

Nunan's ideas (2001:128) incorporate the steps described by Lynch (1996:4), as well as the key questions identified by Dudley-Evans and St John.

The next model is Graves's evaluation model which differs slightly from the previous models.

5.4.5 Graves

According to Graves (2000:214), each aspect of the course design can be assessed and evaluated. She identifies similar steps in the evaluation process, which can be seen as a synthesis of the concepts identified in the models outlined above:

- the goals and objectives: are they realistic, appropriate, achievable, or should they be changed and how?
- the course content: is it on the right level, comprehensive enough, focused enough, what the students needed?
- the needs assessment: did it provide enough and/or appropriate information?
- the way the course is organised: does it flow from unit to unit and within units? Is there a sensible progression?
- the materials and methods: are they on the right level, interesting enough, do students learn enough from them?
- the learning assessment plan: do students understand how and why they are being assessed? Do the assessment activities assess what needs to be assessed?
- the course evaluation: is the purpose clear? Does it provide useful information?

(Graves, 2000:214)

5.4.6 De Vos

The last model to be looked at is the evaluation model of De Vos (2001:368), which identifies six phases in the evaluation process of any course provided to a group, which phases need to be followed. Although he uses these to evaluate, for example, social courses, elements of this evaluation can be applied to the evaluation of courses as well:

- needs assessment: according to De Vos (2001:369), the needs assessment can be done by tapping into existing sources such as annual reports or records or by gathering new information through key informants or surveys.
- evaluability assessment: an evaluability assessment determines whether a course or programme can in fact be evaluated. Aspects to look at would include whether key concepts can be defined, the programme goals are clear, or treatment standardised over time.
- programme monitoring: it has to be determined whether the programme is reaching the target group, whether delivery is consistent with the programme specifications, and whether resources have been expended.
- impact assessment: did the programme have the impact it should have and is there change in the desired direction? Data needs to be gathered and analysed to prove this.
- cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit studies: the programme needs to be efficient in terms of cost and resources.
- utilisation evaluation: to what extent is the programme utilised and does it have an impact on the people involved and future programmes?

(De Vos, 2001:368)

De Vos (2001:369) describes the process of evaluation as an interactive process consisting of the following steps:

- determine what is to be evaluated
- identify consumers
- gain the co-operation of the staff
- specify programme objectives
- specify evaluation objectives
- choose variables
- choose research design
- implement measurement
- analyse or interpret findings
- report or implement results.

(De Vos, 2001:369)

All the models discussed above have elements in common, indicating specific logical steps to follow when evaluating a course. The steps and concepts from the models discussed above are now synthesised into a model which incorporates the main concepts identified in all these models.

5.5 Proposed model for Vista LPR course evaluation

Alderson and Beretta (1992:274) point out that there is no single “best” way of conducting an evaluation of a language programme. Much will depend on the purpose of the evaluation, the nature of the programme, the individuals involved and the timescales and resources available (Alderson & Beretta, 1992:274).

The following model, which is based on a synthesis of the models discussed, is used in this study to evaluate the LPR course at Vista University.

As may be seen in Figure 5, the model has three stages in course evaluation:

- the planning stage
- the action stage
- the report back stage.

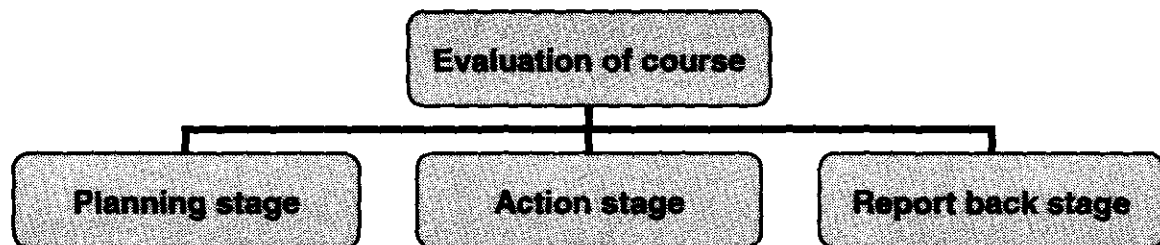


Figure 5: Model for evaluation of a course

The planning stage

According to Alderson and Beretta (1992:274), the planning stage of an evaluation of a language programme is the most important stage and takes the longest. All stages after the planning stage depend on a properly worked out plan. However, perfect planning is unlikely, and provision for imperfections should be made in the design.

Who are the stakeholders?

The evaluator first determines who the audience is, for what purpose the evaluation is done and who will be affected by the outcomes. The audience is anyone who would be interested in the results of the evaluation: students, teachers, funding agencies, curriculum developers or researchers from related fields.

Different stakeholders have different purposes and different requirements. The audience may, on the one hand, be subject specialists or, on the other, know little about the field; what the audience is will influence the way the research is done.

The next step is to gain the co-operation of all stakeholders. A set of principles needs to be drawn up before the research is started in which all the parties involved agree on the rights and responsibilities of all participants in relation to the data, outcomes and recommendations.

What is the background and history of the course?

The evaluator should gather as much background information as possible on the course that is to be evaluated. This information can be based on existing sources such as annual reports or records or by gathering new information through key informants or surveys.

The evaluator has to ensure that it will be practically feasible to do the evaluation. Aspects to look at would include whether key concepts can be defined and whether the programme goals are clear.

What are the aims of the evaluation?

The aims and objectives of the research need to be clarified at the outset. The evaluator needs to be very clear on what s/he wants to evaluate and why and what s/he wants to change or achieve. The aims of the evaluation may differ, depending on the audience, but should be realistic, appropriate and achievable.

What elements of the course are to be evaluated?

The evaluator has to decide whether s/he wants to evaluate specific elements of the course and, if so, which elements to concentrate on. The following aspects are to be evaluated:

- course content: is the content at the right level, comprehensive enough, focused enough, what the students need?
- the needs assessment: did it provide enough information, appropriate information?

- the way the course is organised: does it flow from unit to unit and within units? Is there a logical progression?
- the materials and methods: are they at the right level, interesting enough; do students learn enough from them?
- the learning assessment plan: do students understand how and why they are assessed? Do the assessment activities assess what needs to be assessed?
- the course evaluation: is the purpose clear? Does it provide useful information?

How will the evaluation be done?

The next step will be for the evaluator to decide how s/he would do his/her evaluation. S/He has to decide what data is needed (qualitative, quantitative or both), how this data will be collected, and which instruments and techniques to select.

The evaluator has to decide how the results will be analysed and what criteria will be used. S/He needs to know whether his/her analysis should be statistical, interpretive or both. After all these aspects have been clearly defined and final decisions taken, the evaluator can move to the next stage, the action stage.

The action stage

Collect data

After the evaluator has completed the planning of the evaluation, data collection will follow logically, based on the design chosen for the evaluation. The evaluator has to make sure that s/he follows correct procedures when gathering his/her data.

Describe and analyse data

When the data have been gathered, the evaluator has to interpret these and draw conclusions.

Draw conclusions from the analysed data

The evaluator will draw conclusions from his/her analysis to decide whether the course programme has had the desired impact on the learners and to what extent it should be reviewed and redesigned.

Chapter 6

The Planning Stage: Research Method

6.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the research method employed in this study to evaluate the present course at Vista University is discussed. Data were gathered by means of positivistic (quantitative) and naturalistic (qualitative) research, with an emphasis on the qualitative approach (Lynch, 1996:69; De Vos, 2001:77). Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data collection was used to provide a more detailed description of the course under investigation.

In this and the following two chapters, the LPR course currently offered at Vista University is described, analysed and evaluated according to the model discussed in Chapter 5, which consists of a planning stage (see Chapter 6), action stage (see Chapter 7) and report back stage (see Chapter 8). The model is reiterated here and represented in Figure 6 below.

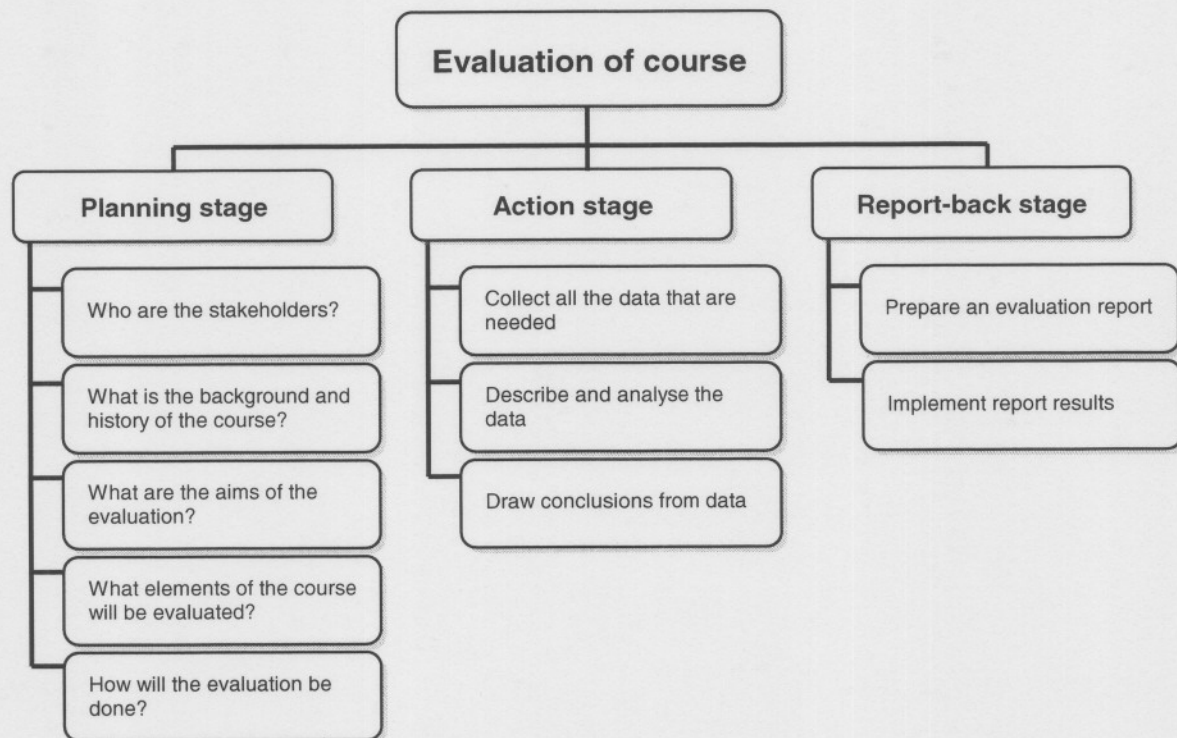


Figure 6: Model for evaluation of a course (detailed)

The report back stage

Prepare an evaluation report

The findings have to be communicated as clearly and honestly as possible to the stakeholders concerned. To this end, a report should be compiled and circulated.

Implement report results

The evaluator may have to redesign the course based on the recommendations in his/her report.

5.6 Conclusion

The evaluator of any course or programme needs to determine beforehand exactly what is expected of him/her. Evaluation is not a random exercise but needs to be planned carefully. A set of principles must be decided on, so that there is structure and coherence within the evaluation process.

Data collection and analysis need to be valid and reliable before any judgements can be made which may influence the course in future. The evaluator needs to act in a professional and responsible way, and must be able to prove whatever statements are made in a scientific way supported by the necessary knowledge and skills. It is not a matter of gathering as much information as possible, but one of gathering relevant information which can be systemised and logically analysed.

Information gathered when evaluating a course needs to culminate in a report which is useful to all relevant parties. Course evaluation is a very important step in course design and needs to be taken very seriously.

The first stage of the evaluation process, the planning stage, is now discussed.

6.1 Who are the stakeholders?

The main stakeholder is the management of Vista University, and it is to them that feedback will be given. Permission to do this study was granted by the Dean of Education, Vista University, on behalf of management.

Sources of information (see 5.4) are also considered stakeholders. In this case, these sources include the lecturers on all campuses involved in the course, Vista University students and the evaluator herself.

6.2 What is the background and history of the course?

Vista University was established in terms of Act 106 of 1981, and came into being on 1 January 1982 after the government had appointed a commission of inquiry to investigate the tertiary needs of urban blacks. It is at present the largest historically black university in the country. Vista University consists of the Central Campus in Pretoria, with decentralised facilities in the main urban areas in South Africa. At present there are eight campuses: Bloemfontein, East Rand, Mamelodi, Port Elizabeth, Sebokeng, Soweto, Welkom and VUDEC (distance education). These campuses are now in the process of merging with other institutions (see the fifth heading, **The merging of tertiary institutions in South Africa**, under 3.2.2).

The medium of instruction at Vista University is English. Students come from all parts of the country, but most students are black, and come from previously disadvantaged communities. Every campus offers student assistance. A Department for Student Development has been formed on every campus and offers various support programmes.

At Vista University, all prospective teachers are required to take a course in Language Proficiency (LPR 5001) if they have not completed English at second-year level. The course was introduced for the first time in 1993, and aims to improve the language proficiency of prospective teachers.

Since 2002, Vista University has offered a Foundation programme to assist students who would like to go into tertiary education but who do not have matriculation exemption. At the discretion of senate, these students can be admitted to various academic programmes. The Matriculation Board (Circular U28/96) states that a certificate of conditional exemption may be issued to a candidate who, in the judgement of the senate of a university, has

demonstrated—through a selection process approved by that senate—his or her suitability for further studies.

The Foundation programme is a one-year programme providing access to tertiary education to students without matriculation exemption. Applicants must write an aptitude test and are expected to participate in academic development programmes. Students who pass a minimum of 80% of the courses in the Foundation programme are admitted to degree studies. One of the compulsory courses that students must take is Language Proficiency in English (LPR 5001), which is the same course as the one offered to prospective teachers.

6.3 What are the aims of the evaluation?

The main aim of the evaluation is to determine whether the LPR course at Vista University is successful in improving the language proficiency of the students and whether it fulfils the expectations of the students, lecturers and management. It aims to identify the shortcomings of the course, which would form the basis for redesigning it according to the principles outlined in Chapter 4.

The Foundation programme was offered for the first time in 2002. There is a need to evaluate the course and its appropriateness for this specific group of students, as it was not originally designed for students in a Foundation programme.

6.4 What elements of the course will be evaluated and how will this be done?

For the purposes of this study, the aims, course content, course organisation, methodology, resources and assessment of the present course were analysed. Data were collected from the students and lecturers, and the same elements in similar courses at other tertiary institutions were reviewed (see Table 1 below).

Source	Research instrument	Description	Number (N)	% of the population
The course itself	Manual and methodology	Analysis of the existing manual and course methodology	N/A	N/A
	Observation	Observed students during 10 classes	10	100%
	Official documentation	A study of available documents	N/A	N/A
Student data	SAT	A pre- and post-test	123	100%
	Questionnaires	Statements evaluated	75	97%
	General comments	Paragraph written by students	22	90,9%
Lecturers' data	Questionnaires	Statements evaluated	7	57,14%
Survey of tertiary institutions	Interviews	Informal interviews with staff members	5	100%

Table 1: Summary of data-gathering instruments

Each of these elements is now discussed in detail.

6.4.1 Analysis of the present course

Course and manual

As a first step, the present course was analysed. The analysis included evaluating the manual, aims, course content, course organisation, methodology, resources and assessment in the course. The prescribed manual (see Appendix A) for the LPR 5001 course is discussed as part of the analysis. This manual was designed by lecturers from Vista University (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2000).

Observation

The researcher observed 10 LPR 5001 lectures. She kept field notes on classroom activities and how students reacted during classes. These included notes on class attendance, student attitudes, and the degree of student involvement during classes in order to give an indication of how the course plays out in the actual classroom. After each class, the researcher wrote reflective notes on the success of the class or activity and on the reaction of the students. These observations were unstructured and of an open nature. From these notes, common trends were inferred and problem areas identified and analysed.

Official documentation

In addition, official course documentation was analysed.

6.4.2 Student data

As a second step, it was necessary to obtain data from the students in the course. The following student data were collected:

- results of a proficiency test (SAT)
- responses to a questionnaire
- general comments from students before and after the course.

The SAT

Background and origin

Students wrote a general proficiency test in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to determine their proficiency levels before and after taking the course (see 2.5.2). The test is designed to assess candidates' language-related abilities within the context of tertiary studies (Yeld, 2001:19).

The test used was the Standardised Achievement Test (SAT) in language and literacy, developed by TELP (the Tertiary Education Linkages Project) under the auspices of Professor Nan Yeld at the University of Cape Town. This test is presently used as an admission test for the thirteen previously disadvantaged universities. The TELP SAT was initially developed in 1999. In March 1999, pilot tests were analysed and the test adapted where necessary (Yeld, 2001:8). This test is not included in the study, as it is a confidential test which is not available to the public.

Reliability, validity and practicality of the SAT

Predictive validity analyses have shown that the academic literacy test has a stronger relationship with subsequent academic performance than Senior Certificate results (Yeld, 2001:9). This evidence suggests that the test is a suitable instrument for indicating academic literacy. Cronbach alpha values could not be done to test for reliability as the test does not lend itself to this. The test works well in practice and complies with the requirements of practicality.

Procedure

A pre-test/post-test design was used with an interrupted time series. The one-group pre-test/post-test design was repeated with the same group of students (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989: 149). This is a quasi-experimental design, as there was no control group. All the students who took the course wrote the pre- and post-test. That means that all the possible subjects in the population were used. Three groups were used: all students enrolled for the LPR course at the Mamelodi campus (n=25), the Port Elizabeth campus (n=58), and the East Rand campus (n=40). After completing the course, the students wrote the same test as a post-test. The two sets of test scores were compared to indicate the pre-test/post-test differences. No inferential statistics were used in the study because no random sample was taken.

The Tertiary English Language Project (TELP) (Yeld, 2001) at UCT provided sub-scales (see Table 2 below), indicating which items tested a specific skill area. The results of the tests were then analysed in terms of these sub-scales to evaluate student improvement.

Sub-scale or skill area	Meaning	Questions
Vocabulary	Deriving meaning from context; "known" vocabulary (that is, no context provided); spelling; understanding metaphorical expressions	12, 13, 16.3, 25.2, 22, 15.1, 15.2
Extrapolation	Extrapolation and application drawing conclusions; applying insights derived from texts; seeing trends	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 8.1.1, 8.1.2, 8.1.3, 8.2, 21
	Inferencing; understanding ideas/information in a text, implied but not explicitly stated	18.1, 18.2
Relations	Understanding relations between parts of texts through devices of cohesion (e.g. pronoun reference, particularly demonstratives, referring to statements, propositions or entities)	4, 11, 14, 23.1, 23.3, 23.4, 23.5, 23.6
	Understanding relations between parts of text by recognising indicators in discourse, especially for introducing, developing, transition and conclusion of ideas; signalling relations between phenomena	20.1, 20.2b, 23.1, 23.3, 23.4, 23.5, 23.6
Communicative functions	Understanding the communicative function of sentences with or without explicit indicators, such as definition, exemplification, exhortation, argument/persuasion	6.2, 21
Grammar	Understanding the grammatical/syntactical basis of the English language	20.1, 20.2a, 20.2b, 21, 22, 24
Visual literacy	Understanding information presented visually (graphs, tables, diagrams)	5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.2, 6.3, 9.3
Essential	Separating the essential from the non-essential, main idea from supporting idea, statement from example, fact from opinion, proposition from argument; classifying and categorising	17, 5.3, 25.1
Numerical	Understanding basic numerical concepts and/or information used in text; basic numerical manipulations; estimation; comparisons; greater than; smaller than percentages; basic fractions (for example, half of) basic chronological references; sequencing	5.1, 5.2, 25.3, 23.1, 23.3, 23.4, 23.5, 23.6, 25.1
	Basic computations	2, 9.1, 9.2, 19, 25.3, 25.4

Table 2: Sub-scales of the items in the SAT

For each sub-scale, the January mark was subtracted from the June mark. Then the mean differences between the January mark and the June mark of every sub-scale were calculated. The effect sizes were calculated by using Cohen's d-values for dependent groups (Cohen, 1984:11). To determine the d-value, the mean of the difference between the two values was divided by the standard deviation of the difference between the two values. This d-value indicates practically significant differences between the means of two groups.

Cohen (1984:11) uses the following scale for interpreting the d-value:

- if the d-value is less than 0,2, the difference between the two means is small—this is termed a “small effect”
- if the d-value is 0,5, the difference between the two means is medium—this is termed a “medium effect”
- if the d-value is $\geq 0,8$, the difference between the two means is high and practically significant— this is termed a “large effect”.

Questionnaires

Background

In addition, students were requested to fill in a questionnaire (see Appendix B) to ascertain their opinions of the course. For this purpose, the researcher designed a questionnaire in which students could indicate their preferences.

Format

The questionnaire consists of Section A (40 questions) and Section B (5 questions). In Section A, students were requested to express their expectations of the course and their opinions of the content, study material, methodology and classroom interaction, assessment, course design and the success of the course in general. This they were asked to do on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4 (1 = not at all; 4 = to a large extent).

In the second section of the questionnaire (Section B, see Appendix B), students had to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with given statements on the manual, course design and general impressions of the course.

Negative questions were incorporated, which were changed into positive statements when analysing the responses, to ensure that responses were correctly analysed.

Procedure

During the last class of the semester, the LPR students from the Mamelodi campus (22 students) and the Port Elizabeth campus (53 students) were requested to fill in the questionnaire, giving their opinions on the various aspects of the course mentioned above.

Reliability of the questionnaire

The first step in analysing the questionnaire was to test its reliability. To do this, the questions in the questionnaire were analysed and questions which were related were grouped together. These questions were then organised into sub-scales of similar constructs. Eleven constructs were identified: expectations, listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, writing skills, resources, group work, assessment, course design, self study, and general impression of the course. All the questions in the questionnaire (Sections A and B) were grouped into these constructs (see Table 3 below).

Expectations	Questions 1, 6, 18
Listening skills	Questions 7, 12
Speaking skills	Questions 10, 17, 27, 36
Reading skills	Questions 2, 13, 19, 20
Writing skills	Questions 3, 22, 34, 35
Resources	Questions 4, 21
Group work	Questions 16, 40
Assessment	Questions 5, 11, 23, 24, 29
Course design	Questions 9, 25, 32, 33
Self study	Questions 15, 28, 39
General impression of the course	Questions 8, 14, 26, 30, 31, 37, 38

Table 3: Sub-scales of similar constructs in questionnaire

To test the questionnaire for reliability, an item analysis was done based on the sub-scales formed of these similar questions (see Table 3 above). The sub-scales were evaluated by means of Cronbach alpha analysis (Hatcher, 1994:131; Cronbach, 1990:202) to determine which of the sub-scales could be considered valid (see 7.2.2).

Cronbach alpha values is a measurement indicating the reliability of items in a measuring instrument, and are based on the number of items, the total of the variance of the individual

items and the variance of the test total (Anastasi, 1988:124) in order to determine internal consistency.

If the Cronbach alpha value is higher than 0,5, the specific construct is regarded as a reliable measuring item and can be used. If the Cronbach alpha value is lower than 0,5, it is considered too low and the specific construct not consistent internally or reliable.

Comparison between Port Elizabeth campus and Mamelodi campus

It was then decided to use the constructs proved by the Cronbach alpha scale to be reliable to compare the results from the Mamelodi campus (18 students) with the Port Elizabeth campus (53 students), using Cohen's d-value for independent groups. The purpose was to determine whether there was a difference in the results of the two campuses.

To calculate Cohen's d-value for independent groups, the difference between the two group means was divided by the maximum of the two standard deviations (see Tables 8 and 9, Chapter 7). Cohen's scale (1984:11) for interpreting the d-value was again used to indicate practically significant differences.

Frequency analyses of items

The last step was to take every item in every cluster of similar constructs (see Table 3) and to analyse and explain these items by means of frequency tables of percentages for each sub-scale (see 7.2.2).

General comments by students

Apart from the questionnaire, the students from the Mamelodi campus were invited during their first class to write a paragraph on their expectations of the course. At the end of the course, they were requested to evaluate and give their impressions of the course, again by writing a paragraph. Common trends were identified and discussed.

6.4.3 Lecturers' data

The same questionnaires that were filled in by the students were sent to the seven LPR 5001 lecturers at Vista University campuses (Mamelodi, East Rand, Welkom, Soweto, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein and Sebokeng), but formulated from the lecturers' perspective (see Appendix C). The lecturers were also requested to give their views and opinions on the suitability of the course, its strong points and shortcomings, and to offer suggestions on how the course could be improved.

As the questionnaire was sent to only seven respondents, it was decided to discuss the data per item instead of analysing it statistically.

6.4.4 Survey of language proficiency courses at other tertiary institutions

It was also essential to take cognisance of similar courses at other South African universities. A survey of existing language proficiency courses at five universities was conducted by means of interviews and e-mail. These interviews were informal conversations in which questions arose spontaneously. However, the same aspects were addressed in each interview. Lecturers involved in teaching language proficiency courses at various tertiary institutions were requested to provide information on the aims, course content, course organisation, methodology, resources and assessment of their courses.

The universities selected are all institutions where the medium of instruction is mainly English and where a high number of students study through the medium of their second language, namely, English. The universities that were selected were the University of Cape Town (UCT), the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE), the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the University of the North (UNIN), and the University of Pretoria (UP).

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter, in which the research method is explained in detail, forms the planning stage of the model for evaluating the LPR course. In the next chapter, which is the action stage, data that were collected are analysed to provide a framework for re-designing the existing language proficiency course at Vista University. Data are analysed from various sources, which contributes to the reliability and validity of the evaluation.

Chapter 7

The Action Stage: An Evaluation of the LPR Course at Vista University

7.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the data collected on the language proficiency course at Vista University are described and analysed according to the model formulated in Chapters 5 and 6. Data on the following are described, analysed and discussed: the course itself, students' views, lecturers' opinions and the survey conducted at tertiary institutions (see Chapter 6, Table 1).

7.1 Analysis of the present course

7.1.1 Course and manual

At present, the course is presented on all seven campuses and as laid out in the manual *LPR 5001* (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2000) prescribed for all LPR 5001 students (see Appendix A) and examined in the external examination (see Appendix E) that LPR 5001 students on all campuses write.

Aims

According to the manual (see Appendix A), the aim of the course is to improve the command of English of the students. The five main areas that are covered are listening, speaking, reading, writing and visual literacy, with an emphasis on communication.

By the end of the course the student should be able to:

- demonstrate his/her awareness of language as a formal system and communication structure
- speak and communicate fluently, using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in the modes of oral and written presentation
- listen to and interpret symbolic language and/or pictures
- write coherent letters, memoranda and essays.

(Van der Walt *et al.*, 2000)

Course content

In this section, the course content is discussed as set out in the prescribed manual. The course is very practical in its approach. Theoretical aspects are not considered of prime importance, but relevant articles on theoretical aspects (for example, “what is a competent reader”, “reading strategies”, “reading for writing”, “the writing process” and “plagiarism”, are included where applicable. The course itself consists of five units and each unit deals with one of the five areas mentioned.

Unit 1: Reading skills (pp 5-10)

The purpose of this unit is to provide the student with information on and practice in various strategies to improve his/her reading competence.

An article on what is considered to be a competent reader is included as background reading. Students are given guidelines on how to become competent at reading. Specific reading strategies such as skimming and scanning are illustrated and practised. Thereafter the students complete 12 comprehension tests which include aspects such as interpreting figurative language, distinguishing between fact and opinion, and reading for summarising. The comprehension passages are on the following topics:

- “My father was deaf, yet he taught me how to listen”—narrative
- “Terror in Flight SK751”—narrative
- “The poisoning of Michigan (1975)—narrative
- “Long Walk to Freedom”—narrative
- “Death”—argumentative
- “Saving the rhino”—factual
- “Video games are motivational”—argumentative
- “Tobacco farming”—factual
- “Oil”—factual
- “Education”—factual
- “Solar energy”—factual
- “Malaria”—factual.

The questions in the exercises give students practice in deducing the meaning of words from their contexts, distinguishing between main and subordinate ideas, distinguishing between fact and opinion, interpreting figurative language, and identifying the main ideas in a text. Lecturers decide whether the students would complete the comprehension exercises in groups or individually, and whether they would do the exercises in class or in their own time.

Although the unit deals with relevant and valuable skills, the issue of academic language is not addressed specifically. Another problem is the fact that the same passages are used every year as the same manual is prescribed every year.

The passages deal with a limited number of topics. Although the topics may be interesting to the students, they are outdated and of limited relevance to the needs of the students. Contemporary and relevant passages should be selected, which could be reviewed and replaced regularly.

Unit 2: Writing skills (pp 39-61)

The second unit in the manual deals with writing skills. The purpose of this unit is to provide students with examples of and practice in the kinds of writing they are expected to produce and, as a teacher, instruct.

Students are guided on how to write a covering letter for use with any official form to be sent in to authorities or employers. They are provided with examples of letters applying for leave, formal letters and memoranda,

There is an informative section on academic writing, where students are shown how to decide on main ideas and how to take notes. This is followed by a section on finding information needed for academic writing, as well as an exercise to practise the steps to follow when reading for writing.

Thereafter students are shown how to structure written academic discourse. They are taken through the process of writing, emphasising audience, purpose, planning and conducting research. They are shown step-by-step, how to write drafts, how to organise assignments, and how to write an argumentative essay, (which is also a compulsory assignment). During each step, suggestions are given on how to apply the information to different learning areas.

Very useful in this unit is a checklist which students can use to edit and correct their own assignments. In addition, there is a section on plagiarism and how to avoid it.

The section on writing skills is of relevance and importance to the students. However, the information is treated somewhat superficially and insufficiently. Students need to practise their writing skills regularly, preferably in every unit. It would also be useful if they were guided through the whole process of writing an assignment for one of their academic subjects.

Unit 3: Speaking skills (pp 63-72)

The purpose of this unit is to give guidelines to students on pronunciation in English, to explain the rhythm of English speech, and to provide him/her with examples of and practice in the use of classroom English.

As the course was originally designed for teacher trainees, the students are informed on how to enhance communication and interaction in the classroom, and how to create a warm classroom atmosphere. During this unit, lecturers should create opportunities for their students to practise their speaking skills. However, no suggestions for this are given in the manual and lecturers have to use their own discretion in this regard. On the Mamelodi campus, students are divided into groups and then have to write and perform their own plays.

Also problematic is that the unit focuses on teacher education, as students in the Foundation Phase are not necessarily trainee teachers. Aspects such as “creating a warm classroom atmosphere” are not relevant to students in the Foundation Phase who may not intend to become teachers. There should be greater opportunity for students to speak in the classroom, and they should be given the opportunity to debate relevant issues and to deliver prepared speeches. As much group work as possible should be done. The course should promote students’ confidence in expressing themselves in English in front of other people. Although students enjoy performing the plays, some do not speak much during the performance, and their use of speaking skills is overshadowed by their “acting”.

Unit 4: Listening skills (pp 74-80)

The purpose of this unit is to exercise and improve listening comprehension. Students listen to a variety of unseen extracts. These extracts are read to the students by the lecturer. Alternatively, they listen to a taped recording of the passages and dialogues. Thereafter they answer questions in the manual on the content, tone and register of the passage.

Although these exercises are useful, they are time-consuming and should rather be incorporated in each unit. Some of the passages have been in use for several years, are outdated and foreign to the students.

Unit 5: Visual Literacy (pp 82-90)

The last unit deals with visual literacy. The purpose of this unit is to raise awareness and understanding of the use of signs and symbols.

Several types of graphs are provided to the students, which they have to interpret. They have to answer questions on the information given in the graphs.

Some of these exercises are irrelevant and others are too easy for tertiary students. If visual literacy were to form part of any unit, it should rather occur in the context of relevant comprehension passages.

Course organisation

The course is offered in the first semester only. In reality, however, the lecturing time in the semester is only 8 to 10 weeks. Students have three hours of lectures per week, one class of two hours and one class of one hour.

The course is organised in five units. The first four units each address one of the four skills and the last unit is on visual literacy. Lecturers can decide whether they want to keep to the organisation in the manual or switch units around, as long as all five units are dealt with during the semester. Every unit has to be completed within two weeks.

There is no integration of skills as the five units are treated as separate entities. It might be more useful to have integrated units where all areas are treated simultaneously and in context. The use of related tasks within each unit might solve this problem.

The actual class time of the course is influenced by unpredictable circumstances such as late registration of students, class boycotts or general strikes which lead to poor class attendance. However, it would not be practical to extend the course to one year as this would influence the curriculum of the students, credits allocated to the course and the structure of the qualification as a whole. Such changes would have to be approved by the Senate of the University Management and could be a very lengthy process.

Methodology

There is no prescribed methodology which is to be followed, except that the course seems to follow the general principles of the communicative approach as vaguely implied in the aims of the course. Lecturers keep to this approach as far as possible, but every lecturer is free to decide for him-/herself how s/he would like to teach the course. Most lecturers opt to make classes interactive and to have the students do the exercises in the manual in class. Although group work is used at the discretion of the lecturers, there are no formal tutorials.

Class sizes differ from campus to campus (see Table 4 below). Large classes are difficult to deal with as there is only one lecturer per campus who teaches LPR. One solution may be to include tutorial classes where students receive individual attention in smaller groups. More lecturers could be involved to ensure smaller classes.

Enrolment numbers	2002	2003
Mamelodi	28	90
Port Elizabeth	142	110
East Rand	50	98
Soweto	58	130
Sebokeng	21	23
Welkom	60	70
Bloemfontein	0	34

Table 4: Enrolment of students in LPR for 2002 and 2003

To ensure equal standards on all campuses, it is essential that there be communication between all LPR lecturers on the different campuses.

Resources

As mentioned in 7.1.1, students receive a manual (see Appendix A) which consists of various exercises on each of the four skills. Lecturers can add any other material—from magazines, brochures or other sources—if they feel it would benefit the students. However, due to time constraints, this does not happen often. On the Mamelodi campus, magazines such as “Getaway” are used to discuss advertisements and writing skills.

As the same manual has been used for the last four years, material in the manual is outdated. Another drawback is that students can get hold of manuals from previous years and copy answers to exercises and assignments. Some material is not relevant to the needs and interest of the students, and new and interesting material should be added on a continuous basis. Worksheets which could be updated and adapted as needed, could rather be used.

Assessment

The LPR course is presented on seven campuses by seven different lecturers who decide for themselves how they will assess their students and determine their semester marks—which constitute 50% of the final mark. However, all the students from all seven campuses

write the same examination. Lecturers have to ensure that their students are prepared for the final examination.

On the Mamelodi campus, students have to hand in three comprehension tests, an argumentative essay, a curriculum vitae and a copy of an original play which they write in groups. They are also assessed on their group performance in the play that they wrote.

Students on the Mamelodi campus have the opportunity to improve their term marks by optionally handing in additional comprehension exercises and essays. Students thus have an incentive for doing additional assignments, which give them further opportunities to practise their skills. The lecturer is able to form a holistic view of the abilities, motivation and dedication of individual students who opt to put in an extra effort.

At the end of the semester, students write a formal examination consisting of an essay, a comprehension test, and language and visual literacy questions (see Appendix D). This paper counts for 50% of students' final examination mark. Theoretically the formal examination is set jointly by all seven lecturers. This does not necessarily happen and often, due to workload and time constraints, one lecturer sets the whole paper. No common grids for marking essays are used by the lecturers and each lecturer makes his/her own decisions regarding the essay marks.

In addition, the students complete a listening examination during their last class of the semester, during which passages are read to them and on which they have to answer questions in writing. This examination contributes another 25% of the final examination mark. The same listening examination is done on all campuses, but there are variations in accents, reading speed and tone on the part of the various lecturers.

The last 25% of the final examination is an oral mark, the nature of which is determined by lecturers at their own discretion. The assessment of the oral mark is problematic because there is no consistency between campuses. Some lecturers make use of group debates or interviews, whereas other lecturers determine this mark through individual interviews. There is no standardised marking scheme. On the Mamelodi campus, students are individually interviewed by the lecturer and a mark is allocated to them according to their ability to communicate. Whichever method the lecturer uses, it is clear that this is a very subjective mark which could lead to differences in standards between campuses and which can dramatically influence the final mark of the student.

Students' final examination mark is calculated by adding marks for the listening examination (25%), the oral examination (25%) and the written examination (50%).

It is clear that the assessment on all campuses needs to be agreed upon and standardised beforehand by all the lecturers involved. As mentioned above, communication between lecturers is essential. Essays are presently marked at the discretion of lecturers, usually allocating 50% of the marks for language and 50% for content. This is vague and subjective. In order to minimise variations in the marks allocated to students, there have to be common marking grids.

There is no external moderation of examination papers or scripts by objective parties. There should be a form of quality control to ensure that students on all campuses are dealt with in much the same way.

7.1.2 Observation

The researcher observed several classes on the Mamelodi campus (see Chapter 6.4). After each class, the researcher wrote field notes in the form of a journal which were then interpreted and analysed.

Classes consisted of formal lectures, after which students completed exercises in the manual and discussed topics as indicated. There was little opportunity for one-on-one tutoring and no tutorials.

During the unit on reading skills, students completed comprehension exercises orally in class and thereafter, as an assignment, completed three assignments on their own at home.

Students were handed copies of Getaway magazine to practise their reading skills. They had to prepare a paragraph on any place they would like to visit that they had seen or read about in the magazine. Students seemed to enjoy the change. They were lectured on the basic elements of essay writing.

During the writing skills unit, students had to write a formal letter and a CV in preparation for any job application they might encounter. They had to practise their writing skills by writing a formal argumentative essay on a relevant topic, in class. They started writing plays in groups, which would be performed later on. They could write a play on any topic, in groups of 4 to 6 students. Students performed their plays in groups. They seemed to enjoy this and went to a lot of trouble. Written copies of the plays were handed in for assessment as well.

The students practised their listening skills by doing the exercises in the manual and listening to the accompanying tape recording. Students found it difficult to answer the exercises which were on tape, due to the size of the class, the quality of the sound and the accents of the speakers.

Students completed exercises on visual literacy. They found them easy to complete. Some students questioned the relevance of this to language proficiency.

In general it seemed that the students enjoyed the classes. They needed to be kept busy all the time and there had to be a lot of variety in the classes. It was difficult to involve all the students in activities as some were quite shy. In every group work activity, students preferred to switch to their mother tongue in their discussions. By the end of the semester, they seemed more relaxed and confident to speak up in the classroom.

From the field notes, it seemed that students gained confidence as the course developed. Students seemed to cooperate well and to enjoy the course in general. They expressed their dissatisfaction when they were bored. They enjoyed the introduction of extra material such as magazines.

From the observation in the classroom it is clear that students need to be involved in the classroom. There need to be interaction between lecturer and students. Activities should be varied, relevant and interesting to students.

In general, it seemed that the students enjoyed the classes. At the beginning of the semester, they were very shy and did not want to speak to the lecturer or their fellow students. As the semester progressed, their confidence grew. They were more relaxed and began to participate in discussions.

The students needed to be kept busy all the time, and there had to be a lot of variety in the classes. It was difficult to involve all the students in activities as some were reluctant to participate in class. In discussions in every group work activity done on the Mamelodi campus, students preferred to switch to their mother tongue.

From the field notes, it can be concluded that students gained confidence as the course progressed. A problem was the lack of time caused by class boycotts. Three academic weeks were lost due to class boycotts (9 lecturing hours). Students had to do self-study to catch up.

Students seemed to cooperate well and in general enjoyed the course. They enjoyed the introduction of extra material such as magazines. Students seemed to find the exercises on reading skills that they had to complete in the classroom, boring. They did not really want to read out loud, found the noise distracting and preferred to do comprehension exercises quietly on their own.

From the observation in the classroom it can be concluded that students should be involved in the lessons and that there should be interaction between lecturer and students. Activities should be varied regularly and should be relevant and interesting to students. To promote confidence in using the language spontaneously, classes should be centred on informal discussions. Not too many exercises should be done in groups in class, as students find this boring. The use of magazines worked well and could be extended.

The students enjoyed performing their plays, and gained confidence through acting their roles. However, the performances of the plays were time-consuming, and not all the members in the group contributed equally. Some had small roles and said only a few words—but at least they were participating.

The researcher's impression was that more feedback should be given on writing skills. The introduction of tutorials would be time-consuming, yet very useful. When teaching listening skills, a tape recording should not be used in large classes if the equipment is not of a very high quality. If students cannot hear the recording well enough, they do not participate and rapidly lose interest.

Some of the graphs in the visual literacy section were too easy, and the students questioned their relevance. Activities should be varied, relevant and interesting yet challenging. The classes should be fun, but should also be useful and meaningful.

7.1.3 Official documentation

Very little official documentation is available on the Foundation course and its rationale. The Management of Vista University sent out a circular to all campuses on 7 February 2002 to introduce the Foundation Programme to lecturers and course coordinators. The Foundation Programme has three broad areas: science, management and humanities. Students who have not obtained University exemption in their matriculation examination can be admitted into these programmes at the discretion of the university Senate. Potential students have to take the SAT and obtain a minimum of 25% to be accepted into the programme. Their curriculum (see Table 5 below) focuses on improving their academic skills and abilities.

Component 1	ENG 5004	Reading and writing skills
	Or ENG 5005	Language skills development
	LPR 5001	English language proficiency
	MFA 5001	Foundation Mathematics
Component 2	SOC 5004	Writing about the social world
	EUC 5001	End-user computing

Table 5: Foundation Programme curriculum

As mentioned in 6.2, students who have been placed in the Foundation Programme will be permitted into mainstream programmes only if they pass a minimum of 80% of the modules taken in the Foundation Programmes.

Although there is a prescribed manual, there is no syllabus available for LPR5001. The introduction of an official syllabus would ensure standardisation on all campuses.

There was very little communication between the curriculum designers of the Foundation phase and the course coordinators of the courses involved. LPR 5001, which is a compulsory subject in the curriculum of the Foundation Programme, is at the same time a prescribed course for the postgraduate teaching diploma. These two diverse groups of students should not be accommodated in the same class as their needs are too divergent.

7.2 Student data

As laid out in Table 1 in Chapter 6, the student data in this study include results on the SAT, filled-in questionnaires, and general student comments.

7.2.1 The SAT

The results of the pre- and post-test SAT were analysed in order to determine the difference between the results of the students on entrance into the course (in January) and again on exit (in June) (see 6.4).

The first step was to compute the average test results of the three groups on both tests, January and June separately (see Tables 6, 8, 10 below). The next step was to compare, for each campus separately, the test results according to the sub-scales indicated in Chapter 6, Table 2. As explained in 6.4, the January mark was subtracted from the June mark for each sub-scale. Then the mean differences between the January mark and the June mark of every sub-scale were calculated. The effect sizes were calculated by using

Cohen's d-values for dependent groups (Cohen, 1984:11). To determine the d-value, the mean of the difference between the two values was divided by the standard deviation of the difference between the two values. This d-value indicates practically significant differences between the means of two groups.

Cohen's d-value was calculated to determine which sub-scales show a practically significant difference. According to the cut-off points set by Cohen (see 6.4), only the sub-scales that had a d-value of 0,8 were considered practically significant (see Table 11 below).

The SAT: East Rand campus

SAT test	Average percentage
January 2002	48,4%
June 2002	45,2%

Table 6: Average percentages obtained by East Rand students in the SAT in January and June

It is clear from Table 6 that the average percentage of the students on the East Rand campus was lower in June than in January.

Variable	Mean of differences	Standard deviation of differences	D-value
Vocabulary	0,4090	0,9591	0,45
Extrapolation	0,1363	1,8592	0,07
Relation	-1,0909	1,7703	0,61
Communicative function	-0,7727	1,6310	0,47
Grammar	-0,4090	1,1815	0,33
Visual literacy	0,6363	0,9021	0,70
Essential	-0,2727	0,7672	0,35
Numerical	-0,3636	1,8656	0,19
Total	-1,7272	3,7693	0,45

Table 7: Results of the SAT obtained on the East Rand campus in June as compared to January

When each subscale was analysed and the d-values determined, it was clear that there were no practically significant differences between the two sets of marks. It can be concluded that the course did not seem to have made an impact on the results of the students on the East Rand campus

The next step was to analyse the results on the Mamelodi campus (see Table 8 below).

The SAT: Mamelodi campus

SAT test	Average percentage
January 2002	40,7%
June 2002	41,3%

Table 8: Average percentages obtained by Mamelodi students in the SAT in January and June

On average the test results on the Mamelodi campus was slightly better in June than in January (0,6%). However, when the subscales were analysed (see Table 9), there were no practically significant differences between the January and June results of the students on the Mamelodi campus.

Variable	Mean of differences	Standard deviation of differences	D-value
Vocabulary	0,4444	1,3814	0,32
Extrapolation	0,3888	1,5769	0,24
Relation	-0,1666	1,1504	0,14
Communicative function	-0,3888	1,2432	0,30
Grammar	0	1,1881	0
Visual literacy	0,2222	1,0602	0,21
Essential	-0,1111	0,6763	0,16
Numerical	-0,1111	1,1826	0,09
Total	0,2777	3,7855	0,073

Table 9: Results of the SAT obtained on Mamelodi in June as compared to January

From Table 8 and 9 it can be concluded that the course did not make a significant impact on the test results of the students on the Mamelodi campus either.

The SAT: Port Elizabeth campus

The third group to be analysed, were the students on the Port Elizabeth campus (see Table 10 below).

SAT test	Average percentage
January 2002	47,9%
June 2002	32,6%

Table 10: Average percentages obtained by Port Elizabeth students in the SAT in January and June

From Table 10, it is clear that the average percentage of the students on the Port Elizabeth campus was much lower in June than in January.

In all the sub-scales (see Table 11 below), there was a decrease in the results of the students from January to June. In the sub-scales of relation, vocabulary, and numerical, Cohen's d-values of were all higher than 0,8, which is practically significant (see 6.4.). In the case of the total marks of the two tests, an average difference (mean) of -7,182 was calculated. This amounts to a d-value of 1,28 which shows a practically significant deterioration.

Variable	Mean of differences	Standard deviation of differences	D-value
Vocabulary	-1,2272	1,541	0,80 *
Extrapolation	-1,2272	1,951	0,63
Relation	-2,1818	2,260	0,96 *
Communicative function	-0,636	1,0930	0,58
Grammar	-0,4091	1,1815	0,34
Visual literacy	-0,5909	1,4027	0,42
Essential	-0,1818	0,8528	0,21
Numerical	-1,8636	2,2529	0,8
Total	-7,1812	5,628	1,28 *

(* practically significant)

Table 11: Results of the SAT obtained on the Port Elizabeth campus in June as compared to January

Port Elizabeth campus was the only campus where there were practically significant differences between the June and January marks, and only in the categories of vocabulary, relation, and the total.

It is difficult to explain why the test scores show no improvement in students' proficiency. On the Port Elizabeth campus, the students wrote the second test after they had written an official June examination in another subject. Possibly this affected their concentration. The lower average percentage may also be ascribed to the fact that in January students were more motivated to perform well in the test, as it was to give them access to tertiary education. In June, they were not motivated as they were requested to complete the test for research purposes, and it held no specific benefits for them.

The impact of educational intervention, such as the possible effect of a programme, is very difficult and controversial to prove (Lynch, 1996:45). However, it may be concluded from the test results of the three campuses that the course did not improve the language proficiency of the students at all. If the course had had a positive influence, this would have been significant in the test results, even if only to a small extent. This was not the case. These results support the decision to evaluate the course and re-design it.

7.2.2 Student questionnaires

The questionnaires were filled in by the students on the Port Elizabeth and Mamelodi campuses. The first step was to test the questionnaire for reliability (see Chapter 6). This was done by using the Cronbach formula (Anastasi, 1988:124) as discussed in 6.4. It was necessary to determine which of the sub-scales (see Table 3 in Chapter 6) may be regarded as valid.

Sub-scale	Cronbach alpha value	Interpretation
1. Expectations	0,338804	Too low
2. Listening skills		Too few items
3. Speaking skills	0,613501	Acceptable
4. Reading skills	0,657138	Acceptable
5. Writing skills	0,598853	Acceptable
6. Manual/teaching aids		Too few items
7. Group work, interaction		Too few items
8. Assessment	0,285256	Too low
9. Course design	0,368288	Too low
10. Self-study	0,358130	Unacceptable
11. General impression	0,636542	Acceptable
Section B		
1. Manual		Too few items
2. Course design		Too few items
3. General impressions	0,603852	Acceptable

Table 12: Cronbach alpha results

The results of the Cronbach alpha values (see Table 12 above) indicate that only five of the sub-scales have a Cronbach alpha result with a value higher than 0.5 and are reliable as clusters of specific items (see Table 13 below).

Speaking skills	Questions 10, 17, 27, 36
Reading skills	Questions 2, 13, 19, 20
Writing skills	Questions 3, 22, 34, 35
General impression of the course, practical, independent thought, useful	Questions 8, 14, 26, 30, 31, 37, 38
General impression	Questions B3, 4, 5

Table 13: Cronbach alpha values (high)

To compare these two campuses, the results of the sub-scales from these two campuses with high Cronbach alpha values (see Table 13 above), were used to calculate the d-values (Cohen, 1984:11) in order to indicate practically significant differences (see Table 14 below) between the campuses.

Variable	Campus	N	Mean	Std Dev	d-value
Speaking	Mamelodi	22	2,951	0,620	0,02
	Port Elizabeth	53	2,948	0,632	
Reading	Mamelodi	22	3,219	0,849	0,03
	Port Elizabeth	52	3,186	0,778	
Writing	Mamelodi	22	2,909	0,726	0,17
	Port Elizabeth	53	3,044	0,789	
General	Mamelodi	22	2,948	0,610	0,18
	Port Elizabeth	52	3,059	0,552	
General impression	Mamelodi	22	0,886	0,174	0,10
	Port Elizabeth	49	0,850	0,289	

Table 14: Results of Cohen's d-value—Mamelodi campus compared to Port Elizabeth campus

As may be seen from the calculations, all the d-values are lower than 0.5, which represent a small or insignificant difference (see Chapter 6). From this it may be deduced that there is no practically significant difference between the analyses of the students' responses from the Port Elizabeth and those from the Mamelodi campus. It appears that the differences between the campuses regarding class size, different lecturers (one male and one female), and different methodology did not influence the results at all. It may be concluded that the opinions of these students were representative of the students on all campuses. It may be assumed, furthermore, that there will not be significant differences between campuses.

The last step was to take every item in every cluster and discuss each by means of the frequency tables of percentages for each item (see 6.4 in Chapter 6). The tables indicate the opinions of the 75 students on the Mamelodi and Port Elizabeth campuses on different aspects of the course. As indicated in 6.4, the responses are indicated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4 (1 = not at all; 4 = to a large extent). Where there is a missing value (N < 75), it reflects students who did not respond to that question. Items in the cluster where students had to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements are discussed within the cluster as a whole.

Section A	1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. I knew what was expected of me in the course	21	30,4%	14	20,2%	14	20,29%	20	28,99%
6. I wanted to take the course	16	22,54%	21	29,58%	14	19,72%	20	28,17%
18. The outcomes of the course were clear to me	10	14,49%	10	14,49%	11	15,94%	38	55,07%

Table 15: Expectations of students

Table 15 indicates that the students were not motivated to take the course and did not know what was expected of them. Although more than half of the students indicated that the outcomes of the course were clear to them, this percentage should be much higher.

Students need to be clearly informed about the value of the course and what its outcomes are at the beginning of the course. They should furthermore be constantly reminded of this throughout the duration of the course. They may be more successful and motivated if they know what to expect and what is expected of them.

Section A	1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
7. The course improved my listening ability	2	2,9%	11	15,94%	11	15,95%	45	65,22%
12. The listening exercises were interesting	4	5,71%	8	11,43%	6	8,57%	52	74,29%

Table 16: Listening skills

Table 16 indicates that most of the students thought the exercises were interesting, although only two-thirds felt that they really benefited from this unit.

If these exercises are spread out throughout the course and not all done in one unit, students might be able to improve their listening skills more.

Section A	1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
10. The course improved my ability to speak English correctly	5	7,35%	15	22,06%	18	26,47%	30	44,12%
17. My pronunciation improved	9	13,43%	16	23,88%	15	22,39%	27	40,30%
27. The course improved my ability to speak English fluently	2	2,9%	20	28,99%	13	18,84%	34	49,28%
36. There was not enough opportunity for me to speak	18	25,71%	10	14,29%	17	24,29%	25	35,71%

Table 17: Speaking skills

Table 17 indicates that fewer than half of the students felt that their speaking skills improved. Almost 60% of the students felt they did not have enough opportunity to speak in the classroom and that their pronunciation and use of the language did not improve.

The students should be given more opportunity to speak and use the language in the classroom. This can be done by introducing more organised group work, relevant prepared or unprepared speeches and tutorials.

Section A	1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
2. The course improved my reading ability	5	7,46%	12	17,91%	8	11,94%	42	62,69%
13. The comprehension passages helped me to understand English better	6	8,96%	11	16,42%	12	17,91%	38	56,72%
19. The comprehension passages were interesting	5	7,58%	11	16,67%	12	18,18%	38	57,58%
20. The comprehension passages were outdated	14	42,42%	13	16,67%	11	19,7%	28	21,21%

Table 18: Reading skills

From Table 18, it seems that most of the students felt their comprehension skills improved during the course. Although 40% of the students felt the passages were outdated, more than half of the students thought the passages were interesting.

By introducing worksheets with contemporary, new and relevant passages, this percentage may be increased.

Section A	1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
3. The course helped me to write more fluently	8	13,11%	11	18,03%	12	19,67%	30	49,18%
22. The course did not improve my writing ability	11	16,92%	13	20,00%	14	21,54%	27	41,54%
34. I learned writing skills that were useful to me	8	11,59%	14	20,29%	9	13,04%	38	55,07%
35. The course helped me to write more correctly	9	13,43%	9	13,43%	13	19,4%	36	53,73%

Table 19: Writing skills

Table 19 indicates that less than half the students felt that their writing skills improved. Only half of the students felt that they were able to write more accurately after completing this unit.

More attention should be given to improving the academic writing skills of the students.

Section A	1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
4. The manual is sufficient as it is	12	19,05%	11	17,46%	12	19,05%	28	44,44%
21. The manual does not provide enough material for the course	14	20,29%	16	23,19%	13	18,84%	26	37,68%
Section B	Agree				Disagree			
	N		%		N		%	
1. I would have preferred to use a textbook with the manual	36		55,38%		29		44,62%	

Table 20: Resources

From Table 20, it can be concluded that about half of the students were not satisfied with the manual and felt that the material in the manual was insufficient. More than half of the students preferred a prescribed textbook in addition to the manual.

This problem may be solved if worksheets are used instead of a manual, as worksheets can be adapted and updated as required. An appropriate textbook could be prescribed in addition to the worksheets.

Section A	1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16. The course helped me to work in groups	6	9,09%	2	3,03%	6	9,09%	52	78,79%
40. I would have liked to do more group work with the other students	13	19,70%	11	16,67%	5	7,58%	37	56,065

Table 21: Classroom interaction

The majority of the students felt that they benefited from group work (see Table 21 above). More than half of the students would like to do more group work.

The course should make provision for more group work and interaction between students.

Section A	1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
9. The course should be extended to one year	26	40,00%	8	12,31%	6	9,23%	25	38,46%
25. I wanted to learn more formal grammar	17	25,76%	9	13,64%	13	19,70%	27	40,91%
32. I wanted to be taught less formal grammar	14	21,88%	10	15,63%	13	20,31%	27	42,19%
33. The course was too short	22	32,84%	12	17,91%	12	17,91%	21	31,34%

Table 22: Course design

Table 22 indicates that the students were divided on the issue of preferred duration of the course. Some students wanted the course to be extended, while others preferred the course to remain the duration it is at present. Almost half of the students wanted formal grammar to be included in the course.

The length of the course is determined by the structure and management of the institution. To change this will entail an elaborate and lengthy process (see Chapter 8).

Section A	1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
5. There was enough formative assessment	12	19,35%	10	16,13%	18	29,03%	22	35,48%
11. The assignments did not help me to improve my English proficiency	13	22,03%	10	16,95%	11	18,64%	25	42,37%
23. The assignments were set in such a way that I could complete them on my own	7	10,77%	12	18,46%	14	21,84%	32	49,23%
24. There were not enough tests during the course to see whether I was improving	12	19,35%	13	20,97%	11	17,74%	26	41,94%
29. I did not get the opportunity to learn from my mistakes	15	23,44%	12	18,75%	15	23,44%	22	34,38%
Section B	Agree				Disagree			
	N		%		N		%	
2. There were enough assignments in the course	49		73,13%		18		26,87%	

Table 23: Assessment

Table 23 indicates that the students were not satisfied with the way in which assessment was done. Although most students felt that there were enough assignments during the course, they wanted more opportunities to be assessed and would have preferred more tests.

The students could be given more tasks and worksheets to solve this problem of too few opportunities for assessment. Tutorials may be one solution to this problem. They could write more formal tests similar to questions in the examination paper.

Section A	1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
15. I needed a lot of guidance, as the course was too difficult	24	37,5%	13	20,31%	6	9,38%	21	32,81%
28. The course gave me enough opportunity to work at my own pace	6	8,82%	10	14,71%	16	23,53%	36	52,94%
39. During the course I had to do too much work on my own	26	38,81%	15	22,39%	8	11,97%	18	26,87%

Table 24: Self-study

From Table 24, it may be concluded that some of the students preferred more guidance and could not work independently. Only half of the students felt they could work at their own pace.

Although these are contact students who can expect help and guidance from their lecturers, the course should nonetheless aim to teach students to be independent by guiding them in the development of their own academic skills. They should gradually be encouraged to work independently. This could be done with the guidance and support of the lecturer.

Section A	1		2		3		4	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
8. During the course I had the opportunity to think for myself	4	5,97%	9	13,43%	13	19,4%	41	61,19%
14. My English proficiency improved by taking the course	8	11,43%	8	11,43	9	12,86%	45	64,29%
26. The course helped me to do my assignments in other subjects	7	10,77%	10	15,38%	12	18,46%	36	55,38%
30. I did not benefit enough from taking the course	36	55,38%	9	13,85%	9	13,85%	11	16,92%
31. The course improved my English proficiency outside the classroom	7	10,45%	8	11,94%	11	16,42%	41	61,19%
37. The course should be more advanced	40	59,70%	11	16,42%	11	16,42%	5	7,46%
38. The course gave me more confidence to use English	5	7,58%	7	10,61%	11	16,67%	43	65,15%
Section B	Agree				Disagree			
	N		%		N		%	
3. The course was interesting and I enjoyed taking the course	57		86,57%		9		13,43%	
4. The course did not help me at all	9		13,43%		57		86,57%	
5. I will recommend the course to my friends	56		83,58%		11		16,42%	

Table 25: General impression of the course

Most of the students felt that they benefited from taking the course (see Table 25 above). They felt that their English proficiency had improved and that they had gained knowledge which they could apply in their other courses. They did not feel that the course should be more advanced. Most of the students thought that the course was interesting and enjoyed taking it.

In Section C of the questionnaire (see Appendix B), the following comments, which are representative of the views of all the students, were expressed:

- most students felt that they benefited from taking the course
- most students enjoyed the course
- six students felt the course was boring with not enough variety
- two students felt the course should be extended to a year in duration.

7.2.3 General comments by students

During their first class, students who enrolled for the course at the Mamelodi campus were asked to write a paragraph on their expectations of the course (see 6.4). The following comments are representative of their comments as a whole:

- "I want to improve my English"
- "I want to speak better"
- "I want to communicate in English"
- "I want to read newspapers and magazines and understand English"
- "I want to read better"
- "I want to improve my speaking, listening and reading"
- "I want to write correct English".

After completing the course, students were asked to write down their opinions of the course in general, highlighting both good and negative points, again in paragraph form.

Good points about the course

- "I learned a lot about English that I did not know"
- "I learned about talking, writing and listening"
- "It gave me confidence"
- "It is important for me to take the course"
- "I work faster now"
- "It improved my understanding and thinking"
- "It helped me to communicate"
- "It helped me to socialise with other students"
- "I have learned about my mistakes"
- "I learned how to write an essay"
- "The study guide helped me with spelling"
- "I am not afraid to make mistakes".

Negative points about the course

- “You need to work too hard”
- “It should be for a year”
- “I do not like to stand in front of others and speak”
- “There should be more group work and talking to others”
- “Listening is too difficult, especially if we have to listen to a tape”.

From an analysis of the student survey, it is clear that the students emphasised the importance of communication. They wanted to learn English to improve their communication skills, to be able to read and write fluently, and to be able to use all four skills for interaction. They wanted to gain confidence in using the language and to be able to communicate with their fellow students in groups.

The majority of the students did not like the use of tape recordings in a large classroom. Many of the students did not like to stand in front of others and speak. Some students felt the course could be extended in duration. A few students felt that the course involved too much work.

However, it is a problem that students think that they need the course to improve their communication skills only. Students at tertiary level should develop their academic literacy to a higher level than seems to have been reached in this course.

From the survey done after the course, it seemed that the students were satisfied that their needs were met. They felt that their proficiency had increased and that they were more confident in using the language.

7.3 Lecturers' data

Of the seven questionnaires distributed to the lecturers, only four questionnaires were returned. The results are now discussed.

Section A	1	2	3	4
1. Students knew what was expected of them in the course	0	2	1	0
6. They wanted to take the course	1	1	2	0
18. The outcomes of the course were clear to them	0	0	3	1

Table 26: Expectations

Table 26 indicates that the lecturers were divided as to whether the outcomes were clear to the students. None of the lecturers felt that the students were motivated to take the course. With the exception of one lecturer, lecturers felt the students did not know what was expected of them in the course.

It may be concluded that the lecturers feel that the outcomes need to be expressed more clearly, and that the students should know beforehand what to expect from the course.

Section A	1	2	3	4
7. The course improved their listening ability	0	1	2	1
12. The listening exercises were interesting	0	0	3	1

Table 27: Listening skills

From Table 27 it is clear that all the lecturers felt that the listening exercises improved the students' listening ability slightly. None of the lecturers felt these exercises were of no value to students. All the lecturers felt that the passages were mostly interesting.

From this it may be concluded that the lecturers felt that the listening exercises were useful and should remain part of the course.

Section A	1	2	3	4
10. The course improved their ability to speak English accurately	0	1	3	0
17. Their pronunciation improved	0	1	3	0
27. The course improved their ability to speak English fluently	0	2	1	1
36. There was not enough opportunity for students to speak	1	1	1	1

Table 28: Speaking skills

From Table 28 it may be concluded that only one lecturer felt that there was enough opportunity for the students to speak English in the classroom. Most lecturers felt that the course did not improve the students' ability to speak English accurately and fluently—though it improved their pronunciation slightly.

According to the lecturers, the speaking skills of students may improve if there is more opportunity to practise these skills during the course as indicated underneath Table 17. Class discussions and debates could take precedence over lecturing.

Section A	1	2	3	4
2. The course improved their reading ability	0	2	2	0
13. The comprehension passages helped them to understand English better	0	2	2	0
19. The comprehension passages were interesting	0	2	2	0
20. The comprehension passages were outdated	1	0	2	1

Table 29: Reading skills

Table 29 indicates that lecturers did not feel that the reading skills of the students improved much. One lecturer felt that the reading passages were outdated and should be changed. All the lecturers felt that the passages were slightly interesting.

From this it may be concluded that the course should concentrate more on the reading skills of the students. Although the passages were interesting, they should be updated regularly and should be more relevant to students.

Section A	1	2	3	4
3. The course helped them to write more fluently	1	2	1	0
22. The course did not improve their writing ability	0	0	1	3
34. Students learned writing skills that were useful to them	1	1	1	1
35. The course helped them to write more accurately	1	1	2	0

Table 30: Writing skills

Table 30 indicates that only one lecturer felt that the students learned writing skills that were useful to them. Most of the lecturers felt that the course did not improve the writing skills of the students; they did not learn to write more fluently or more accurately.

As the emphasis in the course should be on improving the academic writing skills of the students, much more attention needs to be paid to this aspect. Due to time constraints this is difficult. However, the content and activities selected should provide more opportunities for improving the writing skills of the students.

Section A	1	2	3	4
4. The manual is sufficient as it is	2	2	0	0
21. The manual does not provide enough material for the course	3	2	0	0
Section B	Agree		Disagree	
1. I would have preferred to use a textbook with the manual	0		4	

Table 31: Resources

From Table 31 it may be concluded that none of the lecturers felt that there was a need for a textbook in addition to the manual. However, the lecturers felt quite strongly that the manual did not provide enough material and was insufficient.

As mentioned earlier, one solution may be to use worksheets instead of an inflexible manual, which could be adapted and updated more frequently according to the needs and interests of the students.

Section A	1	2	3	4
16. The course helped students to work in groups	0	2	1	1
40. I would have like to do more group work with the students	0	1	0	3

Table 32: Classroom interaction

Table 32 indicates that the lecturers felt that group work improved the language proficiency of the students. However, only one lecturer felt the course created opportunities for group work. Most of the lecturers wanted to do more group work in the course.

Guidelines could be given on how to use group work more extensively during the course. Activities and tasks should provide opportunity for group work.

Section A	1	2	3	4
9. The course should be extended to one year	0	0	1	3
25. Students should learn more formal grammar	0	1	3	0
32. Students should be taught less formal grammar	0	3	1	0
33. The course was too short	0	1	1	2

Table 33: Course design

From Table 33 it may be concluded that most lecturers felt that the course should be extended to a full year.

Most lecturers felt that students should learn more formal grammar. Grammar should be more prominent in the course, as indicated earlier.

Section A	1	2	3	4
5. There was enough opportunity for formative assessment	1	1	1	1
11. The assignments did not help students to improve their English proficiency	1	1	1	1
23. The assignments were set in such a way that students could complete them on their own	0	3	0	1
24. There were not enough tests during the course to see whether students were improving	2	1	1	0
29. Students did not get the opportunity to learn from their mistakes	2	1	1	0
Section B	Agree		Disagree	
2. There were enough assignments in the course	2		2	

Table 34: Assessment

Table 34 indicates that lecturers were divided as to the number of assignments to be included. The lecturers felt that the students did not get enough opportunity to learn from their mistakes. There was no system of re-doing assignments or doing additional assignments as was the case at the Mamelodi campus.

Assignments should therefore form part of every task in the course, thereby providing more opportunity for formative assessment. Lecturers should have the freedom to decide for themselves how to do assessment, but should be informed of what the lecturers on other campuses are doing and activities exchanged. There should be a form of quality control and moderation to ensure equality.

Section A	1	2	3	4
15. Students needed a lot of guidance, as the course was too difficult	1	1	2	0
28. The course gave students enough opportunity to work at their own pace	1	2	1	0
39. During the course students had to do too much work on their own	0	1	0	3

Table 35: Self-study

As indicated in Table 35, the lecturers felt that there was not enough opportunity for students to work on their own. However, most lecturers felt that the students needed guidance and that they should gradually grow towards independent learning.

The ideal situation would be to introduce tutorials so that students could be guided within the context of smaller groups, as mentioned earlier.

Section A	1	2	3	4
8. During the course students had the opportunity to think for themselves	0	3	0	1
14. Their English proficiency improved by taking the course	0	0	3	1
26. The course helped students to do their assignments in other subjects	0	2	2	0
30. Students did not benefit enough from taking the course	0	3	0	1
31. The course improved the English proficiency of students outside the classroom	0	2	0	1
37. The course should be more advanced	0	1	3	0
38. The course gave students more confidence in using English	0	1	2	1

Section B	Agree	Disagree
3. The course was interesting; the students and lecturer enjoyed taking the course	4	0
4. The course did not help my students at all	0	4
5. I will recommend the course to my students	4	0

Table 36: General impression of the course

Table 36 indicates that the lecturers felt that the course was interesting and students benefited from taking the course. They would all recommend the course to their students. However, they were not convinced that the course benefited students to its full potential.

In the last section (Section C; see Appendix C), lecturers made the following suggestions as to how the course could be made more effective:

- the course should be extended to one year in duration
- the manual is outdated and should be updated
- more relevant exercises should be included to improve writing skills
- more group work should be included.

7.4 Survey of tertiary institutions

In this section, the language proficiency courses currently offered at tertiary institutions in South Africa are reviewed in order to determine how these institutions address the issue of language proficiency (see Chapter 6.4). For the purpose of this study, the focus was on students in the field of Humanities, which is comparable to the students and course offered at Vista University.

In all the cases, information was provided by lecturers who are currently teaching the course at these institutions, calendars, brochures, information guides and available websites. The lecturers will remain anonymous.

7.4.1 University of Cape Town

Background

UCT was founded in 1829 as part of the South African College, a boys' college that provided primary, secondary and tertiary education. They achieved full university status in 1918. At present, UCT is one of the most prestigious universities in South Africa, with a student enrolment of about 20 000 students.

According to the mission statement of UCT, the university is committed to maintaining high academic standards and strives to be a university of the first rank in both international and African contexts. Although UCT operates through the medium of English and classes are presented in English, 35% of the students are not mother-tongue speakers of English (Kapp, 2000).

Each faculty at UCT has disciplinary-specific interventions to improve the academic language proficiency of its students. These take the form of credit-bearing courses, adjunct tutorials, writing workshops, or intervention in mainstream curricula. UCT also has a writing centre where all students can go for help with their essays. Students in the Humanities at UCT and who come from a disadvantaged background may have difficulty in coping with the level of reading and writing required in the Humanities. For this reason, the Centre for Higher Education Development at UCT designed the Language in the Humanities (LITH) course, which runs alongside two other general foundation courses in Humanities.

New or transferring undergraduate students applying for entrance to the BA who have written English Second Language (Higher Grade or have less than a D symbol for English First-Language Higher Grade) may be required to register for an Academic Development course (LITH) unless they perform satisfactorily in the Placement Test in English for Educational Purposes (PTEEP) which is written during registration week. LITH is a credit-bearing course similar to the Language Proficiency course offered at Vista University, and is discussed in detail below.

Aims

LITH aims to improve language skills in reading, writing and spoken communication, and to develop self-confidence and critical thinking. The course furthermore aims to develop the ability to analyse and evaluate arguments, something which will help students in writing academic essays in the social sciences. The course aims to improve knowledge and understanding of academic practice, listening and lecture note-taking, writing academic essays, examination and test-taking skills and group facilitation and interaction.

Course content

The course focuses on what is expected of students in the academic environment, and aims to make clear why these conventions and expectations exist, making use of key Social Science concepts. Language and concept development are viewed as closely related, and students are inducted into the language and discourse of the Humanities. Reading and writing skills are developed around a set of key concepts (for example, language, culture

and gender). During the first week of the course, students are orientated and introduced to the learning environment at UCT. They are given guidance about lectures in other subjects and language in the academic context. In terms of theory, the course draws strongly on the New Literacy Studies and genre theorists.

Students are taught strategies for effective note-taking and summarising. They learn about analysing writers' views, giving their own point of view, essay topic analysis, criteria for assessing writing, and debating skills. Students learn how to define concepts and analyse theoretical positions, as well as learn reading and writing skills, coherence and cohesion, the language of comparison, vocabulary building strategies, and examination skills. They learn about comparison and contrast, the close reading of texts, revising and editing, and how to do group presentations.

The course furthermore guides students on how to find relevant information, read effectively, develop reading strategies, synthesise information from a range of sources, and on referencing, planning an essay and writing the first draft, and revision. Students begin with essay topic analysis in order to establish the requirements of a given essay. Students are also taught how to write regular, informal essays, how to manage time, and how to respond to different examination questions.

Course organisation

The course is designed in the form of five units, which embody the aspects discussed above. Each unit is centred around an essay because that is the key genre in their Humanities context. It runs for one semester (that is, six months) and students have four classes of 45 minutes per week, a total of 52 hours. Apart from formal lecture time, there is a lot of one-on-one interaction between the student and lecturer, discussing drafts and giving and receiving advice.

Methodology

Students are divided into classes of 20 to 25 students, with one lecturer per class. Students often debate relevant issues in pairs or small groups facilitated by lecturers. The course is a scaffolded, mediated learning experience based on the ideas of Vygotsky and Cummins (Angelil-Carter & Paxton, 1993:6).

Students are given assignments which allow them to practise constructing an academic argument. They are guided towards using the skills acquired in LITH in their other courses.

Resources

There are no prescribed textbooks for LITH, but students are given handouts and worksheets which they keep in a file. This enables the lecturers to keep course material current and relevant.

Assessment

The term mark is compiled from the results of three assignments and one class test based on reading and writing skills. Students have the option to visit the writing centre at UCT, where postgraduate students help them with writing their assignments.

Assignments contribute 60% of the final course mark. In addition, students write an open-book examination worth 40%.

After completing the course successfully, the students receive a full credit, equal to any other semester course (2 points). If a student fails the course s/he is required to register for a similar course in order to develop the necessary skills.

Summary

The course at UCT is more or less the same length as the one offered at Vista University. An emphasis is placed on reading and writing (not speaking and listening), although all four skills are integrated into each unit. There is more emphasis on critical thinking and academic writing than in the Vista course. Handouts and worksheets are used instead of a manual or textbook. Classes are relatively small (20 to 25 students). Several lecturers assist with tutorials and revising drafts in contrast to the one lecturer per campus at Vista. Academic support is given to students to help them in their other courses. Tasks and reading passages are contemporary and relevant. The lecturers make use of group work and debates where students are actively involved. There is a lot of one-on-one interaction between lecturers and students after classes. Students are taught to debate and argue their points. The course or term mark is weighted more than the final examination mark and is based on the principles of continuous assessment.

7.4.2 University of the North

Background

The University of the North was established as a result of the promulgation of the Extension of the University Education Act of 1959, which sought to maintain racial segregation in

tertiary education. In 1960, the university opened its doors to 87 students, under the academic trusteeship of the University of South Africa.

The current administration has embarked upon an effort to break away from the past and transform the university from an apartheid institution to a democratic one. UNIN is located in what was the self-governing territory of Lebowa, near Polokwane. The main campus is in a remote area at Turfloop, between Polokwane and Magoebaskloof. There are satellite campuses in Qwaqwa and Giyani.

Over 99% of all students are African. The majority come from disadvantaged socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Most of these students are not mother-tongue speakers of English. To help these students to improve their academic literacy, they may enrol for two modules in Academic English. Currently there are 650 students enrolled in this course, with ten lecturers who teach the course. These students come from various disciplines and faculties, and are mostly first-year students.

Aims

The two modules in Academic English currently offered at UNIN aim to raise the English proficiency of students so that they can cope academically in their other courses. The course aims to help students write academic essays and assignments.

Course content

The course deals with formal grammar, academic reading and academic writing.

Course organisation

Each module takes more or less 12 to 14 weeks to complete. Students attend classes for two and a half hours per week, which comprises a lecture for one hour and workshops for one and a half hours.

Methodology

The course is task-based. Students attend a formal lecture after which they complete tasks on grammar, writing skills and comprehension skills during the workshops.

Resources

The lecturers make use of workbooks which on a regular basis are adapted to meet the needs of the students.

Assessment

Students are continuously assessed. Every two weeks they hand in writing tasks, grammar exercises or comprehension tests. At the end of the module, they write a formal examination in which their academic reading and writing skills are evaluated.

Summary

UNIN offers a short language course which is task-based but which also includes formal language teaching. Lecturers make use of workbooks which are regularly updated. Lecturing time is limited to one hour per week, and the remaining time is used for workshops. Students are assessed continuously, that is, at least once every two weeks. Many lecturers are involved, and the emphasis is on language skills.

7.4.3 University of Pretoria

Background

The University of Pretoria is situated in the centre of Pretoria and has a student body of 36 000 students, who come from different population groups. Classes are presented in both Afrikaans and English. However, a large proportion of the student population does not speak Afrikaans or English as mother tongue.

In 1999, the Unit for Language Skills Development was established to address the language problems of students. All students admitted to University of Pretoria have to write a placement test of language proficiency in English or Afrikaans (the ELSA-Plus test) after admission. Students may choose whether they would like to write the test in Afrikaans or English. The test is a language proficiency assessment instrument. At present, about 6 500 students write this test annually. Based on the results of the test, students are declared language proficient or not. From 2004, they will no longer make use of the ELSA-Plus test, but will compile their own test of academic literacy (Weideman, 2003).

Students who are found not to be proficient have to enrol for a course of four modules in academic literacy. They can choose whether they want to follow the course in English or Afrikaans. The course is fully credited (12 credits). Students who are declared proficient nonetheless have to obtain 12 credits in a language-related subject of their choice.

Aims

The aim of the course is to improve the academic language ability of students so that they are able to cope with their studies. The course aims to develop academic literacy and

enable students to communicate productively and perceptively in language which is appropriate to an academic context. The course aims to develop speaking and listening skills, learning strategies and information gathering, to build an academic vocabulary, and to improve reading for academic understanding, and writing.

Course content

The course deals with various contexts of academic language use and the language functions needed by students (Weideman, 2003: vi). The content is problem-based and task-oriented, consisting of information-gap activities based on authentic materials.

Content includes a range of academic vocabulary, understanding relations between different parts of text, interpreting different genres, interpreting information in both graphic and visual form, and making meaning of texts.

Course organisation

Students attend two classes per week, each lasting an hour. The course is held over 28 academic weeks. That amounts to 56 contact sessions of one hour each. For each hour, they are expected to work for another hour on their own, which amounts to 112 notional hours.

Methodology

The course is designed within the communicative approach and process-learning paradigms. During classes, students complete tasks in the textbook under the guidance of the lecturer. This is supplemented by a tutorial as well as a session in the reading laboratory.

Resources

Students use a prescribed textbook, *Academic literacy: prepare to learn* (Weideman, 2003), for the course as a whole, including all four modules. This text provides information on aspects covered in the course, and also serves as a workbook, as students may complete activities in the book itself. Activities and tasks are designed to develop reading and writing skills, comprehension skills, phonics, diction, spatial relations, vocabulary, numeracy and the successful completion of cloze exercises.

Assessment

The mark is made up of work done and submitted during the term—which is usually a portfolio of tasks—and the results of a proficiency test written at the end of each module.

Summary

At UP, the course is designed around tasks that are problem-based and embody information gap activities. Students make use of a useful prescribed textbook which includes a variety of relevant exercises, focusing on all four skills. The emphasis of the course is on academic writing and building an academic vocabulary. The course is much longer than courses at other institutions, and totals 28 weeks.

7.4.4 University of the Witwatersrand

Background

The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) originated in 1886 in Kimberley as the South African School of Mines. In 1904, it moved to Johannesburg and expanded to include Arts, Science, Law, Commerce and Medicine (Pavlich & Orkin, 1984:44). At present, the student population comprises about 23 000 students from various backgrounds. The medium of instruction is English, while Sesotho is being phased in as medium of instruction together with English.

Wits University has a language school called Wits Language School (WLS) which was developed as part of the Wits Enterprise which offers various services and research possibilities to students as well as the private sector on a commercial basis. At WLS, language courses are offered in a number of different languages. Practical English courses are designed for foreign- and second-language students on six levels of difficulty, each of which takes two months (eight weeks) to complete. Courses vary from a basic beginners level to an advanced level called “English Advanced”. However, none of these courses focus on academic development.

The Applied English Language Studies Department at Wits University offers a Foundation course in English Language (AELS) for undergraduate students who speak English as an additional language. The course is compulsory for first-year students who did not perform well enough in English on the entrance examination.

Aims

By taking the course, students learn the language requirements of university-level work. They read and discuss a range of issues while simultaneously acquiring oral and written skills. This course aims to develop the academic potential of students and concentrates on academic reading and writing.

During the first semester, the course aims to develop competent readers and writers, teach students to think and link ideas, to become competent listeners and speakers, and to develop “institutional” know-how by understanding the requirements and conventions of different disciplines.

The second semester investigates the role of language in everyday lives and teaches students basic research skills.

Course content

During the first semester, students are taken through the process of academic writing by giving them guidance on autobiographical writing, then comparative writing, and finally argumentative writing. The course has a strong theoretical basis.

In the second semester, the course concentrates on how language is used in different contexts, how it constructs identities, how language changes to suit the needs of the user, and the social aspects of language use. Students discuss issues such as language policies and language varieties in South Africa. They learn how to identify a research topic, formulate research questions, work with qualitative and quantitative data, conduct interviews, make presentations of the research, write a research report and read research papers.

Course organisation

The AELS course is offered over two semesters, and each semester is more or less 14 weeks in duration, depending on the university timetable. Students attend classes for five hours a week. The first hour is a plenary session attended by all the students taking the course, during which students are introduced to the content. The next four hours are tutorials, where students meet with one lecturer in groups of 30 to 40 students.

Methodology

The course at the WLS is interactive, with group and team work undertaken by the students. Activities centre on conversation, role-play, debate and storytelling. Students learn to use English by telling stories, using gesture and other paralinguistic aids. According to the WLS,

ongoing research in this area, as well as their own experience, has shown that storytelling gives opportunities for students to internalise the correct sentence patterns of the target language, while at the same time developing new vocabulary in a pleasurable and meaningful way. Methods which rely on conversation only, on the other hand, present students with the task of generating new sentences, which involves a high risk of error and embarrassment.

At the WLS, correct pronunciation is encouraged through “speech training” done by speech teachers and voice production experts. The computer laboratory, where an interactive grammar course is offered, is used.

In AELS, learning takes place in the form of a scaffolding process where students have to do research and conduct interviews. The students work individually as well as in groups. They analyse selected readings and complete tasks based on these readings.

Resources

At WLS, students receive a study guide, handouts and a CD; an internationally recognised grammar textbook is prescribed.

In AELS, students receive handouts which they keep in a file, and which are updated regularly.

Assessment

During the first semester in AELS, students hand in a writing portfolio including at least seven pieces of writing. Students are allowed to rewrite tasks if they wish to achieve a better result. These rewrites must be submitted within a week of the previous submission. The portfolio includes drafts and redrafts of the main essay assignments, with reflective comments and self-evaluation. During this semester, students also have to do a poster presentation.

During the second semester, students do three reading assignments, a reading portfolio, an oral presentation of their own research, and a final research report. The reading assignments are sets of questions to be complete on specific readings. The reading portfolio includes reading specific articles and completing writing tasks such as a summary or paragraphs arguing their own views on specific articles.

At the end of each course, students write a formal examination.

Summary

Although WLS is a commercial unit which concentrates on teaching languages to the private sector, they are mentioned here because they make use of interesting methods and resources such as storytelling, visual aids and computer-assisted programmes.

Pronunciation is emphasised, and professional speech trainers and voice experts are brought in—which ensures high quality.

AELS emphasises academic and research skills. This early introduction of research skills will help students with their other subjects. Themes are centred on language-related issues which are interesting and relevant to the students. The writing portfolio—where students hand in drafts and redrafts of assignments with reflective comments and self-evaluation—teaches students to take responsibility for their own academic development. They learn from their mistakes and they are able to see themselves grow as academics. The fact that AELS is offered over two semesters gives the course depth and continuity.

7.4.5 University of Port Elizabeth

Background

The University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) is situated in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape. It is a multilingual university, where the use of Xhosa is being phased in alongside the present languages of instruction, which are English and in some cases Afrikaans. UPE has about 6 500 students in contact tuition and 7 000 in distance education.

The university has a separate Unit for Student Academic Development, which forms part of the Centre for Organisational and Academic Development. Student Academic Development initiates, promotes and maintains programmes aimed at developing students academically within the university system, through programmes such as tutor and demonstrator training, mentoring, and supplemental Instruction.

Apart from this, UPE offers a course called “University Practice” (UPA) which helps students to adjust more successfully to university life. This is a first-year course offering life and academic skills which forms part of the academic development programme. The course aims to empower students to be successful learners, to develop academic and intellectual skills, to stimulate creative, critical and independent thinking, to deal with social issues and to foster cultural sensitivity.

UPA emphasises skills development, and classes are presented in groups of 15 students with one facilitator. Although this course does not focus on the development of academic

skills in English, it is mentioned here because the researcher regards this as a very valuable course: the topics that are dealt with are very relevant to first-year students and should be considered when planning units of the language proficiency course at Vista University.

These relevant and crucial topics in the course are *getting started, tertiary education, resources on campus, problem-solving, decision-making, goal-setting, time management, assertiveness, stress management, financial assistance, maths/science anxiety, coping with tests/exams, relationship building, conflict resolution, employment and CV skills, communication skills, building a positive self-concept, values, dealing with feelings, substance abuse on campus, cultural diversity, sexuality, and study enhancement.*

In the Faculty of Humanities, UPE offers English Academic Advancement (LEA 113) for students on the Foundation Programme. LEA 113 aims to empower students to reach their full potential with regard to communication skills in English for general and academic study purposes. LEA 113 is similar to LPR 5001 offered at Vista University, and is discussed in detail below.

Aims

LEA 113 aims to improve the students' competency in English for study purposes, as English is the principal medium of instruction at the university. LEA 113 aims to empower students to read, as well as comprehend and write, the type of academic texts which are relevant to their chosen field of study.

The course aims to improve the students' skills in general communication in English in order that they may communicate better with other students, lecturers and members of their family and society, and to become purposeful, successful learners. It aims to develop academic and intellectual skills, including the ability to communicate well, both orally and in writing. The course encourages personal growth, creativity, critical thinking and independent thinking. It furthermore develops cultural sensitivity and tolerance.

The course is designed to develop cognitive, reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Cognitive skills such as critical thinking, analysing, extracting, synthesising, generalising, comparing, evaluating, problem-solving and memorising are built into activities.

Reading includes the acquisition of academic terminology, comprehension of texts, analysis of the structure of sentences and paragraphs, identifying the features of academic writing, understanding diagrams, tables, graphs and flow charts, and developing dictionary skills. To develop reading skills, a variety of text types of varying degrees of complexity are read.

Speaking includes oral presentation skills to enable the student to be able to exchange messages and become an effective speaker. Students need to develop the necessary oral skills for managing an interaction, for example. They need to develop sub-skills such as knowing when and how to take the floor, how to invite someone else to speak, and how to keep a conversation going. Students should be able to plan an oral presentation and organise material logically.

Listening involves lecture comprehension/understanding, listening and note-taking.

Concerning *writing* skills, students must be able to write different types of discourse—such as expressive, affirming, persuasive, informative and argumentative discourse. They must be able to write an academic essay, research essays and projects, and summarise and do mind-mapping.

Course content

Content is selected which will enhance the development of the skills mentioned above. Students are engaged in experiencing English through subject-specific texts, as well as improving their basic interpersonal communication skills.

As an accompaniment to practical exercises aimed at improving their language skills, there are also sections containing theoretical explanations to help students understand more about the skills they will be learning

Course organisation

The course is offered over two semesters, and consists of 18 units dealing with the four skills laid out above. Each unit has several tasks or activities to complete. Students and lecturers work very intensively, as every week there are eight classes of 35 minutes each.

Methodology

Classes are organised into two intensive sessions of oral activities, with a break for ten minutes between, after which students work on units from their LEA 113 study guides, do textual analysis activities, have informal debates, or work on informal reaction papers.

Many of the tasks are completed in pairs and groups. Oral communication in English is incorporated to improve general fluency. Students are exposed to unstructured and structured oral communication in pairs and groups. Furthermore, there are formal oral

presentations on general topics and topics. Grammar is contextualised within the language features of the discourses.

Resources

Students receive a manual which contains theoretical information as well as handouts with assignments and tasks that they have to complete.

Assessment

There are also various assignments which have to be completed individually. These are handed in for evaluation during the course of the programme.

Students receive one diligence mark for certain assignments completed for homework or in class. They are allowed the opportunity to evaluate themselves by means of these diligence assignments. When appropriate, the answers to the diligence assignments are discussed and shared during the learning sessions.

Certain assignments and tests receive numerical evaluation. This includes formal oral presentations, formal writing assignments and term tests.

At the end of each term as well as at the end of the academic year, students receive a continuous evaluation mark in percentage form, based on their diligence marks, their formal oral presentation marks, their writing assignment marks, a language skills test mark and their attendance marks.

Summary

At UPE, the course includes formal grammar instruction, as well as several relevant real-life activities. Students' interests are addressed, such as art, drama and music. Language problems related to second-language learners are explained. The course focuses on all four skills, but always within the context of the academic needs of the students. Relevant tasks and activities are given to students. The course is offered over two semesters, which gives it substance and depth.

7.5 Conclusion

As pointed out by Alderson and Beretta (1992:274), evaluations do not reveal the "One and Only Truth" about a programme but rather a multitude of interpretations subjective to the evaluators, objectives and understandings of the programme. However, the data which

have been collected from different courses will assist the course designer in making decisions when redesigning the LPR 5001 course.

Most valuable is the idea that there should be an independent unit for language development, as is the case at UP, UCT and the Language School at Wits. At those institutions, the units are dedicated to the enhancement of student language development and equipped with well-trained, professional staff who specialise in this area. The same should be true at Vista University.

It is clear from this survey that most universities in South Africa have to address the problem of the language proficiency of English second-language speakers who study through the medium of English. The backlog of students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds has not yet been eliminated. Students need guidance and help in adapting to a tertiary environment.

From the data in Chapter 7, it may be concluded that there are serious shortcomings with the current course at Vista University. One of the main problems with the course is that it was originally designed for a different target group from the one currently being served (HDE) and not for students on a foundation programme with their specific needs and abilities.

From the SAT results, it can be concluded that the students did not perform better after taking the course. From the data gathered through the questionnaires and the analysis of the course, it can be concluded that there are indications that the present LPR 5001 course does not fulfil the expectations and needs of the lecturers and students. Other institutions have courses which seem to be much more efficient and interesting. It can therefore be concluded that the present course should be redesigned.

The data discussed here indicate that there are specific areas to address when redesigning the current language proficiency course at Vista University. The conclusions reached in this chapter provide guidelines for the framework for restructuring the course which will be set out in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8

Report Back Stage: Framework for Designing a New Course

8.0 Introduction

This chapter forms part of the report back stage of the evaluation model (see 5.5 and Table 5). The report back stage (see 5.5) consists of the preparation of the evaluation report, report back to relevant parties and implementation of the report results.

Based on the data in Chapter 7, as well as the theoretical survey in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, it is concluded that the present course of Vista University needs to be updated and redesigned. In this chapter, recommendations are made for a framework that can serve as the basis for redesigning the current LPR 5001 course at Vista University.

The preceding discussion may be summarised in the following three questions:

1. Why should the Vista University student be proficient in Academic English (EAP)?
2. What should this student be able to do to be considered proficient in Academic English?
3. What should be changed in the present LPR 5001 course in order to achieve this proficiency?

These questions are addressed below.

8.1 Why should Vista University students be proficient in Academic English?

The question of why the student should be proficient in English is addressed in Chapter 3 (see 3.1). Despite the fact that the language policy of South Africa (see 3.2) states that all languages should be promoted, students need to be proficient in English. This is not a political statement but a pragmatic analysis of the situation. English should not be regarded as superior to other languages or forced upon learners, as history has shown that the authoritarian imposition of language policies has failed (see the second heading, **The Apartheid era (1948-1976)**, under 3.2.1). However, part of the redress of historical imbalances is to ensure equal opportunities for all students in a unitary system of education,

with a necessary respect for all languages and peoples—as stressed in the White Paper (March, 1995:10) (see the fourth heading, **The New South Africa (1994-)**, under 3.2.1).

Although the government feels strongly that learners should, within limits, have the right to language choice in education, it states that special measures should be taken to enable a learner to become competent in the language of learning at his/her specific institution (see the second heading, **Language in the classroom**, under 3.2.2). It is therefore essential for institutions to support learners who want to further their studies; and to ensure that they are proficient in Academic English, that they have the necessary cognitive skills to cope with context-reduced content, and that they are aware of culture and social practices at tertiary level (Kapp, 1998:26) (see the third heading, **National examinations**, under 3.2.2).

As was pointed out in Chapter 3, many learners experience mother-tongue interference or a lack of cognitive academic language proficiency; they may also have limitations arising from their home, community and socio-economic backgrounds (see the second heading, **Language in the classroom**, under 3.2.2). The current transformation of tertiary institutions could further impact on the courses and academic support offered at the institutions. These institutions will have to consider the background and language proficiency levels of their new intake of students to ensure equal opportunities for all, and should aim to place all their students on an equal footing (see the fourth heading, **Tertiary education**, under 3.2.2).

8.2 What should a Vista University student be able to do to be considered proficient in Academic English?

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a variation of ESP (see 4.3.2), and refers to aspects of English teaching that relate to study purposes. Students whose first language is not English but who are studying through the medium of English may need help in specific areas such as the language of the academic discipline, study skills, problem-solving, listening to lectures, note-taking, participating in seminars, reading textbooks, and writing essays and assignments (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998:39) (see 4.2.2).

The basic elements of language knowledge and skills required by second-language learners have been referred to in Chapters 2 and 4 (see 2.3 and 4.2.2).

The following categories have been selected as essential elements in a language proficiency course:

- cognitive, academic and study skills
- grammatical knowledge and skills

- textual knowledge and skills
- functional knowledge
- sociolinguistic competencies.

The term *cognitive skills* refers to the ability to think and argue about issues, thereby developing cognitive skills through activities and tasks.

Grammatical knowledge may be described as a basic knowledge of language structures and the different uses of grammar in various contexts.

Textual knowledge is the ability to recognise, understand and write basic classes of texts, and to interpret information in texts, tables, graphs and diagrams.

Functional knowledge is the ability to use language to perform basic functions in the real world.

The term *sociolinguistic competencies* refers to the ability to use language appropriately in a specific social context.

These elements may be used as the basis of an inventory of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. The inventory is based on the lists by Webb (to be found in 2.3) and Weideman (in 4.2.2). The elements in the list are numbered for reference purposes. This inventory can then be used as a checklist to ensure that essential knowledge, skills, values and attitudes have been mastered by the student. The inventory can also be used in planning the detailed content of a course.

Cognitive, academic and study skills

- C1 Use all four basic skills for academic and study purposes
- C2 Challenge what is being presented in the classroom, develop critical thinking
- C3 Explain and justify own views and support own arguments
- C4 Solve problems by applying essential methods, procedures and techniques
- C5 Organise and present information in a coherent manner and develop ideas logically
- C6 Interpret and evaluate information for relevance, validity, and reliability
- C7 Make own deductions, formulate conclusions, comprehend and extract information
- C8 Organise and manage own time and study skills
- C9 Take part in seminars, negotiate and interact with others, mediate
- C10 Follow the instructional discourse between teacher and learners
- C11 Listen for key words, understand content, cope with different accents, recognise discourse markers, make notes, and ask questions during lectures
- C12 Become academically independent.

Grammatical knowledge and skills

- G1 Understand and construct complex sentences
- G2 Use all the tenses, direct and indirect speech, modals, conditionals and the passive voice
- G3 Apply language structures and conventions
- G4 Apply language as a medium for learning all subjects
- G5 Use basic connectors (pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions and relational words).

Textual knowledge and skills

- T1 Analyse, describe, categorise, classify, synthesise and generalise information
- T2 Analyse the features and structure of texts, identify and evaluate the underlying assumptions in a text
- T3 Read critically, reflect on information and opinions, challenge opinions, judge whether a text is internally consistent and describe what a text implies and what it does not
- T4 Identify points of departure, assumptions, and inferences in a text, compare and contrast phenomena, identify the main communicative intention of a text
- T5 Use a vocabulary of more than 8 000 words, build an academic vocabulary
- T6 Interpret the use of metaphor and idiom in academic usage, and perceive connotations, word play and ambiguity
- T7 Understand relations between different parts of a text, be aware of the logical development of an academic text, using introductions and conclusions
- T8 Interpret different kinds of text type (genre), and have a sensitivity for the meanings they convey, as well as the audience they are aimed at
- T9 Distinguish between essential and non-essential information, fact and opinion, propositions and arguments, cause and effect, and classify, categorise and handle data that make comparisons, apply skimming and scanning, distinguish between the main and subordinate points of a text
- T10 See sequence and order, and do simple numerical estimations and computations that are relevant to academic information and can be applied for the purposes of an argument
- T11 Understand the communicative function of various ways of expression in academic language (such as defining, providing examples, arguing) and make meaning (for example, of an academic text) beyond the level of the sentence
- T12 Write narratives and descriptive, argumentative, discursive, reflective and expository texts, as well as transactional writing (reports, memoranda, agendas, brochures)
- T13 Organise accessed information into new coherent wholes, write cohesively and coherently
- T14 Recognise and express the basic relations in complex sentences, paragraphs and fuller texts
- T15 Present and interpret information in tables, graphs and diagrams.

Functional knowledge and skills

- F1 Use the language to perform basic learning functions (to ask questions, respond to questions, express an opinion, describe, explain, understand)
- F2 Summarise information extracted from a text
- F3 Write an academic text, including being able to write precisely, and present an argument, supporting it with evidence
- F4 Convey detailed information expressing their own thoughts and feelings
- F5 Refuse, disagree, complain, interrupt politely
- F6 Express a critical view, with appropriate supporting evidence and motivation
- F7 Communicate effectively with members of a team, organising and managing them; negotiate about work issues and resolve miscommunication using meta-linguistic skills

- F8 Persuade team members, motivating them to co-operate
- F9 Use oral language appropriately and effectively in learning activities (such as peer tutoring, collaborative learning activities, and question/answer sessions within the classroom and in social interactions within the school).

Sociolinguistic competencies and skills

- S1 Relate utterances and sentences to sociolinguistic use
- S2 Use register, cultural references
- S3 Use natural or idiomatic expressions
- S4 Interpret figures of speech
- S5 Address a specific audience and accomplish a specific purpose
- S6 Adapt language to contexts and audiences—socio-culturally and in a technical or workplace context; interact effectively with superiors and subordinates
- S7 Use appropriate address and reference terms (showing respect for others)
- S8 Communicate cross-culturally with professional and non-professional people
- S9 Distinguish between formal and informal style
- S10 Identify and use technical registers effectively and appropriately
- S11 Conduct job interviews
- S12 Demonstrate an awareness of cultural differences and the ability to analyse the diversity of cultural values in a text
- S13 Demonstrate a critical awareness of language (be able to identify bias, prejudice, ideological writing, racist language, sexist language)
- S14 Recognise stereotypes in writing and challenge them, and verbally handle psychological and cultural alienation.

Table 37: Inventory of essential knowledge, skills, values and attitudes

8.3 What should be changed in the current LPR 5001 course to achieve these outcomes?

As was pointed out in Chapter 4 (see 4.3.2), the Instructional System Design model (ADDIE) (Clark, 2000:3) is used worldwide for instructional design. It is now combined with Graves's model (2000:9) with a view to redesigning the LPR course at Vista University. The first stages of the proposed models for course design (in Chapter 4: *analyse, assessing needs formulating goals and objectives, articulating beliefs, defining the context and conceptualising the outlines of the content*) have been discussed in Chapter 7. This chapter deals with the *Design stage* of the ADDIE model (Clark, 2000:6), which involves all aspects of re-planning the course, including *designing specific outcomes, selecting and organizing the course content and deciding on an assessment plan* (Graves, 2000:5).

The *Develop stage* of the ADDIE model (Clark, 2000:6), which includes *developing materials, finalising detail on the selection of content and material, deciding on appropriate activities and handouts*, will be dealt with by the lecturer in the *implementation stage*. This

stage—as well as the *Re-evaluation stage*—is not addressed here, as these stages can be implemented only once the new course has been accepted, approved and presented at the particular institution.

The proposed redesigned course is now discussed in terms of general outcomes, course content, course organisation, methodology, resources and assessment.

8.3.1 General outcomes

The term “general outcomes” is used to describe the goals to be achieved by the student.

From the questionnaires completed by the students and the lecturers, it was clear that students often did not know what was expected of them (see Tables 12 and 23). The limited official documentation is an indication that there was not enough communication between management and course designers concerning the aims or outcomes expected of the parties. From the questionnaire (see Table 19) and comments (see 7.2.3), it was clear that the students would like to improve their communication skills, and that they want to be able to use the language accurately. These aspects should form part of the general outcomes of the course.

The emphasis in a course such as LPR 5001 should be on academic language in reading and writing, although all four skills should be addressed. At UCT, lecturers aim to improve the critical thinking of students, teaching them how to analyse arguments and write academic essays (see 7.4.1). At UP, similar aspects are addressed, in particular, speaking and listening skills, learning strategies and information gathering, building an academic vocabulary, reading for academic understanding, and writing (see 7.4.3). This is done by concentrating on relevant aspects such as reading, writing, comprehension skills, phonics, diction, spatial relationships, cloze exercises, vocabulary and numeracy. These relevant aspects should be included in the LPR 5001 course.

The following outcomes must be achieved by the student in the LPR course. They include the original aims set out in the present course (see 7.1.1) but also academic skills required from a student who completes this course.

By the end of the course the student should be able to:

- *function independently in an academic, tertiary environment*
- *communicate fluently and accurately, using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in the modes of oral and written presentation within an academic context*
- *understand and interpret a wide range of academic language*

- *conduct basic research by interpreting information, planning and writing academic essays*
- *study and manage him-/herself independently in a tertiary, academic environment*
- *participate in tutorials and discussions*
- *use academic language correctly in the context of other subjects*
- *be job marketable, write letters of application and CVs*
- *use English with confidence.*

8.3.2 Course organisation

From the questionnaires, it was clear that students and lecturers were divided about the preferred length of the course. Lecturers felt the course should be extended, while this did not seem to be a priority with the students. Ideally, the course should be extended to one year, as is the case at UP and Wits. Where this is not practically possible, it is necessary that there be one-on-one interaction between lecturer and students, as is the case at UCT and UPE. However, the organisation of the course is subject to what is practicable. At Vista University, the course is prescribed as a semester course.

The present course at Vista University is organised into five units, each addressing one of the four language skills, together with visual literacy. This organisation is retained, but all the skills should be integrated into every unit instead of being treated separately. If one unit is completed every two weeks, the course would still consist of five units. Skills cannot be separated and units should rather be presented in an integrated, spiralling way, each unit building on the previous one.

As indicated in Chapter 7, the course at Vista is offered in the first semester, and class time is limited to a period of between eight and ten weeks only. Lecture time is three hours per week, totalling 30 hours for the course. Each of the five units has to be completed within two weeks (six hours). Every unit should consist of formal lectures and tasks or activities to be completed during class time. At least four tasks should be completed in every unit.

In addition to the allocated class time, tutorials should be arranged at least once a week, where students have the opportunity to practise spoken language and receive feedback on their work. In these tutorials, the course should aim for some form of one-on-one interaction, as is the case at UCT. At present, class sizes are quite small (30 to 40 students). However, the introduction of tutorials is essential. It is suggested that students attend one to two tutorial sessions per week, ideally in groups of six to eight students.

8.3.3 Course content

As indicated earlier, the present LPR course is organised in terms of the four language skills and visual literacy. It is suggested, however, that the course should be based on themes. Each unit should therefore be based on a specific theme which the students are likely to find of interest and which relates to the general outcomes of the course.

The following themes are suggested for the course:

Unit 1: Relationships: coping at a tertiary institution

Unit 2: Academic Development: adapting to an academic environment

Unit 3: Art and Culture: surviving in a multicultural environment

Unit 4: The World of Science: coping with other subjects

Unit 5: The Economy: how to get and keep a job.

The first two themes are general themes to introduce the student to the tertiary milieu and life on campus. Each of the next three themes relates to a specific field of study, in particular, the Humanities, Science and Economics.

Reading skills

As the questionnaires and observation indicate that the students do not find the reading passages very interesting, these passages should be made more relevant to them. The same passages should preferably not be used year after year, as they become outdated and students may copy answers from previous groups. From the questionnaires and general comments, it may be deduced that worksheets which can be regularly adapted should be used.

The course at UCT addresses relevant and useful aspects which are not apparent in the Vista course, such as note-taking, summarising, analysing the writer's views, giving one's own point of view, essay topic analysis, defining concepts, analysing theoretical positions, coherence and cohesion, comparison and contrast, close reading of texts, revising, editing, developing reading strategies, and synthesising information from a variety of sources. These are very relevant skills which should specifically be addressed in the redesigned course.

In the present course, the theory as to what a competent reader is and how to become more competent in reading is, no doubt, in itself interesting reading material, but it could be given as background reading for self-study purposes. The specific reading strategies (skimming and scanning) which are illustrated and practised should be retained, as mastery of these is necessary.

Reading instruction should teach the students to develop reading strategies such as skimming and scanning, analysing a writer's views, formulating one's own point of view, analysing essay titles, defining concepts, interpreting figurative language, distinguishing between fact and opinion, reading for summarising, deducing the meaning of words from their contexts, distinguishing between main and subordinate ideas, understanding and assessing coherence and cohesion, interpreting comparison and contrast, doing close reading of texts and synthesising information from a variety of sources—such as relevant academic articles.

Writing skills

As described in Chapter 7, the purpose of this unit in the present course is to provide students with examples of and practice in various kinds of writing, and with examples of letters applying for leave, memoranda, and formal letters.

The informative section on academic writing (how to identify main ideas and take notes) (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2000:53), as well as the section on reading for academic writing (with exercises) (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2000:54), are very useful and could be retained as a set of reading passages. The checklist which is provided to students for editing and correcting their own assignments could serve as a set of assessment criteria (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2000:58). The section on plagiarism is relevant and should be retained (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2000:60).

From the questionnaires, it was clear that the students and lecturers were of the opinion that the writing skills of the students did not improve sufficiently. During the observation sessions, it was clear that more attention should be paid to giving feedback on writing tasks. A solution might be the introduction of tutorials, as is the case at UCT and UPE. The course at UCT, furthermore, teaches students to do essay topic analysis, plan a first draft, edit, revise, reference, and answer examination questions—which are all valuable skills that should be in the Vista course.

The LPR course at Vista adopts a process approach to writing. Writing should be practised in every unit and not only in a single, separate unit. Letters could be treated in only one unit.

When addressing writing skills, the course should concentrate on:

- the process of writing
- emphasising audience and purpose
- planning and conducting basic research (including library and internet searches)
- writing assignments for other subjects

- topic analysis
- planning the essay or assignment
- planning a first draft
- editing, revising
- referencing
- the answering of examination questions.

Speaking skills

As may be seen in Chapter 7, the purpose of this unit in the present course (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2000:63) is to show the student how to pronounce an English word, to explain the rhythm of English speech, and to give him/her examples of and practice in the use of classroom English.

From the observation, it appeared that the performance of plays was too time-consuming, and that some students did not participate fully.

Although students commented that they did not like to stand in front of the class and speak, it was clear from their responses to the questionnaire that they felt that their speaking skills did not improve sufficiently. There should be more opportunities for speaking, such as presenting formal speeches, despite the fact that students may not initially feel confident enough. This could be addressed during tutorials when the groups are small. The course should not focus on classroom discourse only, but also on the speaking skills needed outside the classroom. Students' confidence should be built up, something which can be achieved only through practice.

When speaking skills are addressed, the course should make provision for:

- more opportunities to speak in the classroom and during tutorials
- group work
- class discussions
- debates
- prepared and unprepared speeches
- public speaking competitions
- group presentations.

Listening skills

As described in Chapter 7, the purpose of this unit (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2000:74) is to exercise and improve the listening comprehension of the student.

From the questionnaires, observation and general comments, it was clear that the students did not feel their listening skills improved as a result of taking the course. They did not like the taped passages and did not feel they benefited from these exercises. Listening exercises should rather be incorporated into every unit and be presented in context rather than as a separate entity.

It may be concluded that:

- listening skills should be addressed in every unit
- listening should be integrated into all units.

Visual literacy

The last unit in the present manual deals with visual literacy (see Chapter 7) in order to raise student awareness and understanding of the use of signs and symbols (Van der Walt *et al.*, 2000:82). From the questionnaires and general comments by the students, it is clear that visual literacy was sometimes regarded as irrelevant and decontextualised. Visual literacy should rather be taught within the specific context of every unit. It became clear from the observation that the students considered the exercises to be too easy.

Grammar

From the questionnaires (see Tables 19 and 30), it was clear that many students and lecturers want formal grammar to be included in the course. Grammar should be addressed, and tasks should be designed to improve the students' grammatical ability.

As may be seen in Chapter 2, grammatical competence remains an important element in any course design. There seems to be a need for grammar teaching to be included in the course (see 7.2.2). This could be done within the context of the unit. Grammar teaching is an important element in any language proficiency course. However, grammar is not merely about form. The students need to know what the forms mean and when to use them appropriately (Larsen-Freeman, D., 1997:xvii; Leech, G. & Svartvik, J., 1994:4; Downing, A. & Locke, P., 1992:xii).

Based on the conclusions drawn in Chapter 7, the content of the course should:

- be practical
- contain little theory
- include formal grammar
- be skills based
- contain lists of activities

- address language problems
- improve the grammatical ability of the students
- emphasise the academic environment.

8.3.4 Methodology

This framework provides only a brief indication of the methodology. Every unit consists of teaching/learning tasks which indicate what both the lecturer and the student do. The essential feature of every unit is the fact that it follows an activity approach, which features in the selected teaching/learning tasks as argued earlier (see 4.1.2). Students should be actively engaged during every lecture and complete tasks individually, in pairs or in groups. Tasks are selected according to the criteria suggested by Candlin (see 4.1.2).

From the questionnaires, it was clear that the students and lecturers enjoyed group work. Some students were reluctant to participate, yet indicated in their questionnaires that they would like more interaction in the classroom. However, although the students enjoyed classroom interaction, at times they also like to work independently and individually, as long as sufficient guidance is provided.

Smaller classes and more lecturers are suggested. Classes should be interactive, with a high level of learner participation. Tutorials could be introduced to guide learners on an individual basis (cf. practice at UCT and UNIN), and to provide speaking practice. As time is very limited on the course, these tutorials are essential. Students also have to work on their own and complete homework assignments in order to complete the prescribed work.

From the observation, it was clear that the students preferred variety in classes and teaching materials. Not too many exercises should be completed in class as students find this very monotonous. To ensure that the best methods, activities and tasks (such as those at UNIN) are designed, communication between the various lecturers is essential. This will ensure consistency across all campuses.

8.3.5 Resources

From the questionnaire, it was clear that most of the students and lecturers were not satisfied with the manual (see Table 17) and felt that the material was inadequate. Worksheets which can be updated regularly—as is the case at several other tertiary institutions—could be used instead of an inflexible manual, as argued in Chapter 7. These could be kept in a file. Instead of a prescribed manual, a variety of resources should be

used. This means that, where appropriate, relevant sections from the present manual could be retained in their files as handouts.

Reading material from academic journals and commercial magazines could be used in addition to the worksheets. From the observation sessions, it was found that the students enjoyed the use of such resources. More variety with regard to resources is recommended, as is the case at WLS where tapes, computer-based programmes and visual aids are used. In addition, a good grammar textbook could be recommended, such as *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002).

8.3.6 Formative and summative assessment

From the questionnaires, it was clear that both the lecturers and the students were not satisfied with assessment in the course, and would like to have more opportunities to assess and be assessed. The main problem is the fact that all the campuses determine their own assessment practices. Assessment on all campuses should be done in substantially the same way in order to ensure quality, and examination papers should be moderated externally.

To ensure objective marks, there should be very clear criteria as to how and when the evaluation should be done on each campus. Marking grids for oral and written work should be used on each campus to ensure quality control and equal standards.

It is suggested that both formative and summative assessment be done in order to achieve a true reflection of a given student's ability. Continuous assessment should be done to monitor the students' progress, preferably after each task, but certainly as often as possible.

Continuous assessment could be used in the form of written tests, oral examinations, discussions, observing and monitoring, using checklists, studying feedback from learners and collecting samples of their work (Nation, 2000:10). Other possibilities are essays, letters, diagrams, diaries, research papers, reports, projects, models, presentations, journals or illustrations.

Any task or activity which has an element or aspect which can be evaluated or graded during the course is a form of continuous or formative assessment and will give a clearer picture of the abilities of the learner. Portfolios could be introduced to give learners more opportunities to be assessed. At UNIN, the students hand in an assignment every two weeks.

At the end of the unit, the students should write a formal examination, the summative assessment. This exam should include an essay, a comprehension test and language questions, as is the case in the present examination for LPR. Apart from this written component, students should do an oral and a listening examination. The semester mark should count half of the final mark.

8.3.7 Grading

One aspect which does not receive specific attention in the present LPR course is the matter of grading. UCT refers to the spiral structure of their course. At WLS, students can take courses at different levels of difficulty from levels 1 to 5 and, thereafter, English Advanced. Other institutions have an implied grading in their courses in the way the material and units are organised. There needs to be a structured outline of the course, with a clear indication of the grading intended. The present Vista course makes no provision for any form of grading.

Grading should be built into every unit as well as into the course. A spiral approach (see Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983:35) is suggested, which implies that the same aspects of language are revised in consecutive units but within different contexts. This cyclic process will help the learner to improve consistently.

8.4 Conclusion

The foregoing shows the relation between different elements in the framework, and is captured in Figure 7 below which illustrates the course design process to be followed when the course is redesigned.

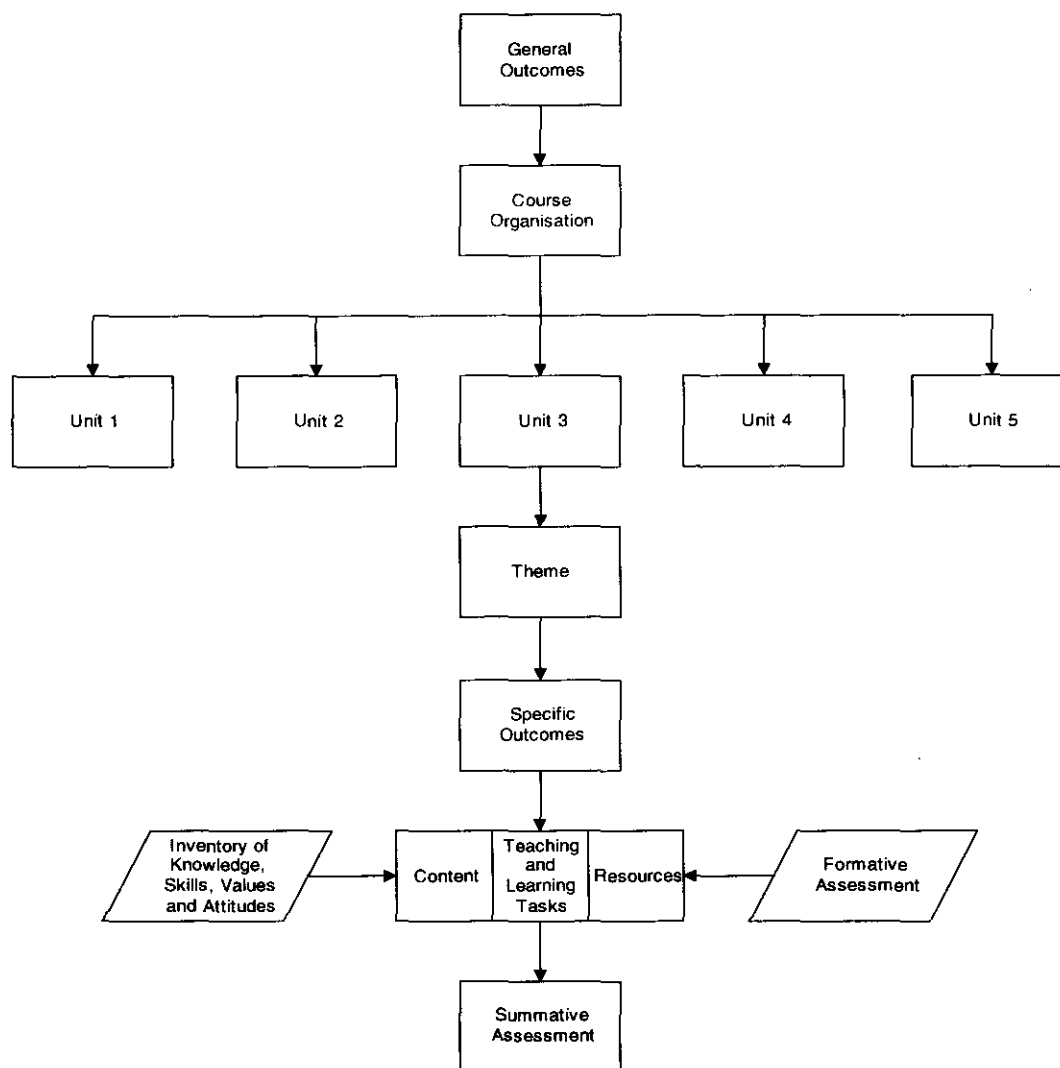


Figure 7: Framework for redesigning the LPR course

This framework furthermore indicates the specific areas which will be addressed when redesigning the current language proficiency course at Vista University. The conclusions reached in this chapter form the guidelines for restructuring the course.

In the next chapter, the course is redesigned according to this framework.

Chapter 9

Redesigning the Language Proficiency Course at Vista University: Report Back and Implementation Stage

9.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the outline of the suggested new LPR course, based on the framework and conclusions reached in Chapter 8. This amounts to a fairly substantial revision of the present course.

The course is designed in terms of the five units suggested in Chapter 8, with all four skills integrated in each unit. The description of each unit includes the theme on which the unit content is based, the specific outcomes of the unit, the teaching/learning tasks, resources and assessment. As this is a general outline only, every lecturer will adapt the units according to the needs of his students.

9.1 Unit 1

Theme: Relationships

In this unit, students are introduced to the academic world, lecturers and their peer group. The focus in this unit is on relationships, starting with the self, and leading up to the wider world.

Specific outcomes

By the end of this unit, the student must be able to:

- describe what is expected in this course
- read and understand informational documents from the university
- introduce him/herself appropriately to strangers
- read a comprehension of at least 500 words and answer questions on it
- use basic grammar structures correctly
- take notes during lectures
- listen to a passage and answer questions on it
- present a speech

- assess peers who present speeches
- conduct basic research in the library and on the internet.

Week 1—Unit 1: Lecture 1

Content

Introduction to the course

Speaking skills 1: register and tone.

Teaching /learning tasks

- The lecturer introduces the course and explains requirements, course outline and course outcomes
- The lecturer explains that all assignments are to be put into a file to form a portfolio. This portfolio is handed in at the end of the semester. Students are given the opportunity to reflect on their own progress through the semester and have to write a progress report on their reflections and the conclusions reached (see Lecture 29)
- The lecturer presents a formal lecture on ways in which to introduce people, register and tone
- The students do practical exercises on addressing peers and others, asking permission, requesting information, how to address lecturers
- The students have to prepare a speech on their experience of the transition to university. This speech is presented during Tutorial 1.

Resources

Information leaflets on the university and on the course itself

Handout on introducing people and social conduct

Exercises on addressing people, requesting information.

Unit 1: Lecture 2

Content

Pre-test to determine the language proficiency of learners

Grammar 1.

Teaching/learning task

- All the students write a pre-test to determine their current language proficiency status. This will enable the lecturer to adapt his/her course as necessary.

Resources

A standardised language proficiency test may be used, or else the lecturer can decide to use an examination paper similar to the one the students would write at the end of the course. Valuable teaching content for the rest of the course may be deduced from the results of these tests.

Unit 1: Lecture 3

Content

Speaking skills 2: class discussion on relationships between people

Note-taking 1

Listening skills 1.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The students take part in a lecturer-initiated class discussion on relationships and gender issues
- The lecturer explains note-taking and listening skills
- The lecturer reads a relevant article on relationships
- The students practise note-taking
- The students complete a listening exercise on the article, using their notes.

Resources

Article on relationships

Listening test on the same article.

Unit 1: Tutorial 1

The students introduce themselves to the group in the correct manner.

The students have prepared a speech on the transition to university in which they discuss problems they might experience and possible solutions (see Lecture 1). Thereafter they take part in a group discussion where common problems at university are addressed and solutions sought.

Week 2—Unit 1: Lecture 4

Content

Reading strategies 1: skimming and scanning

Reading strategies 2: reading with understanding

Speaking skills 3: instructions on group work and pair work.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer explains the concept of group work
- The lecturer provides students with information and guidelines on reading and comprehension
- The lecturer explains and illustrates the concepts of skimming and scanning
- The students do practical exercises, practising skimming and scanning in groups.
- The students answer a comprehension exercise in pairs.

Resources

Notes on reading skills

A comprehension passage with questions.

Unit 1: Lecture 5

Content

Conducting research 1
Library searches.

Teaching/learning task

- A staff member from Library Services introduces students to practical aspects of conducting research in the library and on the internet.

Resources

Information leaflet from Library Services.

Unit 1: Lecture 6

Content

Writing 1
Conducting research 2
Grammar 2
Brainstorming, mind-mapping.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer explains and illustrates basic sentence construction, leading to paragraphing
- The students do cloze exercises, including paragraph writing and grammar exercises, first in pairs and then individually
- The lecturer explains the concepts of brainstorming and mind-mapping to the students.
- The students practise mind-mapping and brainstorming in groups.

Resources

Cloze exercises
Examples of paragraphs
Notes and exercises on basic grammatical structures
Handout on brainstorming, mind-mapping.

Unit 1: Tutorial 2

The lecturer explains how peer assessment works. The students present a formal speech on relationships in their lives. They are assessed by their peers and by the lecturer.

Assessment

By the end of the unit, the students will have:

- presented a formal speech (see Tutorial 2)
- written a formal pre-test (see Lecture 2).

9.2 Unit 2

Theme: Art and culture—surviving in a multicultural environment

In this unit, students are made aware of the world of art and culture. The concept of multiculturalism in all facets of life is pointed out.

Specific outcomes

By the end of the unit, the student must be able to:

- show proof of improved reading and comprehension skills
- practise note-taking and listening skills
- take part in a discussion, express an opinion and argue a point
- write a formal letter
- summarise an article
- interview people and write down their points of view
- analyse information and draw conclusions
- write a research report.

Week 3—Unit 2: Lecture 7

Content

Speaking skills 4: class discussion on cultural differences

Reading skills 3: comprehension skills.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer initiates a class discussion on different cultures
- The students individually complete a comprehension exercise on a relevant passage—for example, South African art/various cultures—which is then marked by other students in class led by the lecturer (self-assessment).

Resources

Comprehension passage and exercises on multiculturalism

Brochures on Arts and Culture festivals.

Unit 2: Lecture 8

Content

Research 3

Collecting research information on various cultures by means of interviews.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer presents a lecture on research skills, focusing on collecting research information by means of interviews
- The students take notes on interviewing techniques
- The students practise interviewing skills in pairs.

Resources

Handout on basic research skills
Handout on interviewing techniques.

Unit 2: Lecture 9

Content

Research skills 4
Writing skills 2: academic writing
Editing skills 1.

Teaching/learning tasks

- Students study examples of good academic writing
- The lecturer explains how to identify the research question and write a research report, emphasising mind-mapping, brainstorming and planning
- Students have to prepare research reports for Tutorial 3 on any topic related to culture, using information from the library and the internet, as well as information based on the interviews as discussed in Lecture 8.

Resources

Exercises on academic writing.

Unit 2: Tutorial 3

Students prepare a report on a topic related to culture, based on their research (see Lecture 9). This report is presented orally and discussed by students and the lecturer. Thereafter, students finalise the report and hand it in to be assessed by the lecturer.

Week 4—Unit 2: Lecture 10

Content

Note-taking 2
Listening skills 2
Writing skills 3—summaries.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer presents a follow-up lecture on listening skills and note-taking
- The students complete listening exercises in class
- The lecturer discusses writing summaries and identifying main ideas
- The students write a summary as part of the listening test.

Resources

Information on listening skills and note-taking
Reading passage to be used for the listening exercise. The same passage is used as an exercise on which to base a summary
Listening exercise.

Unit 2: Lecture 11

Content

Reading skills 4

Writing skills 4

Editing skills 2

Grammar 2.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer explains common problems identified from the report writing exercise done in Unit 2, Lecture 9. Academic writing is discussed and grammatical problems identified in the writing of reports are dealt with
- In class the students look at good articles as examples of academic writing
- Thereafter they edit examples of authentic student writing in pairs.

Resources

Notes on academic writing

Academic articles

Examples of authentic student writing to edit.

Unit 2: Lecture 12

Content

Writing skills 5—transactional writing

Reading skills 5.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer presents information on transactional writing
- The students read and study different forms of transactional writing, and complete appropriate exercises
- The students have to write a formal letter for Tutorial 4.

Resources

Notes on transactional writing

Exercises to be completed in class

Brochures on Arts and Culture festivals.

Unit 2: Tutorial 4

The students had to write a formal letter in preparation for the tutorial session (see Lecture 12). These letters are discussed and problems addressed. Students have to hand in the final letter for assessment by the lecturer.

Assessment

By the end of this unit, students should have:

- | | |
|---|----|
| ▪ completed a listening test and written a summary (see Lecture 10) | 25 |
| ▪ written a research report (see Tutorial 3) | 50 |
| ▪ written a formal letter (see Lecture 12) | 25 |

9.3 Unit 3

Theme: The academic world—adapting to an academic environment

In this unit, students are introduced to the concepts of study skills and time management. Academic writing is revised—students are expected to write drafts, to edit and to revise.

Specific outcomes

By the end of the unit, the student should be able to:

- read a comprehension passage with understanding
- take notes during lectures
- apply study skills in his/her own learning
- address problems in grammar
- present a formal prepared speech
- research a specific topic in his/her field of study.

Week 5—Unit 3: Lecture 13

Content

Time management

Study methods and study skills

Note-taking revised 3

Writing skills 6: academic writing, mind-mapping revised

Grammar 3: revision in preparation for grammar test.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer presents information on study methods and study skills, including revision of note-taking and mind-mapping
- The students discuss their own study skills and study methods in groups, and representatives from each group give feedback to the rest of the class
- The students complete exercises on note-taking and mind-mapping
- The lecturer addresses grammatical problems related to note-taking and study methods, as encountered during discussions and in preparation for the next grammar test.

Resources

Handout on study skills

Exercises on study skills, note-taking and mind-mapping.

Unit 3: Lecture 14

Content

Grammar revision 4: test.

Teaching/learning task

- The students write a grammar test in class.

Resources

Grammar test.

Unit 3: Lecture 15

Content

Research 5

Seminar

Peer assessment.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The students are introduced to the basic structure of a formal seminar
- The lecturer shows a video on people actively involved in a seminar
- The students have to prepare a similar formal speech for Tutorial 5.

Resources

Handout on seminar

Video.

Unit 3: Tutorial 5

The students prepare beforehand and then present formal speeches in the tutorial session in the form of a mock seminar (see Lecture 15). They are assessed by the lecturer and their peers.

Week 6—Unit 3: Lecture 16

Content

Reading skills 6: comprehension skills revised.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer revises comprehension skills
- The students complete an advanced level comprehension exercise in pairs in class
- The students have to complete another comprehension exercise on their own to be handed in as an assignment.

Resources

Academic comprehension passage and exercise.

Unit 3: Lecture 17

Content

Writing 7: academic writing, referencing techniques, plagiarism
Dictionary work.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer presents information on referencing techniques and plagiarism
- Dictionary work is illustrated.

Resources

Handout on referencing techniques
Handout on plagiarism
Exercises on dictionary work.

Unit 3: Lecture 18

Content

Writing 8: academic writing skills revised
Editing skills revised 4.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer explains common errors and pitfalls
- The students complete exercises on academic writing and editing in pairs.

Resources

Handout on common errors
Exercise on academic writing.

Unit 3: Tutorial 6

The grammar tests (see Lecture 14) and comprehension exercises (see Lecture 16) are handed back to students and discussed.

Assessment

By the end of the unit, the students will have:

- | | |
|--|----|
| ▪ written a grammar test (see Lecture 14) | 40 |
| ▪ presented a speech (see Tutorial 5) | 20 |
| ▪ completed a comprehension passage (see Lecture 16) | 30 |

9.4 Unit 4

Theme: The world of science—coping with other subjects

In this unit, students learn academic language usage in the field of science and technology, subject jargon and discourse. They apply this knowledge to their specific subject areas.

Specific outcomes

By the end of this unit, the students must be able to:

- argue a point and challenge other ideas
- read and interpret with understanding
- interpret graphs and tables and draw conclusions
- complete grammar exercises correctly
- research and write an argumentative academic article.

Week 7—Unit 4: Lecture 19

Content

Writing 9: academic writing in various learning areas, subject jargon, argumentative writing
Grammar revision 5.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer presents a lecture on subject jargon and argumentative writing
- The students complete exercises on the use of subject jargon and argumentative essay writing, analysing common grammatical errors
- The lecturer explains and illustrates how to construct an argument
- The students have to prepare a topic to be debated in Tutorial 7.

Resources

Handout on grammar revision
Exercises on grammar revision
Handout on subject jargon, argumentative writing
Handout on formal debate.

Unit 4: Lecture 20

Content

Speaking 6
Listening skills 3.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer gives a listening exercise to the students to practise their listening skills
Thereafter the students set their own questions on another listening passage in pairs.
These questions are handed in and evaluated by the lecturer.

Resources

Listening passage with questions
Listening passage without questions.

Unit 4: Lecture 21

Content

Reading skills 7: comprehension skills revised
Writing 10: academic language—the sciences
Visual literacy 1.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer discusses a selected comprehension passage with the students in the classroom
- The lecturer defines and illustrates visual literacy
- The students complete a comprehension passage on a slightly more advanced level, during class, while the lecturer facilitates.

Resources

Comprehension passage and exercises.

Unit 4: Tutorial 7

The students take part in a debate and defend their arguments in the group (see Lecture 19).

Week 8—Unit 4: Lecture 22

Content

Writing skills 11, argumentative and academic writing, revised.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer discusses academic writing, emphasising the field of Science
- The students study examples of good academic writing in the field of Science, in which a point is argued.

Resources

Handout with examples of scientific writing.

Unit 4: Lecture 23

Content

Speaking skills revised 5.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The students study more examples of good academic writing, contrasted with academic writing considered not to be acceptable. They work in pairs to identify weak points in these examples, and suggest ways to improve them.

Resources

Handout with examples of scientific writing.

Unit 4: Lecture 24

Content

Writing skills 12

Editing 5.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer revises academic writing and editing skills
- The students are guided as how to research and prepare the first draft of their academic report for Tutorial 8.

Resources

Handout with example of academic writing to edit.

Unit 4: Tutorial 8

Students prepare and present academic essays in the tutorial session (see Lecture 24). Peer assessment is done and the results are compared to self-assessment rubrics. After the tutorial session, students finalise their academic essays and hand them in to be assessed by the lecturer.

Assessment

By the end of this unit, the students will have:

- written an argumentative, academic essay 50

9.5 Unit 5

Theme: The economy—how to get and keep a job

In this unit, the students are introduced to the world of finance and economy. They are introduced to the job market and taught how to handle interviews and CVs. Visual literacy is included in this unit, and they have to be able to deduct information from graphs and tables.

Specific outcomes

By the end of the unit, the student must be able to:

- read with understanding
- interpret graphs
- conduct and undergo interviews
- apply for a post

- write a CV
- handle basic correspondence.

Week 9—Unit 5: Lecture 25

Content

Introducing the job market

Writing skills 13: how to apply for a job, write a CV, write a letter of application.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer presents a lecture on applying for jobs, and writing a CV and letter of application (see Tutorial 10).

Resources

Handout on writing a CV and a letter of application.

Unit 5: Lecture 26

Content

Speaking skills 7: job interviewing skills, professional conduct.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer invites a speaker from the job market to discuss pitfalls in applying for jobs and giving interviews.

Resources

Handout from speaker.

Unit 5: Lecture 27

Content

Reading skills 8: comprehension skills

Visual literacy 2.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The lecturer revises comprehension skills
- Students complete a comprehension exercise, including visual literacy, in class. This exercise is handed in for assessment by the lecturer.

Resources

Comprehension passage and exercises.

Unit 5: Tutorial 9

Students take part in mock interviews for jobs. Peer assessment is used.

Week 10—Unit 5: Lecture 28

Content

Editing 6

Grammar revision 6.

Teaching/learning tasks

- Pitfalls in grammar are revised and exercises completed in class.

Resources

Exercises on grammatical problems.

Unit 5: Lecture 29

Content

Writing skills 14: portfolio progress

Grammar 7: test.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The students write a final grammar test
- The students are instructed to write a portfolio progress report (see Lecture 1) in preparation for Tutorial 10.

Resources

Portfolio

Grammar test.

Unit 5: Lecture 30

Content

Listening skills 4: video as listening exercise on a topic that deals with the economy of the country or the world

Writing skills 15: exam writing.

Teaching/learning tasks

- The students watch the video and write a listening test as part of their exam mark
- The lecturer discusses exam writing in preparation for the final exam.

Resources

Video

Visual literacy test.

Unit 5: Tutorial 10

Discuss drafts of CVs, letters of application, before final handing in (see Lecture 25).
Discuss exam writing.

Assessment

By the end of the unit, the students will have:

▪ written a comprehension exercise (see Lecture 27)	25
▪ done a simulation interview (see Tutorial 9)	25
▪ written a final grammar test (see Lecture 29)	50
▪ written a CV and letter of application (see Lecture 25)	25
▪ written a progress report based on the portfolio (see Lecture 1)	25

9.6 Formative and summative assessment

As described in Chapter 8, formative as well as summative assessment is done. Apart from the assignments and tests assessed by the lecturer, self-assessment and peer assessment are used. Continuous assessment is done during the course, and may be summarised as follows:

Unit 1

Formal speech 20 – assessed by peers and lecturer

Unit 2

Listening test and summary 25 – assessed by lecturer

Research report 50 – assessed by lecturer

Formal letter 25 – assessed by lecturer

Unit 3

Grammar test 30 – assessed by lecturer

Formal speech 20 – peer assessment

Comprehension test 30 – assessed by lecturer

Unit 4

Academic essay 50 – assessed by lecturer

Unit 5

One comprehension exercise 25 – assessed by lecturer

Grammar test 50 – assessed by lecturer

A simulation interview 25 – peer assessment

Portfolio progress report 25 – assessed by lecturer

CV and letter of application 25 – assessed by lecturer.

By the end of the course, students have to hand in a portfolio containing all the assignments that they have completed during the course.

The final examination consists of three components: oral, listening and written. Students have to do an oral exam, the nature of which is at the discretion of the lecturer. It is suggested that students are interviewed individually to determine whether they are able to communicate in the target language. During their last lecture (Unit 5, Lecture 30), they write a listening test which forms part of the final examination mark. Lastly, the students have to write a formal examination which consists of an essay, a comprehension test and language questions.

Lecturers use their own discretion in compiling the term mark. The following is a suggested format:

Semester mark

All assignments indicated in 9.6 come to a total mark of 400, expressed as a percentage.

Examination mark

Listening exam	25
Oral exam	25
Written paper:	
Essay	25
Comprehension test	25
Language	50

Total: 200—converted to 100 for final mark.

9.7 Aspects addressed in the course

A variety of skills are addressed throughout the course. These are included according to the spiral approach, where items or skills are studied in greater depth at successive levels of learning (see 8.3.7).

The skills that are addressed more than once are indicated in Table 38 below.

Skills addressed in units	Number of times specifically addressed during the course
Reading and comprehension skills	8
Speaking skills	7
Grammar	7
Note-taking	3
Listening skills	4
Writing skills	15
Research skills	6
Editing skills	6
Visual literacy	2

Table 38: Frequency of skills addressed during the course

These aspects are included throughout the course as indicated in Table 39.

Week	Unit	Lecture	Grading of skills/aspects
1	1	1	Reading 1, Speaking 1
1	1	2	Grammar 1 TEST
1	1	3	Note-taking 1, Listening 1, Speaking 2
1	1	Tut 1	Prepared speech
2	1	4	Reading 2, Speaking 3
2	1	5	Research 1
2	1	6	Writing 1, Research 2, Grammar 2
2	1	Tut 2	Prepared speech
3	2	7	Reading 3, Speaking 4
3	2	8	Research 3
3	2	9	Research 4, Writing 2, Editing 1
3	2	Tut 3	Oral presentation of research report
4	2	10	Note-taking 2, Listening 2, Writing 3
4	2	11	Grammar 2, Writing 4, Editing 2, Reading 4
4	2	12	Writing 5, Reading 5
4	2	Tut 4	Feedback session on academic writing
5	3	13	Note-taking 3, Writing 6, Editing 3, Grammar 3
5	3	14	Grammar 4 TEST
5	3	15	Speaking 5
5	3	Tut 5	Formal academic presentation
6	3	16	Reading 6
6	3	17	Writing 7
6	3	18	Writing 8, Editing 4
6	3	Tut 6	Feedback session on draft reports

7	4	19	Writing 9, Grammar 5
7	4	20	Speaking 6, Listening 3
7	4	21	Writing 10, Visual literacy 1, Reading 7
7	4	Tut 7	Defend and debate research report orally
8	4	22	Writing 11
8	4	23	Research 5
8	4	24	Research 6, Writing 12, Editing 5
8	4	Tut 8	Mock interviews
9	5	25	Writing 13
9	5	26	Speaking 7
9	5	27	Reading 8, Visual literacy 2
9	5	Tut 9	Mock interviews
10	5	28	Editing 6, Grammar 6
10	5	29	Writing 14, Grammar 7 TEST
10	5	30	Listening 4, Writing 15
10	5	Tut 10	Discuss final drafts, Exam prep

Table 39: Skills/aspects addressed during the course as they appear in the units

9.8 Checklists

In 8.2, specific categories were indicated as essential elements in a language proficiency course. It was further mentioned that this inventory could be used as a checklist to ensure that essential knowledge, attitudes, values and skills have been dealt with in the course. The following lists (Tables 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44) may be regarded as such checklists.

Cognitive, academic and study skills	Unit
C1 Use the four basic skills for academic and study purposes	
C2 Challenge what is being asked in the classroom, develop critical thinking	
C3 Explain and justify own views and support own arguments.	
C4 Solve problems by applying essential methods, procedures and techniques	
C5 Organise and present information in a coherent manner and develop ideas logically	
C6 Interpret and evaluate information for relevance, validity, and reliability	
C7 Make own deductions, formulate conclusions, comprehend and extract information	
C8 Organise and manage own time and study skills	
C9 Take part in seminars, negotiate and interact with others, mediate	
C10 Follow the instructional discourse between teacher and learners	
C11 Listen for key words, understand content, cope with different accents, recognise discourse markers, make notes, and ask questions during lectures	
C12 Become academically independent.	

Table 40: Checklist of cognitive skills

Grammatical knowledge and skills	Unit
G1 Understand and construct complex sentences	
G2 Use all the tenses, direct and indirect speech, modals, conditionals and the passive voice	
G3 Apply language structures and conventions	
G4 Apply language as a medium for learning all subjects	
G5 Use basic connectors (pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions and relational words).	

Table 41: Checklist of grammatical skills

Textual knowledge and skills	Unit
T1 Analyse, describe, categorise, classify, synthesise and generalise information	
T2 Analyse the features and structure of texts, identify and evaluate the underlying assumptions in a text	
T3 Read critically, reflect on information and opinions, challenge opinions, judge whether a text is internally consistent, and describe what a text implies and what it does not	
T4 Identify points of departure, assumptions, inferences in a text; compare and contrast phenomena; identify the main communicative intention of a text	
T5 Use a vocabulary of more than 8 000 words; build an academic vocabulary	
T6 Interpret the use of metaphor and idiom in academic usage, and perceive connotation, word play and ambiguity	
T7 Understand relations between different parts of a text, be aware of the logical development of an academic text, particularly by means of introductions and conclusions	
T8 Interpret different kinds of text type (genre), and have a sensitivity for the meaning they convey, as well as the audience they are aimed at	
T9 Distinguish between essential and non-essential information, fact and opinion, propositions and arguments, cause and effect, and classify, categorise and handle data that make comparisons; apply skimming and scanning; distinguish between the main and subordinate points of a text	
T10 See sequence and order, and do simple numerical estimations and computations that are relevant to academic information and that allow comparisons to be made and can be applied for the purposes of an argument	
T11 Understand the communicative function of various ways of expression in academic language (such as defining, providing examples, arguing), and make meaning (for example, of an academic text) beyond the level of the sentence	
T12 Write narratives and descriptive, argumentative, discursive, reflective and expository texts, as well as transactional writing (reports, memoranda, agendas, brochures)	
T13 Organise accessed information into new coherent wholes; write cohesively and coherently	
T14 Recognise and express the basic relations in complex sentences, paragraphs and fuller texts	
T15 Present and interpret information in tables, graphs and diagrams.	

Table 42: Checklist of textual skills

Functional knowledge and skills		Unit
F1	Use the language to perform basic learning functions (to ask questions, respond to questions, express an opinion, describe, explain, reach an understanding)	
F2	Summarise information extracted from a text	
F3	Write an academic text, including being able to write precisely, and present an argument, supporting it with evidence	
F4	Convey detailed information expressing their own thoughts and feelings	
F5	Refuse, disagree, complain, interrupt politely	
F6	Express a critical view, with appropriate supporting evidence and motivation	
F7	Communicate effectively with members of a team, organising and managing them; negotiate about work issues and resolve miscommunication using meta-linguistic skills	
F8	Persuade or motivate team-members to co-operate	
F9	Use oral language appropriately and effectively in learning activities (such as peer tutoring, collaborative learning activities, and question/answer sessions within the classroom and in social interactions within the school).	

Table 43: Checklist of functional skills

Sociolinguistic competencies and skills		Unit
S1	Relate utterances and sentences to sociolinguistic use	
S2	Use register, cultural references	
S3	Use natural or idiomatic expressions	
S4	Interpret figures of speech	
S5	Address a specific audience and accomplish a specific purpose	
S6	Adapt language to contexts and audiences—socioculturally and in a technical or workplace context, interacting effectively with superiors and subordinates	
S7	Use appropriate address and reference terms (showing respect for others)	
S8	Communicate cross-culturally with both professional and non-professional people	
S9	Distinguish between formal and informal style	
S10	Identify and use technical registers effectively and appropriately	
S11	Give job interviews	
S12	Demonstrate an awareness of cultural differences and the ability to analyse the diversity of cultural values in a text	
S13	Demonstrate a critical awareness of language (be able to identify bias, prejudice, ideological writing, racist language, sexist language)	
S14	Recognise stereotypes in writing and challenge them, and handle psychological and cultural alienation verbally.	

Table 44: Checklist of sociolinguistic skills

9.9 Critical crossfield outcomes and the LPR course

Seven critical outcomes and five lifelong learning developmental outcomes have been identified by the NQF (National Qualifications Framework) (Coetzee, 2002: 11), and must be addressed in any learning programme. The correspondence between these outcomes and the outcomes addressed in the LPR course is provided in Table 50.

The twelve outcomes identified by the NQF are as follows:

- *Problem-solving skills*
Identifying and solving problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made
- *Teamship*
Working effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation or community
- *Self-responsibility skills*
Organising and managing oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively
- *Research skills*
Collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information
- *Communication skills*
Communicating effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written persuasion
- *Technological and environmental literacy*
Using science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others
- *Developing macro-vision*
Demonstrating an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation
- *Learning skills*
Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively
- *Citizenship*
Participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, international and global communities
- *Cultural and aesthetic understanding*
Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts
- *Employment-seeking skills*
Exploring education and career opportunities
- *Entrepreneurship*
Developing entrepreneurial opportunities.

Critical outcomes	Units in which outcomes are addressed most prominently
Problem-solving skills	Units 1, 3, 4, 5
Teamship	Units 1, 2
Self-responsibility skills	Units 4, 5
Research skills	Units 3, 4, 5
Communication skills	Units 1, 2, 4
Technological and environmental literacy	Units 4, 5
Learning skills	Units 1, 2, 3
Citizenship	Units 1, 2
Cultural and aesthetic understanding	Units 1, 2
Employment-seeking skills	Units 5
Entrepreneurship	Units 4, 5

Table 45: Essential critical outcomes as they are addressed in the suggested course

From Table 45 it is clear that all the outcomes prescribed by the NQF have been addressed in the suggested LPR course.

9.10 Conclusion

This chapter provides a provisional course plan for the LPR 5001 course which includes all the suggestions made in Chapter 8. The researcher is of the opinion that these changes in the course will improve the success rate of the students in the course.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

10.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to conclude the study and to present recommendations for further research. Limitations of the study and problem areas that were encountered are pointed out. Any study on course design should be regarded as a work-in-progress, as course design is a dynamic process and as such is never static. Every course design should therefore be regularly re-examined and modified in the light of the needs and interests of both the students and the lecturers involved.

The focus of this study has been course evaluation and design, in particular the evaluation and re-design of a language proficiency course for students who are studying using a second language as medium.

10.1 Literature review

The literature review involved the exploration of course design, an evaluation of courses, and a review of the South African context. The first aspect reviewed was to determine the nature of language proficiency and means to its achievement. Thereafter, the relationship between language proficiency and academic needs was explored. Factors that influence the acquisition of language proficiency were explored, from the point of view of both the learner and the teacher. The testing of language proficiency was then researched in order to determine what would be an efficient way to ascertain the language proficiency of the students.

The study explored the impact of language policy on language proficiency, and specifically examined the impact of such policies historically in South Africa and at present. The concept of course design and the theory behind course evaluation were reviewed, and models suggested for implementing both these aspects.

10.2 Evaluation of the present course

The present course was evaluated in terms of the best models identified during the literature review. Data were gathered by means of a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data. Various sources were used to collect data, including the course itself, and data from

students and lecturers, as well as a survey of tertiary institutions in South Africa where language proficiency courses are offered.

Analysis of the course included analyses of the current manual and course methodology. The manual was analysed in terms of the skills addressed in the various units. Classes on the Mamelodi campus were observed and, based on the observations, conclusions were drawn. A study of course documentation was carried out.

To determine the proficiency levels of students before and after taking the course, students on the Mamelodi, East Rand and Port Elizabeth campuses wrote a pre- and post-test (January and June). This test was a general proficiency test in English for Academic Purposes. The test used was the Standardised Achievement Test (SAT) in language and literacy, developed by TELP (the Tertiary Education Linkages Project) directed by Professor Nan Yeld at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Specific sub-scales indicating which test items tested specific skill areas were provided by UCT. The results of the tests were analysed in terms of these sub-scales to evaluate student improvement. The January mark was subtracted from the June mark, and the mean differences were calculated.

In addition, students on the Mamelodi and Port Elizabeth campuses were requested to fill in questionnaires to ascertain their opinions of the course. Constructs in the questionnaire were tested for reliability by means of the Cronbach alpha scale. Constructs proved to be reliable by the Cronbach alpha scale were used to compare results from the Mamelodi campus with the Port Elizabeth campus, using Cohen's d-value for independent groups. The purpose was to determine whether there was a difference in the results from the two campuses. There were found to be no practically significant differences, and it was concluded that the results of the questionnaires could be accepted as valid.

The next step was to take every item in every cluster of similar constructs and to analyse these items by means of frequency tables. Based on these results, conclusions were drawn and deductions made.

During their first class, students on the Mamelodi campus were requested to write a paragraph on their expectations of the course. During the last class of the semester, they were again requested to write a paragraph on their impressions of the course. These were compared and common trends were identified.

Questionnaires similar to those filled in by the students, but adapted to the lecturers' perspective, were then sent to lecturers on all campuses involved in the course. The questionnaire sought to canvass their opinions of the course.

A survey was carried out of five tertiary institutions where similar courses were offered, and elements of their courses applicable to the Vista course were identified. Lecturers involved in these courses were contacted and the courses were discussed.

It was determined that the present LPR 5001 course did not fulfil the expectations and needs of students and lecturers involved in the Foundation Programme. Specific shortcomings were identified and described. The main problem with the course content derives from the fact that it was originally designed for a certain target group (Higher Diploma Education students) but is now offered to a different group (Foundation Programme students). This is in principle unsound practice.

After data from all sources had been analysed and conclusions reached and discussed, a redesign of the existing course was undertaken. This was done in terms of Graves's course design model taken together with the ADDIE model (see 4.4.2, 4.4.3).

10.3 Redesigning the course

Specific outcomes for the course as a whole were identified. Skills needed by this group of students were identified and categorised according to cognitive, grammatical, textual, functional and sociolinguistic skills. The twelve essential critical outcomes of the NQF were reviewed to ensure that these outcomes were covered in the course.

Specific learning outcomes to be reached in each unit were then determined. Grading was organised in a spiral way to ensure that every skill was fully addressed once the course had been completed.

An integrative approach was followed, which required that all four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) were addressed in every unit. Specific tasks which would develop these four skills were selected, based on Candlin's criteria (see 4.1.2).

The proposed course was divided into five units; the approach which was adopted was process-orientated and task-based. Units were developed, each based on a central theme which were relevant to the life-world of the students. All aspects to be included were

described: outcomes for every unit, course organisation, course content, methodology, resources and assessment.

Within this framework, each unit was elaborated so as to require completion within two weeks. Flexibility to choose appropriate teaching material was built into the course. The lecturer on each campus would be able to adapt each unit to the needs of his/her group, although the general format of the course would remain unchanged.

10.4 Limitations of the study

The results of the study are derived from and therefore strictly applicable to students at Vista University—although, presumably, the basic ideas and concepts can be applied to other campuses and institutions. With the mergers of tertiary institutions, previously advantaged institutions will increasingly have to deal with the issue of English language proficiency.

The proposed course needs to be field-tested at various institutions before final conclusions can be reached as to its adequacy. It has not yet been tested in the lecture hall. The success of the study can only be determined once it is clear that the course has influenced for the better the language proficiency of the specified target group of students.

The course is bound by the restrictions and regulations of the specific institution, Vista University. It would be in the best interests of the students if the course duration could be extended to one year, instead of just six months. In the interests of the students, disruptions and limited class time (due to political and/or other factors) constitute a problem which needs to be eliminated.

10.5 Future research and recommendations

Many training and educational programmes will in future be computer-based. This course could be adapted to an e-learning situation but is not specifically written with that in mind. Various problems would be encountered when teaching oral and aural skills in a distance education, computer-based mode. However, in order to find workable solutions, this field needs further exploration and research. Indeed, the whole question of applying a language proficiency course within a distance education and computer-based context deserves further exploration as many students at Vista University (and other institutions) want to study through some form of distance education.

A course such as this—which aims to improve the language proficiency of ESL students for the purpose of achieving academic excellence—needs to be followed up with further

research in order to determine the ultimate success of the course and its benefits to students in their studies and even in their careers. Final success will be achieved only once it can be established that these students have improved to such an extent that they are able to achieve success in their careers and in the wider world.

10.6 Conclusion

Course design remains a challenge to every course designer and instructor. The course designer should always remember that the student is the client and the goal is to improve the student's language proficiency to such an extent that s/he will succeed in his/her tertiary studies, career and later life.

Course design is a flexible process which is never complete, as the course designer has constantly to re-evaluate and re-design. There is constant reflection on every aspect of the course and its methodology. Since students, their needs, interests and personalities will always differ, this process will never be final. It is important that every course that is designed is aimed at a specific group and situated within a specific context.

Any course can be designed in an innovative and engaging way. The success of a course will, however, depend on the motivation of the students and, above all, on the attitude and enthusiasm of the lecturer presenting it.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX D

VISTA
UNIVERSITY



DEPARTMENT OF
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

MODULE: LPR5001

ONLY MANUAL

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1999

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LPR5001SG

**DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATION**

COURSE:LPR5001

ONLY MANUAL

**COMPLIED BY:
PROF. C VAN DER WALT
DR JT. VON GRUENEWALDT
DR PR STRAUSS**

Contents

Pages

INTRODUCTION	3
1. UNIT 1: READING SKILLS	5
1.1 What is a competent reader?	5
1.2 Reading strategies	6
1.2.1 Scanning	6
1.2.2 Skimming	7
1.2.3 Close reading	7
1.2.3.1 Interpreting figurative language	8
1.2.3.2 Distinguishing between facts and opinions	8
1.2.3.3 Reading for summarizing	9
1.3 Conclusion	10
1.4 Exercises	10
2. UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS	39
2.1 Written discourse in a formal education system	39
2.1.1 The covering letter	39
2.1.2 The memorandum	41
2.2 Advanced writing skills	44
2.2.1 Reading for writing	44
2.2.2 The organization of written academic discourse	47
2.2.2.1 The introduction	47
2.2.2.2 The body	48
2.2.2.3 The conclusion	50
2.3 The writing process	51
2.3.1 Planning	52
2.3.1.1 Activating prior knowledge	52
2.3.1.2 Making notes from texts and outside sources	53
2.3.1.3 Investigating outside sources of information	53
2.3.1.4 Primary research	53
2.3.2 Drafting	53
2.3.2.1 Organization	54
2.3.3 Revising	56
2.3.3.1 Give yourself enough time	56
2.3.3.2 Write multiple drafts	56
2.3.3.3 Work with your peers	57
2.4 Plagiarism	60
2.4.1 What is plagiarism?	60
2.4.2 How do I avoid plagiarism?	60
2.4.2.1 Learn how to use quotations properly	60
2.4.2.2 Learn how to paraphrase	61
2.4.2.3 Learn how to synthesize	61
2.4.2.4 Learn how to make a correct list of sources	61
3. UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS	63
3.1 The pronunciation of English words	63
3.2 The rhythm of English	65
3.3 Communication in the classroom	65
3.3.1 Creating a warm and accepting atmosphere in class	66

3.3.2	Giving instructions for class activities	68
3.3.3	Getting learners to work and cooperate	69
3.3.4	The teacher as disciplinarian	70
3.3.5	The teacher as examiner	71
3.3.6	Oral evaluation	72
4	UNIT 4 : LISTENING SKILLS	74
4.1	Categories or genres of speeches	74
4.2	Proverbs	75
4.2.1	Predicting content	75
4.3	Wind	76
4.4	Extract from NEPI report	79
4.5	Improving health standards	79
4.6	Employment Sickness Plan	80
5	UNIT 5 : VISUAL LITERACY	82
5.1	The use of visual information in texts	82
5.1.1	Why present information in a visual form?	83
5.1.2	How can you understand information in a visual form?	83
5.2	Bar graphs	85
5.3	Pie charts	86
5.4	Line graphs	88
5.5	Tables	89
5.6	Practice makes perfect	90
	REFERENCES	96

INTRODUCTION

Specific outcomes:

By the end of this course you should be able to

- demonstrate your awareness of language as a formal system and communication structure.
- speak/communicate fluently, using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in the modes of oral and written presentation.
- listen to and interpret symbolic language and/or pictures.
- write coherent letters, memoranda and essays.

Aims of the course

This course, as the name implies, is aimed at improving your language proficiency. The aim is twofold. Firstly, improving your own command of the language will enable you to teach more effectively. Secondly, you will then be in a position to help your pupils improve their linguistic skills. The English teacher cannot be responsible for all the linguistic needs of the pupils. Subject teachers must accept a certain amount of responsibility for the language that their pupils use in their subject areas. In order to demonstrate their ability in your subject pupils must have an adequate command of the English language.

The five main areas covered in this study manual are: listening, speaking, reading, writing and visual literacy. However, these areas are not clearly defined and you will find that all the skills will be practised in each section. The headings merely denote where the main emphasis will fall.

In the examination you will be expected to demonstrate your abilities in these areas.

Prescribed texts

There are no prescribed texts for this course, but you will develop your skills far better if you read as much English as possible and do all the exercises in this manual. We also recommend that you buy an English dictionary, which will also be useful when you teach.

Assignments

You will be required to submit assignments in writing and on an audio tape (which will be sent to you). It is absolutely essential that you develop oral and listening skills and that you demonstrate your competence in the assignments. Please make arrangements well in advance should you need to borrow or buy an audio tape player.

Examination

You need to obtain an examination entry mark of at least 45% average for your assignments. The average mark that you obtain for your assignments will comprise a third of your final mark. As stated above, your oral and listening skills will also be tested, but not during the examination period. We will inform you of the arrangements in this regard.

Evaluation questionnaires

We are trying to develop a course that will serve the needs of all our students. We should appreciate it if you would complete the questionnaires in the assignments. These will help us to gauge the success or failure of our course.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

The purpose of this unit is to provide you with information on and practice in various strategies whereby you can enhance your reading competence.

1.1 WHAT IS A COMPETENT READER?

A competent reader is one who is able to practise a variety of reading strategies appropriate to the purposes for which he or she reads. Reading is a form of language behaviour which we practise for various reasons: we read for everyday functional purposes, for academic and professional purposes, and for entertainment. The purpose for which we read determines the level, the speed and the manner in which we read.

In order to develop your reading competence, you need to realize, firstly, that reading does not merely imply the ability to decode graphic symbols on page. Reading is a plural concept that implies mastery of a variety of skills that involve understanding, interpreting and responding to a text.

Secondly, you need to realize that, as a reader, you have an active role. As a competent reader, you are not passive, but are actively 'filling in the gaps' as you read. When you interact with the words and structures in a text, you bring your own prior knowledge and experience of the world to bear on what you read in order to make sense of it. Meaning is therefore not solely 'in' the text waiting to be revealed to you; it is something that you as a reader 'negotiate' as you interact with the text. This is why the 'meaning' of a text is described by some scholars as an 'event' - it is something that 'happens' when a reader engages in the act of reading (Fish 1970:125).

Thirdly, most competent readers do not always understand every word they read! However, this does not put them off reading. As a competent reader, you are constantly making predictions and guesses about new or strange words as you read. You may have to go back to certain parts of the text to check or to confirm your predictions; you may also make use of a dictionary to look up the meanings of words that remain strange to you. This constant discourse between what is familiar and what is new is how you develop your reading competence.

Comprehension exercises are provided in this study manual to give you practice in reading and understanding a variety of texts. Various comprehension exercises are set to test your ability to

- grasp the main ideas of a passage.
- infer the meanings of words as used in a particular context.
- distinguish between literal and figurative language.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

- discern the difference between fact and opinion.
- assess whether you are being manipulated or persuaded by a writer to adopt a certain point of view.
- summarize the main ideas of a text.

1.2 READING STRATEGIES

There are many different ways or modes of reading. As a reader of a text, you will have a specific purpose in mind and will therefore apply a specific strategy appropriate to this purpose (Carter 1995:125). The speed at which you read is also closely related to the purpose for which you read. For instance, if you want to know the time at which a bus or a train leaves, you will move your eyes down the timetable and focus only on the specific information you require. You will certainly not start at the beginning of the timetable and read everything. This reading strategy is known as *scanning*. Another strategy which involves a superficial reading is known as *skimming* or *skim-reading*. This strategy is useful when you need to establish what a text is generally about. However, when you read a poem or a literary text for the purpose of studying it, you will practise *close reading*, i.e. you will read slowly and carefully, attending to every word and detail. When you read for entertainment, you do so using varying speeds and techniques, depending on your mood or on the extent to which you engage with the imaginary world of the text.

Start practising an awareness of the many different ways in which you read. You can do this by deciding on the purpose of your reading and then thinking about how this purpose determines which of the following strategies you will apply:

1.2.1 Scanning

Scanning is a strategy which efficient readers practise when they need to access specific information as quickly as possible, such as the time of departure of a bus or a train in a timetable, the price of an item on a list, or a specific telephone number in a telephone directory. When you scan a text, you are not reading for interpretation. Instead, you merely pass your eyes over the text until you see the words or the numbers you are looking for. You then focus only on those words or numbers, and, once you have read them, you ignore the rest of the passage. Scanning is therefore a type of selective, focussed searching for details or information.

As an example of how you could practise scanning a text, you could pass your eyes over the following passage with the purpose of establishing the depth of the hole drilled in the Kola Peninsula:

The Earth Yields Her Secrets

In the Kola Peninsula of what was once the Soviet Union, geologists and engineers have drilled the world's deepest hole. They have been drilling into the earth's crust since 1970 and the hole is now 13 000 metres deep. Scientists have always wanted to know what is deep inside the earth's crust and this deep hole may provide some answers. Geologists are examining pieces of rock that have been brought up to the surface to establish how old they are. Tests indicate that the rocks near the bottom of this hole are more than 2 700 million years old whereas the rocks near the top are only 1 100 million years old. From this hole, scientists are also learning about the minerals and gases that can be found deep in the earth's crust. They have established that the rock near the bottom contains large amounts of iron. They were also surprised to find lots of water deep in the earth's crust. Although this hole is extremely deep, it only probes one third of the earth's crust. Scientists therefore plan to continue drilling until the earth yields her secrets.

1.2.2 Skimming

Skimming or skim-reading is a very valuable strategy which accomplished readers practise when they do not have the time to pay close attention to a text, or when they need to gain an overview of a text. Mastery of this strategy enables you to survey a text quickly so that you can establish its focus. When you skim-read a text, you read parts of it very quickly, without taking in much detail, until you have a general idea of the theme or focus. There are many purposes for which you might skim-read a text. For instance, in a library, you may skim-read a chapter of a book to find out whether it is of any relevance to your studies. If it is, you may decide to borrow it and read it closely when you have more time, if it is not, you will put it down and move on to skim-read another text. In a bookstore, you might skim-read a book to decide whether or not it is worth buying.

There are different ways of skimming passages. On some occasions, you may skim-read only the heading and the first paragraph of each chapter of a book to establish what it is about. In an examination situation, you may find it helpful to skim-read a passage set for reading comprehension as a preview or to 'catch the gist' of the passage. You would then go back to the beginning of the passage and re-read it closely before answering the questions.

1.2.3 Close reading

You will practise close reading when you have to read a passage or a text carefully in order to be able to interpret it, summarize it, study it, or critically evaluate it. This type of reading is usually practised for academic purposes. Certain texts may require more than one reading as you need to clarify aspects that are obscure or ambiguous.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

Texts that require close reading may contain figurative language that needs to be interpreted, or opinions and attitudes that need to be assessed.

1.2.3.1 Interpreting figurative language

A competent reader should be aware of the difference between *literal* and *figurative* language. Literal language means exactly what it states, for example:

We sheltered *from the storm* because we were afraid of the lightning.

Figurative language, however, does not mean exactly what is stated, but relies on comparisons and allusions and requires interpretive activity on the part of the reader. For instance, in the following sentence, the word *storm* is not used literally, but figuratively:

She *stormed* out of the room.

The word *stormed* implies that the person ran out of the room in an angry and emotional manner. The reader interprets the sentence by inferring that the properties of a storm are being projected onto the behaviour of the person. In interpreting figurative expressions such as metaphors and similes, you are required to make connections or find similarities between apparently disparate entities. In doing so, you are actually enhancing your understanding of the text. Bear in mind that figurative language is not only used in literary texts, but also in many other genres. The ability to make associations or to see similarities is part of the cognitive activity through which you make sense of the world.

Refer to the passage *The Earth Yields Her Secrets* and decide whether the language is used in a literal or a figurative sense. The language of the passage is used in a literal sense, presenting factual, scientific information. Only the last sentence and the title of the passage contain figurative language, namely, '... the earth yields her secrets'. This is an instance of personification, as the properties of a secretive person are transferred onto the earth which is, in reality, inanimate. The effect of this instance of figurative language is to impress the reader with a sense of awe at the knowledge which is being derived from this scientific venture.

1.2.3.2 Distinguishing between facts and opinions

A competent reader is able to distinguish between facts and opinions. Opinions are individual beliefs or perceptions, which differ from person to person, whereas facts are truths that can be proved or verified. For instance, a statement such the following is an opinion, as it expresses one person's perception:

It's hot today.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

One person may be of the opinion that it is hot whereas another person may be of the opinion that it is not hot, but indeed cool, on that particular day. However, the following statement can be considered as being a fact as it can be proved:

The temperature in Pretoria today is 30 degrees.

This statement can be verified or proved by looking at a thermometer or by phoning the Weather Bureau.

The persuasive language of political propaganda and advertising relies on presenting opinions disguised as facts. When we are told by an advertisement that a specific product, such as a detergent, is 'the best', or that it 'washes whiter' than any other, we should realize that this is a statement that presents us with an opinion, not a fact. There is no way of knowing whether a particular brand of detergent is 'the best', as housewives will differ in opinion. Such statements are merely opinions which are being presented as 'facts' to impress and influence us. We should always be aware that the aim of every advertisement is to manipulate us into buying the advertised product!

How would you describe the statements contained in the passage *The Earth Yields Her Secrets* - as facts or opinions? Could the truth of the statements made in this passage be tested by consulting an encyclopaedia or a textbook, or even by visiting the Kola Peninsula? If so, they are facts; if not, they are opinions.

1.2.3.3 Reading for summarizing

Close reading can also be practised for the purpose of summarizing the main ideas in a text. An easy way to do this is to look for the theme or the main idea. In a lengthy text consisting of many paragraphs, you would look for the main or topic sentence of each paragraph. Each paragraph usually focusses on one idea; therefore there should be a sentence which expresses this idea clearly. You need to develop the strategy of identifying this topic sentence and of being able to distinguish it from those sentences that contain supporting arguments or examples and details.

If you were asked to summarize the passage *The Earth Yields Her Secrets* in 5-6 lines, you would look for the sentence that expresses the main idea. In this passage, this happens to be the first sentence, so it would form the main part of your summary. You would then decide which other facts constitute the essence of the passage and include them in your summary. These facts concern the knowledge that scientists have gained about the age of the earth and the content of its crust. You would include only the essential details in your summary. A summary of 5-6 lines could be as follows:

Since 1970, in the Kola Peninsula, scientists have been drilling a hole into the earth's crust. They have reached a depth of 13 000 metres and have established that the rocks at this level are more than 2 700 million years old. They have also found iron ore, gases and water at this depth. They plan to continue drilling as this hole probes only one third of the earth's crust.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

1.3 CONCLUSION

Your reading competence therefore comprises a variety of different strategies, depending on the purpose for which you read. Skimming and scanning are both modes of speed-reading. In contrast, close reading for the purposes of study, interpretation, critical evaluation or summarizing, is practised slowly and may even require you to reread certain parts of the text.

1.4 EXERCISES

The following exercises will give you practice in reading a variety of texts for various purposes. The questions set on these passages will give you practice in deducing the meanings of words in their contexts, distinguishing between main and subordinate ideas, discerning between facts and opinions, interpreting figurative language, and identifying the main ideas of a text.

Passage A**My father was deaf, yet he taught me how to listen**

One afternoon I rushed from university, overjoyed. 'I won a prize, Momma,' I sighed. 'I earned a gold key for my university work: Phi Beta Kappa.' I spelt each Greek letter for her. Our eyes met in a long smile. 'You worked hard many years,' she signed. 'I proud of you.' She took my face in her hands and kissed me.

The moment my father opened the door, my mother, unable to contain her pleasure, pulled him into the living room. 'Ben, I have a surprise.'

'I'll take off jacket, hat.'

'No, wait I tell you now. Ruth has Phi Beta Kappa.'

'Funny words. What are you saying, Mary?'

'They are letters of the Greek alphabet,' I interjected. 'It's the name of an honour society for the best students in university.'

He made the connection and shouted with his harsh voice and sweeping hands. 'We have good luck! Tell me again how to spell the honour club words.'

Once more I spelt the letters, and he etched them into his hands. Sitting on the sofa, he pulled me down to him and took me by the shoulders with both hands. In halting oral words he said, 'Congratulations to daughter Ruth.'

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

It was only then I realised I had not taught my father. It was he who had engaged me in the conquest of language. It was he who told me to be direct, to be watchful, to listen with my eyes and to ask with my mouth. From his silence, my father taught me the true power of speech.

(Ruth Sidransky: 'You are my dictionary' in *Reader's Digest*, February 1993)

- 1 Was this girl's mother also deaf? Give three instances from the passage to support your answer.
- 2 What is wrong with the sentences: 'I proud of you', 'I'll take off jacket, hat'? Why were the sentences uttered in that way? Comment on the words that are left out.
- 3 Why, do you think, did Ben have a harsh voice? In the extract, the author notes that Ben 'shouted with his harsh voice and sweeping hands'. How can you shout with your hands?
- 4 In the last paragraph, Ruth sums up what her father has taught her. Discuss what she means when she says that her deaf father taught her 'the true power of speech'.
- 5 Everything builds up to the conclusion in the last paragraph, but as this is only an extract from an article, we have to guess that this girl wanted her father to share her triumph because he
 - A was the only person whose opinion was important to her.
 - B had always supported her in everything she did.
 - C had set her a wonderful example despite his handicap.
- 6 In line 10 Ruth says 'It's the name of an honour society...' What is the difference between 'it's' and 'its'? Write two sentences to illustrate the difference.

Passage B

Terror in Flight SK751

The plane's last few seconds had a dreamlike quality for Steve Rasmussen. The Lord's Prayer flashed through his mind, and thoughts of his family. Then he was calm.

With less than 15 seconds remaining, he saw a patch of snow breaking the green of the pine forest and headed towards it. Still, the plane was coming down too fast. Seeing the soft treetops flash by underneath, Steve had a sudden inspiration. He pulled back the yoke and set Dana Viking gently down onto the forest. For a split second, the top branches swished tenderly against the fuselage, but then the enormous mass, travelling at 222 kilometres per hour, sank down into several hundred hard, upright objects thicker than telephone poles.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

Roaring and crashing, the plane thundered through the forest in a mad sleigh ride more than 100 metres long. Almost immediately the right wing came off in several pieces, spraying thousands of litres of fuel over the pines. Pulled to the right, the plane broke out of the forest sideways and hit the ground tail-first. The left wing snagged the earth, swinging the aircraft back to a roughly straight course. At the same time, the landing gear caught in a drainage ditch and snapped off.

The impact split the plane open at rows 7 and 23, forward and aft of the wings. Still connected at the edges by a thin skin of aluminium, she slid about 100 metres further, scooping topsoil into the cabin, while showering everything around with the fuel from the ruptured tanks. Dana Viking had been airborne for exactly 4 minutes and 6 seconds.

The crash slammed Steve's head into the cockpit wall. He came to, bleeding from the head, but felt no pain. Next to him, Ulf was inert in his seat, which had been thrown grotesquely upwards against the overhead instruments.

And now there was silence - wonderful beautiful silence. This snow-blanketed meadow was so lovely that Steve briefly wondered whether he was on earth or some other place. Then he realised the miracle. He unbuckled his belt, bolted into the cabin and shouted out, 'Evacuate!'

The plane could burst into a fireball at any second. After helping an air hostess open the forward door, he rushed back into the cockpit. Ulf was alive, but jammed in his seat. Steve pulled it down and freed him from the tangle. Then he dragged an unconscious passenger to the door, handed him over to someone else, and plunged back into the cabin.

Within minutes the passengers had left the plane through the splits of the fuselage and the doors that still worked. After making a complete tour of the plane, Steve headed everyone away from the wreck. Standing in his shirtsleeves, blood trickling from under his captain's cap, he briefed them that help was on the way. The best news he saved for last: there had not been a single fatality. The passengers, half still in shock, gaped at their rescuer. Then they applauded him with the sincerest ovation of their lives.

(Rudolph Chelminski: 'Terror on flight SK751' in *Reader's Digest*, March 1993)

- 1 This passage consists of eight paragraphs. The first paragraph serves as an introduction linking with the heading to induce a sense of impending danger. Quote four words from the first paragraph that give you the idea that this passage is about a plane crash.
- 2 Which of the following sentences best summarizes the second paragraph?
 - 2.1 Steve saw a patch of snow on the ground.
 - 2.2 Steve thought of a way to lessen the impact of the crash.
 - 2.3 Steve could not control the plane sufficiently to keep it above the trees.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

3 What is the most important idea in the third paragraph?

3.1 The crash landing

3.2 The danger of fuel spilt on the trees

3.3 The fact that the landing gear was caught in a drainage ditch

4 Write brief sentences summarizing the content of the last five paragraphs.

5 **Inferring the meaning of unknown words**

Match each of the underlined words in Column A with its probable meaning in Column B. Be careful, there are some extra meanings in Column B.

Column A**Column B**

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 5.1 Steve had a sudden <u>inspiration</u> ... | a collision |
| 5.2 The <u>impact</u> split the plane open ... | b get out, withdraw |
| 5.3 ... showering everything with fuel from the <u>ruptured</u> tanks. | c motionless |
| 5.4 Ulf was lying <u>inert</u> in his seat ... | d congratulate briefly |
| 5.5 ... shouted out, ' <u>Evacuate!</u> ' | e outstanding idea |
| 5.6 ... he <u>briefed them</u> that help was on the way | f expression of approval |
| 5.7 ... with the sincerest <u>ovation</u> of their lives | g broke, tore open |
| | h divine action |
| | i gave them essential information |

Passage C**The poisoning of Michigan**

In the Spring of 1975, a truck driver, remembered only as Shorty, made a routine delivery from a chemical factory in Central Michigan to an agricultural feed plant in another part of the State. The plant workers unloaded a ton of what they believed was magnesium oxide, a crumbly whitish substance, packed in heavy brown paper sacks on which a trade name had been crudely stencilled. Over the next few weeks, this was mixed into tons of cattle feed and sent to farm suppliers throughout Michigan.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

In fact, a hideous mistake had been made. Whoever loaded Shorty's truck had filled it not with magnesium oxide, a harmless antacid which was often added to dairy cattle feed to improve milk production, but with almost identical sacks of a similar looking substance - polybrominated diphenyl (PBB). This is an industrial chemical, developed to bond with hard plastics and make them fireproof, and it is highly toxic.

The two chemicals, produced in different buildings at Michigan Chemical Corporation's factory, should have been kept in separate warehouses, and dispatched from different loading areas. They weren't - and afterwards no one could explain how the mistake had been made. Neither Shorty nor the men who handled the bags at either end of the trip noticed the difference. Given that magnesium oxide is sold under the trade name of Nutrimaster, and PBB under the name of Firemaster; that some of the lettering on the bags was smudged; that some of the mixer operators were barely literate - the mix-up was understandable. Yet no one had thought it possible, and so tens of thousands of Michigan cattle were poisoned, and poison spread to everyone who consumed Michigan beef and milk.

It was not a single disaster. Cattle ate contaminated feed day after day before one farmer, with an exceptional knowledge of chemicals, was able to track down the reason why so many of his animals had sickened and died. Working in isolation, he had no idea that other farmers were suffering too - and each of them also assumed that the undiagnosed plague which devastated his herd was unique.

The farmers sent their unprofitable animals, and what milk they produced, to market. Consequently, for at least nine months, heavily contaminated meat and dairy products were sold in Michigan supermarkets. When a thorough investigation of the human health effects was eventually made, it was estimated that all of Michigan's nine million inhabitants had ingested enough PBB to accumulate a body burden of a chemical so persistent that traces would remain in their tissues for the rest of their lives.

By then the experts had discovered that PBB can wreak havoc with the liver, the central nervous system, the bones and the immunity system. It crosses the placenta to the foetus, and shows up in the breast milk of nursing mothers. It is suspected of causing cancer and genetic damage.

When Michigan was contaminated, the only poisoning of which the local doctors had experience was the acute kind that makes people ill immediately. They failed to understand a chronic toxicosis which builds up over months, slowly retarding bodily functions, and for a long time they insisted that PBB appeared to do no damage. 'We were mired in a swamp of ignorance,' Michigan's Director of Public Health admitted.

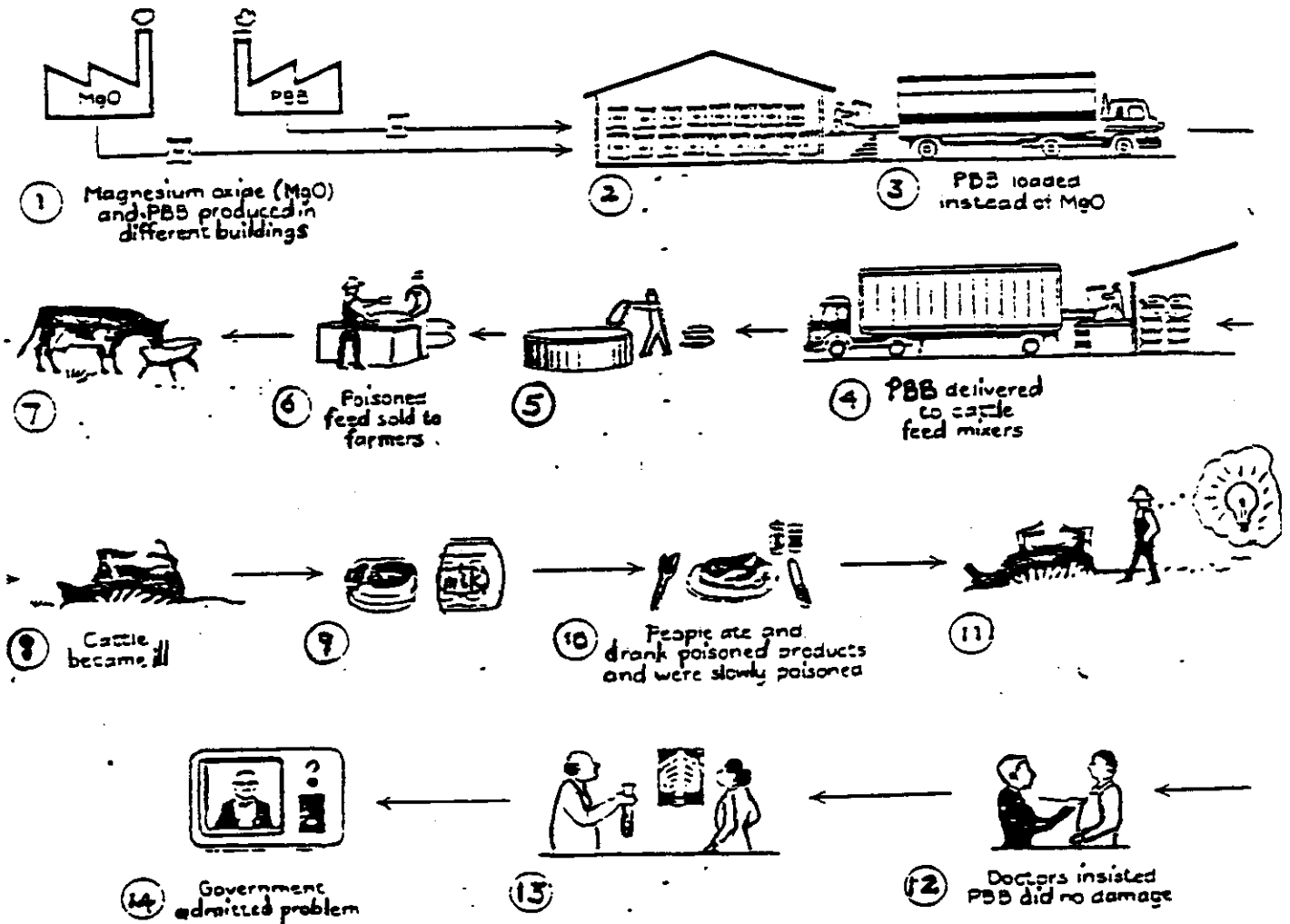
(Adapted from *Authentic Reading* by Catherine Walker)

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

1 Complete the following table:

What happened?	Why did it happen?
The people who mixed the cattle feed did not notice that they were using a different chemical from the usual one.	1 The trade names written on the bags were similar. 2 3
It took a long time for people to discover that a large number of the cattle in Michigan were suffering from a strange disease.	1 2
Only one farmer discovered the cause of the disease.	1
PBB has terrible effects on people, but these were not discovered for a long time.	1

Here is a chart of the main events in the article, in the order in which they happened. (Like many articles and stories, this one does not tell the events in the exact order they happened.) Fill in the blank spaces on the chart.



UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

- 2 Look at your chart and the blank spaces you have filled in. There are a number of places where someone did his or her job badly. Identify these places and say what should have happened.
- 3 **Inferring the meanings of unknown words**

Match each underlined word in Column A with the meaning that comes closest to it in Column B. Be careful, Column B has some extra meanings.

Column A	Column B
3.1 ... packed in heavy brown paper sacks on which a trade name was crudely <u>stencilled</u>	a attach itself to
3.2 This was an industrial chemical, developed to <u>bond</u> with hard plastics and make them fireproof.	b missing
3.3 ... and it was highly <u>toxic</u> .	c eaten
3.4 The two chemicals ... should have been ... <u>dispatched from</u> different loading areas	d establish
3.5 ... that some of the lettering on the bags was <u>smudged</u> ...	e blurred
3.6 ... one farmer ... was able to <u>track down</u> the reason why so many of his animals had sickened and died	f stored
3.7 ... it was estimated that all of Michigan's nine million inhabitants had <u>ingested</u> enough PBB to accumulate a body burden of (the) chemical ...	g find
3.8 By then the experts had discovered that PBB can <u>wreak havoc with</u> the liver, the central nervous system, the bones and the immunity system.	h poisonous
	i dangerous to touch
	j written
	k sent by truck
	l seriously damage
	m fed to their cattle

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

4 Negative expressions

Negative expressions do not always contain 'not' or 'no'. For example, in the sentence 'She could have told me earlier!' the words *could have* carry a negative meaning; it is clear that 'she did not tell me earlier'. You probably know most of the negative expressions in English. However, if you read carelessly you can miss them and misunderstand a sentence completely. In the following exercise, underline the negative expressions and write a sentence containing 'not' for each situation.

- 4.1 The plant's workers unloaded a ton of what they believed was magnesium oxide.
- 4.2 The two chemicals should have been kept in separate warehouses.
- 4.3 Neither Shorty, nor the men who handled the bags at either end of the trip, noticed the difference.
- 4.4 They failed to understand a chronic toxicosis which builds up over months.

Passage D

One morning, as we lined up to be counted before beginning work in the courtyard, we were instead ordered into a covered truck. A few minutes later, we arrived at a lime quarry. It looked like an enormous white crater cut into a rocky hillside.

We were met by the commanding officer, Colonel Wessels, a colourless fellow who cared only about strict adherence to regulations. We stood at attention as he told us that the work we would be doing would last six months, and afterwards we would be given light tasks for the duration of our terms. His timing was considerably off. We remained at the quarry for the next 13 years.

We were handed picks and shovels and given rudimentary instructions as to the mining of lime. It is not a simple task. The first day, we were clumsy with our new tools and extracted little. The lime itself is buried in layers of rock, and one had to break through to it with a pick and then extract the seam of lime with a shovel.

It was an attempt to crush our spirits but those first few weeks at the quarry had the opposite effect on us. Despite blistered and bleeding hands, we were invigorated. I much prized being outside in nature, being able to see grass and trees, to observe birds flitting overhead, the wind blowing in from the sea. It felt good to use all of one's muscles, with the sun on one's back, and there was simple gratification in building up mounds of lime. Although some of the men regarded the march to the quarry as drudgery, I never did.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

It was hot work, but worse was the light. The sun's rays would be reflected into our eyes by the lime. The glare hurt our eyes and along with the dust made it difficult to see. After a few days, we made an official request for sunglasses. The authorities refused. This was not unexpected, for we were then not even permitted reading glasses. We requested sunglasses again and again, but it was to take us almost three years before we were allowed to have them, and that only after a sympathetic physician agreed that the glasses were necessary to preserve our eyesight. Even then, we had to buy the glasses ourselves.

For us, such struggles - for sunglasses, long trousers, study privileges, equalized food - were corollaries to the struggle we waged outside the prison. The campaign to improve conditions in prison was part of the apartheid struggle. It was all the same; we fought injustice wherever we found it, no matter how large or how small, to preserve our humanity.

We were not allowed to have any news from outside, but one day that first year, I noticed a newspaper lying on a bench. I plucked the paper off the bench slipping it into my shirt. Normally I would have hidden the newspaper in my cell and taken it out only after bedtime. But like a child who eats his sweet before his main course, I was so eager for news that I opened the paper immediately. Suddenly, an officer appeared and I did not even have time to slide the paper under my bed. 'Mandela,' the officer said, we are charging you with the possession of contraband and you will pay for this. I offered no defence and was sentenced to three days in isolation and deprivation of meals.

(From *Long Walk to Freedom* by Nelson Mandela)

- 1 What does the writer mean when he calls Colonel Wessels 'a colourless fellow' (paragraph 2)?
- 2 Rewrite in simple English: 'He cared only about strict adherence to regulations.'
- 3 Why does the writer say that Wessels's timing 'was considerably off' (paragraph 2)? What does the expression mean?
- 4 What does the writer mean when he says that the instructions given to them were 'rudimentary' (paragraph 3)?
- 5 Do you think the prisoners were used to manual labour? Give a reason for your answer.
- 6 Give this extract an appropriate title.
- 7 What evidence is there in the passage that the writer was not in an inland prison?
- 8 Why was working in the quarry bad for the prisoners' eyes?

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

- 9 Supply another word for 'physician' (paragraph 5).
- 10 What does the writer mean when he says that the authorities were trying 'to crush our spirits' (line 13)? Did they succeed? Give a reason for your answer.
- 11 Write sentences to illustrate the meanings of the following words:
- isolation
drudgery
- 12 Where would you put the stress in these words? Underline just the vowel sound you would emphasize, for example: table
- enormous; quarry; privileges

Passage E

One of the liveliest topics of the moment seems, improbably, to be death, even as life expectancies increase. While many of the world's thinkers are worried about the proliferation of births, it is the knelling sound of death that keeps us awake at night. The US best-seller lists are crowded, in fact, with titles such as *How We Die* and *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. Perhaps it is because AIDS and cancer have implicated us all in the abruptness of extinction, or merely that publishers see a killing in the most universal experience of them all. But that, in either case, may be a blessing: when we spend months, even years, learning to fix a car or speak Portuguese, why should one not learn to die?

One reason, of course, is that death is the one great adventure of which there are no surviving accounts; death, by definition, is what happens to somebody else. Empiricism falters before death. Yet it is more certain than love and more reliable than health. And its very reliability prompts us to find ways to domesticate it. Some of us try to take the sting out of mortality by talking of 'passing away' or going to 'the Great Dugout in the Sky' (while doctors, who have to deal with it daily, refer, even more coolly to 'coding' or 'circling the drain'). Others try to romanticize it as the great escape, the best anaesthetic outside of Prozac. Those who cannot countenance any hope in the world find it the ultimate confirmation of their grimmest fears. Death, after all, is the only reality that never lets you down. Yet that too can be an escape, a projection of our fantasies upon the dark unknown. Keats, who admitted to being 'half in love with easeful Death', died at 25, penniless and spitting blood.

Others would try to outlast it or outwit it, through cryonics, (though it may be no coincidence that their most famous example is said to be Walt Disney). But the fact remains; this article will someday be posthumous. That face I touch will, in the not too distant future, be out of reach. Tibetan Buddhists meditate upon the images of dancing skulls, and ancient Egyptians, during feasts, had skeletons brought to their tables, all to remind them of a single fact: the smile we love will soon be food for worms.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

Perhaps the most common way of making peace with death - getting over it, in a sense - is by thinking of it as a way to 'meet one's maker'. Religions of every kind might almost be said to exist to help us deal with our own extinction. They tell us that something is waiting for us on the other side, that death may be a pilgrimage and not a destination, that the afterlife is a warm awakening after the fretful dreams of life. The hero of the huge best-seller *Embraced by Light* returns from the hereafter with the news that 'all experiences can be positive'. In my local bookstore the 'Death and Dying' section is right next to 'Recovery and Affirmations', and the titles themselves sound like holiday brochures: *Death: The Trip of a Lifetime; Heading Toward Omega; Companion Through Darkness*.

Not coincidentally, in William Osler's classic medical textbook of 1892, he recommended death as the one great help for some diseases (words for Karl Marx to chew on), and that may be especially true now that our senses of the transcendent is diminished. The man who gave us *The Death of God* also wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*; a sense of eternity is much less cold and abstract if linked to a sense of divinity.

(Adapted from *Time*, August 8 1994)

- 1 Supply a suitable title or headline that expresses the gist of the article.
- 2 In paragraph 2, the writer identifies one characteristic of death that distinguishes it from all other 'adventures'. Write down this distinction in your own words.
- 3 Give a reason why each of the following statements may be considered true:
 - 3.1 Death is more certain than love (paragraph 2).
 - 3.2 Death is the best anaesthetic (paragraph 2).
 - 3.3 The smile we love will soon be food for worms (paragraph 3).
 - 3.4 Death is a pilgrimage and not a destination (paragraph 4).
- 4 In paragraph 2, the writer mentions a person by the name of Keats.
 - 4.1 Why was Keats famous?
 - 4.2 Keats died 'spitting blood'. What disease did he die of?
- 5 In paragraph 5, the writer states that 'publishers see a killing in the most universal experience of them all'. Explain this statement in your own words.
- 6 In paragraph 4, the writer compares life to a fretful dream. Explain in your own words what you think he means by this.
- 7 Use the following words from the passage in clear sentences of your own, without changing their form in any way:
 - 7.1 proliferation (paragraph 1)
 - 7.2 posthumous (paragraph 3)

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

- 8 Write down an idiomatic expression from the passage that means more or less the same as the following:
to take the threat or danger or pain out of death
- 9 Give one word for expressions that substitute blunt or harsh expressions, such as the following from the passage (paragraph 3) that are all substitutes for 'death' or 'dying':
passing away; the great escape; the only reality that never lets you down
- 10 Copy each of the following words and then underline only the stressed vowel in each:

implicated
confirmation
coincidence
pilgrimage
- 11 Insert a comma in the following sentence and explain how it drastically changes the meaning of the sentence:

The writer wasn't writing about death seriously.
- 12 Change the following sentence into a more formal register by changing only one word (rewrite the whole sentence):
Many of us - the writer included - have been lucky enough never to have to face up to death.
- 13 Explain in not more than 20 words what the writer is saying in paragraph 5 (Not coincidentally ... sense of divinity).

Passage F**Saving the Rhino**

The threat to the rhino is similar to that facing the elephant but more serious; only 700 northern white rhinos are believed to survive. The black rhino has suffered severely from poaching - Kenya is believed to have lost 90 percent of its black rhino in the last decade - but the case of the southern white rhino is encouraging. Before the turn of the century, this species was considered to be extinct, but a handful of survivors were found in Natal and a conservation programme was managed so well that there are now 2 500 southern white rhino in South Africa, 300 in other countries in the region and 600 in zoos all over the world. So, if care is taken, wild animals can survive.

Meanwhile, the threat to the rhino is almost entirely due to the demand for the horn. It has long been used in Asia, especially in China, not as an aphrodisiac, as is widely thought in the West, but as an agent in reducing fever, and as a general tonic. Only in

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

parts of India has research found it to be used as an aphrodisiac. These demands for the horn have brought the Great Indian, Sumatran and Javan rhinos to the brink of extinction, and contributed to the decline of the African species.

But it is oil, ironically enough, that has brought catastrophe to the northern white and black rhinos. From about 1969, men of the Yemen Arab Republic found very lucrative jobs in oil-rich Saudi Arabia. Their earnings enabled them to buy prestigious types of traditional daggers, of 'Jambia', with handles of rhino horn. The result: the import of rhino horn, along with the price, soared.

It has been calculated that the amount of rhino horn imported into the Yemen between 1969 and 1977 meant the death of 800 rhinos. Asian traders also had to compete to maintain their supplies, so the wholesale price of rhino horn in South-East Asia between 1975 and 1979 rose by 2000 percent. With the prospects of such lucrative rewards, poachers went after the most vulnerable rhino populations in East Africa first, and then spread their activities elsewhere.

The only hope for rhinos is to protect them from poachers, and in the long run to persuade Yemenis, Chinese and other consumers to use substitutes for their dagger handles and medicines. This might seem a forlorn hope, but a good precedent was set by Hong Kong traders who voluntarily agreed to stop handling rhino horn when they were informed that the beasts were in grave danger of extinction. It may be hard for conservationists to believe, but most consumers of rhino horn seem to be unaware of this danger.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in Wild Fauna and Flora - CITES - is important if there is to be proper control of the ivory trade and trade in rhino horn. Major consumer countries like China, Hong Kong and Japan are parties to the convention, but the Yemen Arab Republic is not. Nor have all the producing countries joined, and many of those that have, fail the test of effective implementation.

The decisions rest with African governments, but they need the continued aid of the international community to help in conserving rhinos, which are, after all, part of the world's heritage.

In each of Questions 1.1 to 1.8, choose the option that best completes the statement.

1.1 The success of the southern white rhino conservation programme shows that

- A zoos have a major role to play in conservation.
- B this species is not extinct after all.
- C it is possible to save a threatened wild species.
- D the white rhino is a less popular target for poachers than the northern white rhino.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

1.2 Westerners incorrectly think that

- A rhino horn is used as an aphrodisiac only in India.
- B Asian people use the horn of the rhino as an aphrodisiac.
- C rhino horn has few reducing and tonic properties.
- D the main threat to the rhino is due to demand for its horn.

1.3 It is ironic that oil should be a direct cause of the decline in the numbers of the northern rhino because

- A richer people are usually conservation conscious.
- B oil should bring benefits rather than disastrous losses.
- C money from oil could be used to save the rhino.
- D there seems to be no clear connection between oil and the decline in the numbers of the northern rhino.

1.4 Rhinos in countries outside Africa

- A are all but extinct.
- B have not been affected by the trade in rhino horns.
- C have been hunted exclusively as source of an aphrodisiac.
- D have completely disappeared.

1.5 The price of rhino horn rose by 2000 percent between 1978 and 1979 because

- A poachers had already exhausted the most vulnerable herds.
- B the animals had become so scarce.
- C far fewer people wanted to buy them.
- D many traders were competing for the horns.

1.6 The action of certain Hong Kong traders is described as 'a good precedent' (paragraph 5) because

- A it shows that people can be persuaded to use alternative materials.
- B it is a victory for conservationists.
- C traders and customers are often ignorant about the animals they are exploiting.
- D if other people followed their lead the rhino might be saved.

1.7 The trade convention is important but

- A most major consumers have not signed it.
- B one of the main consumers of rhino horn has not agreed to it.
- C only the producing countries have agreed to the convention so far.
- D there is little chance of putting the convention into effect.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

- 1.8 The international community has a responsibility to help in the conservation of the rhino because
- A rhinos, in a sense, belong to the whole world.
 - B African countries are often too poor to undertake expensive conservation schemes.
 - C the leaders of African countries do not have the political power to take decisions.
 - D expertise as well as money comes mainly from outside Africa.
- 2 When was 'the turn of the century' (paragraph 1)?
- 3 How many southern white rhinos are found outside South Africa, according to the article?
- 4 What is an aphrodisiac?
- 5 Explain in your own words why the rhino might be saved if people were better informed.
- 6 Use the following words in sentences to illustrate their meanings:
- extinct
brink
lucrative
vulnerable
- 7 Explain the use of the dashes in paragraph 6 (The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora - CITES - is important ...). Name two other punctuation marks that could have been used.
- 8 Complete the following sentences using information from the passage:
- 8.1 Contrary to what is thought in the West, the rhino horn ...
- 8.2 Although decisions about conservation rest with African governments, ...

Passage G**Video Games are Motivational**

Video games have attracted a wide variety of responses, most of them unfavourable. Space Invader and Pac Man addiction is seen as a misfortune that befalls the young. Though in this country no one has attempted, like the citizens of Irvington, New York, to have video game machines banned, most parents of young enthusiasts probably have severe misgivings about their youngsters' use of time.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

Research, however, is on the children's side. According to an array of experts assembled at a recent conference on 'Video games and human development' at Harvard University Graduate School of Education in America, video games do children no harm and possibly some good. The conference was funded by Atari, a major producer of video games, and was sponsored and organised by Harvard University, who were given a free hand in bringing together researchers into the effects of video games.

David Brooks, a California educational specialist, found that among 1,000 adolescents who frequented games arcades, 68 percent were above average achievers at school, 80 percent spent less than five dollars a week on the games, and most saw the arcades as places to meet their friends and socialise.

Edna Mitchell, Chairperson of the Education Department, Mills College, Oakland, California, in a survey of twenty families who had bought video games sets, found that the time spent playing games came mainly from that which would normally have been spent watching television. None of the parents believed that the games adversely affected the children's school work and Ms Mitchell felt they increased interaction in the family.

'I think I was most surprised that the children didn't seem to be hooked on the video games. Playing time rose and fell depending on whether or not they had a new cartridge ... the playing time was kept to what I thought was very moderate, less than an hour a day.'

Jerry Chaffin and Bill Maxwell of Kansas University argued that the most productive approach to video games was to seek ways of applying their motivational characteristics to educational situations. They defined four 'motivational features' of video arcade games and coined the term 'Arc-Ed Courseware' for this sort of software. Many teachers will immediately recognise elements of the drill-and-practise software, now coming from the USA and from some companies in England, as falling into this category.

The four features were: feedback – the players know instantly whether an individual response was too late, too early, correct or incorrect; improvement – typically arcade players do poorly on the first few games, but, contrary to the modern educational principle that failure discourages, players appear to view their poor initial performance as a challenge to improve their scores; high response rates – that is, the fast pace of the game. 'Such high rates of response allow for little else – the individual has no time for interfering or distracting thoughts without serious penalty. The task has the player's undivided attention.'

Finally there was what they called 'unlimited ceiling on performance'. The creators of the games are almost always one step ahead; just as a player accomplishes one goal, another more difficult situation is introduced.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

In Questions 1.1 - 1.4, choose the correct answer from the four available alternatives.

1.1 Most parents in America

- A are extremely opposed to video games.
- B are worried about the time their children spend on video games.
- C are as addicted as their children to video games.
- D support a complete ban of video games arcades.

1.2 Research seems to show that

- A children, and not adults, are right about video games.
- B adults have good reason to dislike video games.
- C video games appeal to a wide variety of ages.
- D video game addiction is a very real phenomenon.

1.3 From the educational point of view, figures seem to show that

- A schoolchildren spend their time outside school hours playing video games.
- B friendships are made and sustained by the social contact of video game centres.
- C spending time playing on video game machines does not have a bad effect on schoolwork.
- D schoolchildren strictly limit their spending on video game machines.

1.4 Edna Mitchell found it surprising that children

- A quickly tired of new games as their novelty wore off.
- B played new games obsessively when they first got them.
- C were far less addicted to video games than she had expected.
- D preferred older, more familiar games to new ones.

2 Edna Mitchell said that there was a positive aspect to the playing of video games as far as the family was concerned. In your own words, explain what this positive aspect is.

3 At the conference, it was argued that the most productive approach to video games was to seek ways of applying their motivating characteristics to educational situations. In your own words, explain what this statement means.

4 Would it be true to say that the players' concentration is improved? Give a reason for your answer.

5 What belief held by educators seems to be contradicted by the way in which children play video games?

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

- 6 Explain the use of dashes in paragraph 7 ('The four features ... undivided attention.')
- 7 Why is the phrase 'unlimited ceiling on performance' (paragraph 8) in inverted commas? Explain what is meant by this phrase.
- 8 Stress is used in sentences to give meaning. Explain how the different stress patterns in the following sentences alter the meanings of the sentences.
- 8.1 I was most surprised that the children didn't seem to be hooked on video games.
- 8.2 I was most surprised that the children didn't seem to be hooked on video games.
- 8.3 I was most surprised that the children didn't seem to be hooked on video games.
- 9 Match each word in Column A with a meaning from Column B. There are extra meanings in Column B. Write down only the number and letter of your answer.

Column A

- 9.1 misgivings
9.2 adversely
9.3 moderate
9.4 characteristics
9.5 initial

Column B

- a negatively
b first, beginning
c not extreme
d doubts, worries
e positively
f features
g trends
h arguments

Passage H

A squabble is brewing between two sister agencies of the United Nations over tobacco. The World Health Organization (WHO), whose slogan is 'Health for all by the Year 2000', is alarmed that smoking diseases could hit the Third World at the very time when some of the traditional diseases are being overcome. The WHO is encouraging developing countries, most of which grow tobacco, to ban cigarette advertising and help their farmers to switch from tobacco to other crops. But its sister agency, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which helps developing countries to increase their output of food and other agricultural products, says that tobacco is too profitable to drop. A recent FAO report claimed that until world demand can be curbed sufficiently to make tobacco growing less profitable, 'it will be difficult to induce growers to curtail production'.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

While smoking is declining in most Western countries, it is on the increase in many parts of the Third World where tobacco companies are doing all they can to stimulate demand. The WHO believes that demand for tobacco products in the Third World will be curbed if there is less advertising and if smokers are better informed about the health dangers. The WHO argue that the health of millions could be seriously affected if a smoking epidemic sweeps the Third World. It stresses that a rise in smoking-related diseases such as lung cancer and heart disease will force countries to tie up scarce medical resources to deal with them. The FAO claims that revenue from tobacco exports is important for a number of countries (Zimbabwe and Malawi for example), that tobacco products give tens of thousands of farmers an extra income, and moreover, that the crop occupies only 0.3 percent of the world's arable land.

But there are some aspects of tobacco growing which the FAO might prefer to forget. In a hungry world, over four million hectares of land is used to produce tobacco, whereas it could be used to produce food for people. Cigarette production is also very demanding in its use of trees - which the FAO has a brief to protect. A great deal of tobacco is cured in inefficient barns in which trees are used for fuel. Africa is now losing so many trees that the continent is becoming a disaster area. When the trees go, good agricultural land becomes unprotected and can be lost. Tobacco is lost too, unless a substitute for wood can be found. No trees means no curing, no cigarettes and no foreign earnings. All would vanish like a puff of smoke.

- 1 WHO and FAO have different attitudes as far as the growing of tobacco is concerned. Briefly discuss the arguments for and against the growing of tobacco in Third World countries.
- 2 Explain in your own words why trees are necessary for tobacco farming.
- 3 To how much of the world's arable land does 0,3% amount?
- 4 Why are inverted commas used for .. 'it will be difficult to induce growers to curtail production'?
- 5 Explain the use of brackets in paragraph 2: '(Zimbabwe and Malawi for example)'. What other punctuation marks could have been used instead of the brackets?
- 6 Match each word in Column A with a meaning in Column B. Column B has some extra meanings. Write down only the number and letter of your answer.

Column A

- 6.1 squabble
6.2 curbed
6.3 curtail
6.4 epidemic

Column B

- a encouraged
b disease that attacks great numbers
c income
d expenditure

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

6.5	scarce	e	cut short, limited
6.6	revenue	f	checked, stopped
		g	quarrel, fight
		h	illness that spreads in Third World countries
		i	rare, not plentiful

7 Read the following facts:

0.3 percent of the world's arable land is used for growing tobacco.
Tobacco is directly linked with certain diseases.
Revenue from tobacco exports are important to certain Third World countries.

An FAO spokesman would say, 'While we admit that there are certain health problems connected with smoking, it is an important source of revenue for some Third World countries. Remember, only 0,3 percent of farming land is used for growing tobacco. That leaves a great deal for growing food.'

The FAO spokesman is trying to put forward the FAO's point of view. Now, write what the WHO spokesman would say. You must use the facts mentioned above and you may not alter any of them.

8 But there are some aspects of tobacco growing which the FAO might prefer to forget. Comment on the function of the underlined words.**Passage I****Oil, Oil, Everywhere**

'People call us fools, because the companies took out oil for other people to enjoy and left us with nothing.' These are the words of Princess Irene Amangala, the daughter and granddaughter of two previous kings of Ogabia township. This township is a collection of forty-five villages in the heart of the Niger Delta, some six hours by motorboat from Nigeria's southern business city of Port Harcourt.

In 1956, the first commercial discovery of oil was made at one of these villages, Oloibiri, where Princess Amangala now lives. Since that time, oil production has boomed in Nigeria, making it Africa's leading producer of petroleum (it also possesses huge deposits of natural gas, exploited in conjunction with oil) bringing untold wealth to the country.

Stories of oil pollution are common in the Niger Delta, so common that it is alarming to contemplate what will be left of the region in forty years when the petroleum reserves are fully exploited, the land ravaged and the people's way of life destroyed.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

Shell Oil, who are responsible for half of Nigeria's oil production, admit that there are at least two hundred spillages a year of different sizes. They say they have a commitment to containing and cleaning up such spills but, in the watery environment of the Delta, it is impossible to take effective measures short of burning off the oil altogether, annihilating a large part of the surrounding forest.

The ecology of the region is delicately balanced. There are areas of saltwater mangrove forest, freshwater swamp forest, tropical rainforest and different types of savannah, all of which have a rich plant and animal life on which the forest dwellers live. Within the forest, the land is fertile, giving rise to farming communities which grow banana, coconut, palm oil, plantain and cocoyam crops around the settlements along the water's edge. The creeks are the main network for communication between settlements and they also provide a varied stock of fresh and saltwater fish and shell food.

When I visited Okoroba village, I discovered how easy it is for the activities of the oil industry to upset the ecological balance of the region even without causing an oil spill. The village is positioned between a freshwater area (essential for drinking-water) and a saltwater area (which provides food such as the region's popular periwinkles). A few years ago, a four kilometre channel was dug right through this area in order to float in heavy drilling equipment to construct an oil well-head next to the village. Freshwater and saltwater were thus mixed together. When the job was done, they left Okoroba and other villages along the creek in a state of chaos.

(Adapted from 'Oil, oil everywhere' in *Focus on Africa*, January - March 1995)

- 1 Explain in your own words why Princess Irene thinks that the Nigerians have been foolish.
- 2 What difficulties did Shell encounter when it attempted to clean up the oil spillages?
- 3 How do people in the Niger Delta move between settlements?
- 4 Why, do you think, did the digging of the four kilometre channel leave the villagers in 'a state of chaos'?
- 5 Has the discovery of oil had a totally negative effect on the country? Give a reason for your answer.
- 6 Rewrite Princess Irene's words (lines 1-2) in reported/indirect speech.
- 7 Explain the use of brackets in 'Since that time ... wealth to the country' (paragraph 1).

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

- 8 The words in Column A appear in the passage. Link up each of these words with an appropriate meaning in Column B. Column B has some extra meanings. Write down only the number of the word and the letter of the correct meaning.

Column A		Column B	
8.1	previous	a	doing away with entirely
8.2	untold	b	devastating
8.3	contemplate	c	state of utter confusion
8.4	ravaged	d	environmental control
8.5	annihilating	e	former
8.6	ecology	f	to puzzle over
8.7	chaos	g	laid waste
		h	state of overwhelming anger
		i	relationship between organisms and their environment
		j	too great or numerous to count
		k	reflect, think
		l	famous

- 9 'Get those damned machines off the land immediately!' yelled the conservationist.
- 9.1 Describe the tone of these words. Justify your answer by quoting two words from the above statement.
- 9.2 Would you describe the register of the utterance quoted in 9 as formal or informal? Rewrite the utterance to change the order into a polite request.

Passage J**Women and Education**

As the old often quoted Ghanaian adage says: 'If you educate a man you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a nation.'

The education of women, and specifically the education of the girl-child, became one of the most important development topics leading up to the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference.

Throughout the world, studies have shown that the education of women is one of the greatest empowerment tools. It is the key to better health, family planning and the overall well-being of families.

But, on the African continent, the education of women and girls is falling further and further behind. There are 26 million African girls out of school, most of them in the rural areas, and estimates show that this figure will increase to 36 million by the year 2000.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

Africa is lagging behind other regions of the world in female enrolment ratios and in female literacy. Illiteracy rates in Africa are over 60% for women. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child established universal access to primary education, with special emphasis on girls, as a goal for children's development in the 1990s.

In the Southern African region, girls' access to primary education has almost reached parity with that of boys. But access to secondary and tertiary education is still unequal with girls falling behind their male counterparts. Girls are also disadvantaged in terms of the quality of education and training they receive. They are not as exposed to science and technology, and they are prepared more for careers in female-dominated professions. For adult women, the Southern African regional report for Dakar notes that the challenge is to provide education and training that is cost-effective, and that helps women to overcome past discrimination which has left them without essential skills.

Throughout the region, women's groups and other organisations have put forth various strategies to increase the education of women and girls. The Zimbabwe Association of University Women (ZAUW) has called on the government to ensure the empowerment of girls and women by affording them equal access to education and training. According to figures in Zimbabwe's National Report for Dakar and Beijing, in 1992 at primary school level, girls constituted 50,2% of the total primary school enrolment. At the lower secondary level (Forms 1-4), they account for 40% and at upper secondary level, they drop to 29%. In the technical and vocational colleges, females make up 34% of the student population and at university, 26%. This pattern is repeated in varying degrees throughout the region.

(Adapted from 'Educating a nation' in *Southern African Economist* 1995)

- 1 Explain in your own words what is meant by the adage, 'If you educate a man you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman you educate a nation.'
- 2 Explain how educating women can improve the overall well-being of families.
- 3 Why, do you think, does the education of girls lag behind that of boys?
- 4 What does the writer mean when he says that in the Southern African region girls' access to primary education has almost reached parity with that of boys' (paragraph 6)?
- 5 Mention is made of the 'essential skills' that women need to be taught (paragraph 6). What, do you think, are these essential skills?
- 6 Are the following statements true or false? Write down only the number of the question and your answer.
 - 6.1 Approximately 40% of women in African can read and write.
 - 6.2 Women are not encouraged to enter professions such as nursing and teaching.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

According to the Zimbabwe National Report for Dakar and Beijing

- 6.3 there are more boys than girls in primary school.
- 6.4 there are more boys than girls in the first two years of high school.
- 6.5 64% of all students at teacher training colleges are women.
- 6.6 84% of all university students are men.

- 7 The words in Column A appear in the passage. Link up each of these words with an appropriate meaning in Column B. Column B has some extra meanings. Write down only the number of the word and the letter of the correct meaning.

Column A

- 7.1 adage
- 7.2 universal
- 7.3 access
- 7.4 counterparts
- 7.5 strategies
- 7.6 varying

Column B

- a differing
- b similar people
- c philosophy
- d unusual
- e including or covering all
- f proverb, saying
- g brainwaves or ideas
- h freedom to make use of
- i careful plans or methods
- j friends

- 8 You are a young teacher at a secondary school in a rural area in South Africa. Your headmaster is concerned that many of the girls who leave primary school are not enrolling at high school. He has asked you to write a **short** letter (10-15 lines) in which you encourage parents to allow their daughters to further their education. The register of this letter is very important. You must be careful not to offend your audience, many of whom have had very little schooling. Simply start your letter 'Dear Parents'.

Passage K**Hong Kong's Solar Energy**

'Solar energy can be harnessed in Hong Kong to operate cooling systems to meet energy shortages and to ease costs. The commercial sector should take the lead in using solar energy for conservation purposes.' This was the view of a visiting environmentalist from Denmark, Mr John Nielsen, who attended a two-day symposium on energy and pollution organised by the Federation of Danish Industries recently.

Mr Nielsen said he was surprised to find that Hong Kong was not fully exploiting the sun's rays. He had come across a few examples of solar energy being used for heating water, but none of its being used for cooling systems. 'I think Hong Kong should further probe the potential use of solar power for cooling systems,' he said. 'Denmark is using

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

solar energy for hot-water supplies and heating. However, as the maximum demands for heating is during periods of minimal solar radiation, solar energy can only meet about one percent of Denmark's needs. But the situation is different for Hong Kong because cooling demands are at a maximum when the sun is shining at its strongest. Solar energy, therefore, has considerable potential to supply a substantial part of the energy needed for cooling systems.'

Mr Nielsen admitted that the cost of installation was higher than for a conventional system, but said that the operating cost was much lower. 'If Hong Kong looks a little towards the future, I think it will work,' he said. When he was asked about the climate and topography, he said equatorial regions were best suited to harnessing the sun's heat.

In Japan, some families are already using solar energy. Mr Kobza, a merchant banker, runs his home entirely off the sun's energy. 90 photovoltaic panels mounted on the roof at a 45° angle are expected to supply 90 to 100 percent of electricity needs, depending on weather conditions. Mr Kobza has eliminated any need for gas appliances. For a combination of aesthetic and practical purposes, the photovoltaic panels have been installed on the westerly side of the roof. They can't be seen by neighbours from the street and they allow easy access and maintenance.

He admits that the cost of the photovoltaic panels is expensive but he believes that the cost will come down. The total cost of Mr Kobza's equipment included a computer-controlled inverter. This feeds electricity into the home and shifts surplus electric power to the city utility when the amount exceeds the household's immediate needs. During the average ten hours of sunlight, when the family is away from home, the Kobza rooftop system generates a total of 32 kilowatts of power, much of it going into the local power network.

1. Select the correct answers from the available options. Write down only the number of the question and the letter of your choice.
 - 1.1 To harness solar energy means to
 - A explore its possibilities.
 - B use solar energy economically and with little waste.
 - C control solar energy and make use of it.
 - D use solar energy for conservation purposes.
 - 1.2 Choose a phrase to replace the underlined verb: Mr Nielsen was surprised to find that Hong Kong was not exploiting the sun's rays.
 - A exploring the potential of
 - B aware of the power of
 - C making full use of
 - D taking advantage of the low cost of

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

- 1.3 Choose a phrase to replace the underlined words: We should not ignore the possibilities of solar heating.
- A the potential use of
 - B the costly installation of
 - C the conservation aspects of
 - D the serious danger of
- 1.4 Complete the sentence by selecting one of the options that follow: In Mr Nielsen's opinion the sun could supply ... of the energy needed for cooling systems in Hong Kong.
- A nearly all
 - B a small but significant amount
 - C a large part
 - D up to one-fifth
- 1.5 The word 'conventional' in the phrase 'conventional system' (paragraph 3) means
- A 'usual'.
 - B 'cheaper'.
 - C 'experimental'.
 - D 'potential'.
- 1.6 With regard to solar energy for cooling systems, Mr Nielsen suggests that the commercial sector of Hong Kong should
- A spend money on experiments.
 - B set a good example by making use of such energy.
 - C look for ways of making use of solar energy.
 - D unite in their support of the use of solar energy.
- 1.7 The one difference between Mr Kobza's house and the others is that
- A he built it himself.
 - B his house is powered by solar energy.
 - C his house uses one hundred percent electrical power.
 - D his house faces west.
- 1.8 The function of the photovoltaic panels is to
- A convert sunlight into electricity.
 - B act as a storage system for heated water.
 - C concentrate the sun's rays and thus produce a high temperature.
 - D contribute unused electricity to the city.

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

- 1.9 What has Mr Kobza done about gas appliances?
- A He has not installed any yet.
 - B He has sold them.
 - C He does not need them at all.
 - D He has converted them to run on electricity.
- 1.10 Complete this statement by selecting the word that is most appropriate: Mr Kobza ... that the cost of the panels is high.
- A hopes
 - B regrets
 - C fears
 - D admits
- 2 Rewrite the following in a more informal register: 'The maximum demand for heating is during periods of minimal solar radiation.'
- 3 How do Denmark and Hong Kong's needs for solar energy differ? Which place is the most fortunate? Why?
- 4 Rewrite the following in direct speech, remembering to use the correct punctuation:
- Mr Nielsen said he was surprised to find that Hong Kong was not fully exploiting the sun's rays. He had come across only a few examples of solar energy being used for heating.
- 5 Where are the equatorial regions?
- 6 Why does the solar energy system, which Mr Kobza uses to run his home, depend on the weather?
- 7 What does the word 'aesthetic' (paragraph 4) mean?
- 8 Why were Mr Kobza's panels installed on the westerly side of the roof?
- 9 How does Mr Kobza actually help Hong Kong?
- 10 Write sentences to illustrate the meanings of each of the following words:
potential; eliminated; surplus
- 11 What is the difference between **practice** and **practise**? Use these words in sentences to clearly illustrate how each should be used.

Passage L**Malaria: It's Back**

Only a couple of decades ago, malaria seemed to be a disease that might become as rare as smallpox. The widespread use of the insecticide DDT had all but wiped out the mosquito that transmits the malaria parasite in the US, Europe and parts of Asia, and some headway was being made in Africa and South America. At the same time, chloroquine, a miracle drug developed during World War II, had emerged as a relatively inexpensive prophylactic and treatment that saved many lives. In the tropics, chloroquine became a common fixture on many tables, sometimes unwittingly. In one bold experiment during the 1950s that was supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the US Agency for International Development (AID), Prince Norodom Sihanouk's government in Cambodia had table salt laced with chloroquine and distributed as a preventative in the Pailin region, one of the most malaria-ridden parts of Indochina.

Then something happened. In the early 1960s, reports began to trickle in from Southeast Asia that chloroquine was no longer proving effective against malaria caused by *plasmodium falciparum*, the most deadly species of the parasite, because it had developed a resistance to the drug. Since then, elsewhere in the world, other strains of the parasite have shown resistance to each successive drug that has been developed to treat the disease. DDT, though still used in many places, especially for spraying indoors, is also losing its effectiveness; the insects that transmit malaria, some 70 species of the female *Anopheles* mosquito, are showing resistance to the drug.

The effort to eradicate malaria through drugs and chemicals now seems destined to go down in the annals of medicine as a textbook example of nature's ability to outwit science. Malaria is once again on the march - and has returned with a vengeance. This year, more than 300 million people will contract the disease, and between 1 and 2 million will die from it. The incidence, experts think, may actually be considerably higher, since most of those afflicted live in remote areas where many cases go unreported. Says Carl Kendall, a medical anthropologist with the United States Agency for International Development: 'We are experiencing a new epidemic, a tremendous resurgence of severe malaria that is affecting hundreds of millions of people.'

Africa's AIDS epidemic may ultimately prove more devastating, but there is no doubt that at present malaria is the continent's most deadly disease. While up to half of all hospital admissions are malaria-related, the vast majority of deaths occur in children under the age of 5. Pregnant women are also especially vulnerable.

So swiftly does the disease strike down its victims, that children who were playing in the morning may be brought to hospital unconscious in the afternoon, suffering from the most frequently fatal complication of the disease, cerebral malaria. Millions of other victims endure high fevers, shaking chills, renal failure and anaemia. Although malaria usually bestows immunity after repeated attacks, it continues to sap the energy and undermine the health of those who survive its miseries. The cost, beyond human

UNIT 1: READING SKILLS

suffering, amounts to billions of dollars a year in health care and lost productivity, usually in countries that can ill afford it.

Once reduced to a negligible incidence in Brazil, malaria has rebounded in the Amazon basin since the area was opened by mass colonisation in the early 1970s. With countless settlers coming into contact with the malaria-bearing mosquitoes, it has become the highest risk area in the Western hemisphere. In India, which was virtually free of the disease in the early 1960s as a result of the widespread use of DDT, malaria is again the biggest public health problem. The story is much the same throughout Southeast Asia. Cambodia is beset by a particularly deadly strain of the parasite that has proved resistant to all the standard drugs - most likely, say experts, a result of the earlier experiment in which table salt was laced with chloroquine.

Malaria has even reappeared in Western Europe, largely among travellers returning from malarious regions. 9000 people in Europe have been affected since 1992. The danger in places where malaria is not common is that doctors may not recognise its symptoms and instead diagnose influenza. 'If it's falciparum,' says Dr Ron Behrens, a specialist in tropical medicine in London, 'the patient could go home and three days later be dead'.

(Adapted from *Time*, February 1993)

Scan the passage on malaria and answer the following questions as quickly as you can.

- 1 Which type of mosquito transmits malaria?
- 2 What age group is most affected?
- 3 Which is the highest risk area in the Western hemisphere?
- 4 What does WHO stand for?
- 5 How many people in Europe were affected during 1992/93?
- 6 What does AID stand for?
- 7 Where is the Pailin region situated?
- 8 Which is the most deadly of all the mosquito types?
- 9 What was the first region to report that chloroquine was no longer proving effective against all types of malaria?

Skim-read paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 and jot down the main words. Then, answer the following questions.

- a When did the first reports start coming in that chloroquine was not effective?
- b Which two groups of people are worst affected by malaria?

Practise close reading of paragraphs 5, 6 and 7. Often the first sentence contains the main idea but this is not always so. In paragraphs 5, 6 and 7, jot down what you think the main idea of each paragraph is in no more than 10 words. Now use these short summaries and the words you jotted down earlier to represent paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 to write a short summary of the passage.

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

The purpose of this section is to provide you with examples of and practice in the kinds of writing you will be expected to produce and instruct as a teacher.

2.1 WRITTEN DISCOURSE IN A FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

As a teacher, you do not communicate with your students only. As a member of a formal education system, you also have to maintain contact with your head of department, principal and other education authorities. If you teach in a linguistically homogeneous school, you may find that you do not need English much in official school matters, but as soon as you have to write an official document, this will probably have to be done in English. The use of English in this instance serves to make the education system run more smoothly and to establish contact among teachers from various language backgrounds.

2.1.1 The covering letter

It is a feature of the system in which teachers work that most communication takes place by means of forms: forms are used to apply for leave, to plan lessons and to report on incidents or work done, to name but a few. When these forms have to be submitted to a higher authority, they all have one thing in common - they have to be accompanied by a covering letter.

This type of letter usually has the format of a formal letter or is written in a specific format to suit the official letterhead devised for the organization in which you work. If you send forms with a personal covering letter, the format is the same as for a formal letter. The content of the letter does not vary much, since it only directs the receiver's attention to the enclosed forms.

Daveyton Secondary School
P O Box 22
1507 Daveyton
6 April 1994

The Circuit Inspector
P O Box 73
0001 Pretoria

Dear Sir

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE: REFERENCE NUMBER 2347/F4

Please find enclosed: Leave application form A7
 Examination timetable
 Letter granting entrance to the examination

I hope you will find everything to your satisfaction.

Yours faithfully
M Mahlangu
M MAHLANGU (MRS) 2347/F4

If you use departmental letterheads, you will have to provide the information demanded by such a format. Different organizations design different letterheads. The following is just one example:

Verw. No./Ref. No.

KANTOOR VAN DIE/OFFICE OF THE

Navrae/Enquiries: (Name of your school or department.)

(Your own reference number.) _____

(Date) _____ 20

Tel. No. (Your telephone number.)

Die/The _____ (The name and

address of the person

you are writing to.)

Dear Sir

As you can see, this letterhead basically follows the format of the formal letter, except that the reference number is in the top right-hand corner, probably because this makes filing procedures easier.

2.1.2 The memorandum

Communication within an organization is often restricted to memoranda or a memorandum, popularly known as a 'memo'. Once again, each organization has its own format and full addresses usually do not have to be provided, since these memoranda are sent by internal post (post that is sent within the organisation, without stamps).

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

Look at the following:

REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA * REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEMORANDUM

Tel. No..... Bylyn/Extension 19...

Van
From
.....
.....

My verwysing:
My reference:
No

[
Aan
To
.....
.....
]

U verwysing
Your reference:
No

Gedateer
Dated

INSAKE
RE

As you can see, only limited space is provided for writing about the matter you want to discuss. For this reason one usually lists matters in a memorandum. If you need more space it is customary to add a blank page.

If the memorandum form contains few directions, you must make sure that you include all the relevant information. The memorandum form currently in use at Vista University looks like this:

MEMO

VISTA
UNIVERSITY



UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

In this case you will have to add the necessary information, that is:

TO whom the memo is to be sent, and in what capacity.

FROM whom and in what capacity.

A SUBJECT LINE to indicate the purpose of the memorandum.

The MATTER ITSELF in point form.

MEMO

VISTA
UNIVERSITY



15 November 1991

TO: THE CHAIRMAN, MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
FROM: PROF. C VAN DER WALT

APPLICATION FOR STUDY LEAVE AND TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE

- 1 The above matter has been discussed with Mrs E M Murray and Dr B Mokhaba who have, in principle, approved my application.
- 2 As you can see from the enclosed application form, I will be away in the time when other lecturers will conduct vacation courses for Distance Education students.
- 3 I have arranged with the head of department and with a colleague, Ms Roos, to teach my courses. In return I will handle the administration of her last two assignments.
- 4 I hope you find this in order.

Thank you

C VAN DER WALT

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

Both these types of memoranda must be signed at the end. It is not necessary to add a closing remark such as 'Yours sincerely' or 'Yours faithfully', but if you know the person well you could say 'Thank you' or 'Best wishes' before signing your name.

2.2 ADVANCED WRITING SKILLS

Most teachers continue their studies and may need to develop more advanced writing skills. This paragraph is concerned with **writing for study purposes**, but it will also help those teachers who find that they have to write motivations or reports in their professional career.

As stated in the introduction to this manual, you cannot study communication skills in isolation: listening and speaking can happen simultaneously, and while you are writing, you are also reading what you write. You need to refer to Unit 1 on reading and the writing of summaries.

2.2.1 Reading for writing

In the previous section, you learned about different types of reading: reading for general comprehension, reading for vocabulary meaning, reading for detail and studying. The next step in studying or learning information is learning how to read and how to take notes in order to start writing assignments or examination questions. This skill we call **reading for writing**. Read the short passage below and follow the directions. The sentence numbers will help you answer the questions below.

READING PASSAGE

1. Multicultural and antiracist education has an important place in the future education system in South Africa.
2. During the period of political and economic transformation, the education system will be profoundly affected by changes decided upon.
3. There is no doubt that this will lead to considerable confusion, particularly about roles and relationships.
4. Previous teachings will have to be unlearned.
5. We have, however, an opportunity to bring about fundamental change by working with the youngest children.
6. It is with this in mind that multicultural education at the preschool level, in our pre-primary schools, educare centres, home-based programmes and parent education programmes is essential in moving towards a society that is free of prejudice.
7. The preschool setting, in whatever form, can provide an environment for learning about both the similarity and the diversity of the people of South Africa.

[E. Atmore, 1994. 'Multicultural education, antiracist practice and early childhood education in the South African context.' in *The Black Child in Crisis*, Johann le Roux, (ed). pp. 147-169.]

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

STUDY QUESTIONS

Now answer these questions to help you connect your ideas with the ideas in the passage. You can work with a partner or in groups to find these answers.

- 1 List the **unfamiliar words** from the passage. Work with a partner or with your dictionary to find the meanings of these words. Then make sure the definition you use is appropriate to the context of the passage. [Remember what you have learned about guessing unknown words from the **Reading Skills** unit.]
- 2 In sentence 3, Atmore talks about changing 'roles and relationships'. Can you think of examples of roles and relationships that will be confused? List at least **two** examples and explain the confusion that arises as a result of these changes.
- 3 In sentence 4, the author says that some teachings will have to be 'unlearned'. This is an unusual notion in a passage about education. Usually we talk about 'learning', not 'unlearning' in education. Since this is a strange use of a word, we know that it is important to the meaning of the passage. Can you give some examples of ideas that will have to be 'unlearned?'
- 4 In sentence 5, who are the 'we' to whom Atmore refers? List all the different people who are part of the **we**. Are you part of that **we**? Why or why not? Write your answer in a short paragraph of about 5-10 lines.
- 5 What would be a good title for this passage? Try to use fewer than 15 words. Write your title here:

Compare and discuss your title with a partner. You may both have different titles, but the main ideas need to be similar. Make sure that you have included the main point. The title is almost like a short summary of the passage.

- 6 Usually the author of a text in English will give the reader the main idea very directly. **Underline** the 'main idea' sentence of the passage by E. Atmore.
- 7 The author then usually uses sub-topics to explain what he wants to say about that main idea. The sub-topics are the smaller parts of the main idea in the passage.

What are the sub-topics in this passage? List them below. Number these sub-topics in the passage.

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

- 8 Do you agree or disagree with the ideas of this author? Why or why not? What would you do about this situation? Write your answer in a short paragraph of about 5-10 lines.

Then, in a group or with a partner, discuss your opinions about this text and discuss the different points of view.

- 9 Would your opinion be different if you were the principal of a primary school? What would your opinion be if you were a parent of small children? What would the opinion be of people working and teaching in some of the different organizations mentioned in sentence 6? Explain why the opinions of these people may differ.

SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

- 10 Think of a question you would ask someone to test whether he or she understands the passage. Your question can be about any part of the passage, not only the main idea. Write your question below:

Now, share your question with the others in your group. Remember that each person will probably have a different question. Can you think of any changes you need to make to your question?

Now, think of any other questions you could ask based on the passage. The more questions you can create in your group, the more you can explore this passage. Make a list of all your questions. If possible, use the lecture room blackboard so that everyone can participate.

The group should choose four or five of the best questions from the group. See if there is a logical order inherent in your questions. Indicate which questions need to be answered first, then second and so forth. Now discuss the answers. Each answer will be specific to that question, but will also relate to the whole passage.

In this reading for writing exercise, you have gone through the steps of breaking down a passage: understanding the vocabulary, identifying important phrases, bringing your own examples to connect with the text, giving your opinion about the text, and then practising questions and answers. These are all very important steps in the process of making your studying process active.

In summary, again, these are the steps to follow (see the Study Questions in the exercise above):

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

- 1 List unfamiliar words and define them
- 2 Pick out important phrases and terminology and give examples from your own experiences.
- 3 Look for and explain unusual phrasing.
- 4 Put yourself 'into' the passage. How does the passage relate to you and to your life experiences?
- 5 Look at the passage from different points of view.
- 6 Summarize the passage by giving it a new title.
- 7 Identify the main idea(s) in the passage.
- 8 Find the sub-topics in the text.
- 9 Evaluate the passage by giving your opinion. Do you agree or disagree with the author? **Why** do you agree/disagree with him?
- 10 Ask yourself practice questions from the text and answer them.

2.2.2 The organization of written academic discourse

This section will discuss the structure of written academic discourse. You need to understand how an academic essay is structured so that you can write your answers in an academic style.

When you are writing for academic purposes in English, there are certain requirements that you must meet. The reader will expect certain things from you as the writer.

It is important to keep these expectations in mind when you organize an academic essay in English. Each part of the essay needs to be written in a way that makes it easy for the reader to understand the ideas that you are trying to communicate.

2.2.2.1 The introduction

The **introduction** is a very important part of the academic essay. In your introduction you bring the reader to your message, and your ideas to the reader. It is your task to make the introduction interesting and to capture the reader's attention so that he/she will continue reading your essay.

In many cases, you will be writing your essay in response to a question in an assignment or in the examination. The introduction is very important then, because it provides strong evidence that you know the answer to the question. In this case, your introduction refers to the keywords in the question.

There are several different ways of introducing an essay, but the most common strategies are the following:

- a. **Topic and organization.** Introduce the topic you will discuss and explain the organization you will follow in the essay.

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

- b. **General to specific topic.** Start with the general topic, and then go to the specific topic, and write about the specific focussed topic that you will discuss in the essay.
- c. **Anecdote or example.** Start with an example or anecdote to catch the reader's attention and then talk about the topic of your essay.
- d. **'Echoing' the assignment or examination question.** Repeat the keywords of the question: for example, 'Discuss the two main causes of adult illiteracy.' Your answer could begin: 'The two main causes of adult illiteracy are ... and ...'
(This is a strategy more common for very short introductions, or for an essay in an examination situation.)

There are many different strategies to use for introductions. Sometimes you will choose one strategy and at other times you will choose another. The main thing to remember is that an introduction in academic writing tells the reader what your essay will be about (topic) and how you are going to present your information (organization).

Every introduction in academic writing contains a main idea, often formulated in one sentence. This is sometimes called the 'thesis statement' or the 'focus statement' of your essay. (Remember the ideas in the earlier sections of this study manual about skimming and reading for content. One of the reasons we always read the first part of a passage when we are skimming is because the introduction almost always contains the main idea written very briefly or very explicitly in the passage.) This statement is the idea which controls the rest of your essay. Often the thesis statement is the last sentence of the introduction.

2.2.2.2 The body

If you think about your essay as a sandwich, the 'bread' that holds it together consists of the introduction and the conclusion. However, the 'meat' or 'filling' of the essay (the most important, tasty, most nutritious part) is the **body**.

While the introduction is necessary for academic writing, the most important part of the essay is the **body**. This is the section where you present all your ideas and facts about the topic, with explanations and examples supporting those ideas.

The **body** contains the message that you want to convey to the readers. This will be the answer to the assignment or examination question, where you state the relevant facts so that you receive all the marks possible.

The building blocks of the **body** of your essay are the paragraphs. As you write the **body** paragraphs of the essay, keep going back to the thesis statement or the focus statement that you wrote in your introduction. Each of the main ideas of the **body** must also relate and connect to that controlling statement. In addition, each paragraph in the **body** of the

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

essay needs to be organized in the best way to communicate your ideas.

Paragraph organization: There are three levels of ideas in a paragraph of academic writing.

- a. **First level: General assertion.** This is where you write the main idea of that paragraph. This is sometimes called the 'topic sentence' because it states the controlling idea of that paragraph in the same way that the introduction 'controls' the whole essay.
- b. **Second level: Support for general assertion.** The next step is for you to provide supporting evidence for the general statement to persuade the reader to believe you. This support can take the form of facts, statistics, dates, tables, graphs or charts, quotations from experts and authorities, examples and anecdotes, etc. There are many types of support. When you are writing an academic paper, the best strategy is to use different types of support throughout the essay. This will keep the reader interested and, at the same time, provide substantive evidence.
- c. **Third level: Reasons why step b supports step a.** In many cases, the writer will need to explain why the support you chose in step b above actually supports the assertions made in step a. For example, if you use case studies as examples to support a theory of education, you will need to conclude the case study by presenting reasons why this specific example reinforces the theory.

In a single paragraph with one main idea, you may actually present several different types of support (step b) and connecting reasons (step c) for a single general assertion (step a).

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

Activity

Mark the levels of organization in the paragraph below. Mark the general assertion(s) a and underline these sentences. Then find the support for these assertions and mark these with b with an arrow drawn back to the general assertion. The most difficult part is to find the reasons why the evidence you have marked b supports a particular assertion. Look for these reasons (these could be a sentence, or perhaps only part of a sentence) and mark them with c, with an arrow connecting the reasons back to the support and to the general assertion.

The value of studying model paragraphs lies not in labelling what shape they have. Rather, we can use models to show students how writers link sentences one by one, expressing with each new sentence a coordinate or subordinate relationship to those already written. Models also provide a starting point for imitation, for letting students practise different ways of relating sentences in their own writing. By analysing professional models together with praiseworthy student writing, students discover useful strategies for rewriting paragraphs by tightening or clarifying intersentence relationships.

(Adapted from E Lindemann, 1987. *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*. (Second Ed.) New York: Oxford University Press p156.)

2.2.2.3 The conclusion

The last section of any academic essay is the **conclusion**. Everything has a beginning, and thus it also must have an ending. For your essay, the conclusion is the section where you again 'take control' of the reader.

It is also important to remember that we often 'save the best for last' by putting the strongest ideas and the best types of evidence and support toward the end of the essay in academic writing. This may be because we have poor memories and will remember the last parts better! Nevertheless, it is important to finish the body of your essay with strong points.

In many ways, the conclusion is a mirror image of the introduction to your essay. You can start the conclusion by summarizing the specific topic you have written about and then elaborate on the more general aspects of your topic, in a reversal of the introduction (which proceeds from the general to the specific). In this way, the conclusion is balanced against the introduction of your essay.

Stated in another way, remember that the conclusion is the bottom slice of bread of your sandwich, and you need both pieces of bread (the introduction and the conclusion) to hold your ideas together. There are several strategies to consider when you write the conclusion:

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

- a. **Summary of the main ideas of the essay:** Most conclusions include some sort of summary to remind the reader of the important ideas in the essay. This is especially necessary and helpful if the essay is very long and/or very complicated. The concluding summary can refocus the reader's attention on the main ideas of the essay.
- b. **Conclusions or evaluations:** Another important strategy is to give an evaluation of the information in the body of the essay. The conclusion is an acceptable place for writers to give their personal opinions regarding the ideas forwarded in the body.
- c. **Recommendations:** Giving recommendations and/or suggestions to the readers is another common strategy used in the conclusion. For example, you could suggest that teachers look at their students differently, based on your ideas in the essay. Often the writer will motivate the reader to take a specific action, for example to vote for a change in school policy, to join the PTA, etc.
- d. **Further research:** It is often the case that continued research needs to be done on a topic. While the research document/essay may be finished, there are still ideas that other writers could explore on the same topic. In this case, it is very common for writers to give suggestions about further research that needs to be done. In this way, the writer gives additional ideas to the readers.

These are just a few of the strategies that you, as a writer, could use in a conclusion. Other strategies would be similar to those used for the introduction, for example, telling a story, or using a quotation at the end. No matter which type of strategy you use, make sure that the reader knows that you have indeed ended the essay. Remember that the conclusion is the last message that you are giving the reader; therefore you want your ideas to be remembered.

2.3 THE WRITING PROCESS

The first step when writing is to determine your needs. What do you need to know to in order to complete this piece of writing? The answer to this question involves two elements: **audience and purpose.**

Audience: For whom are you writing?

Think about the likely readers of your essay, whether these are a lecturer, a fellow student, your school students, or your colleagues, etc. The more you know about the readers, the more you can write exactly for them, trying to meet their needs, answering their questions, and giving them information that will interest them.

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

Purpose: Why are you writing?

Think about the purposes and reasons you have for writing this essay. These reasons may be such things as trying to get good marks, passing the course, persuading someone to agree with you, proving that you understand a theory, applying theoretical knowledge to a practical situation, trying out an experiment, etc. There are as many purposes as there are assignments, but the clearer you are about your purpose, the better your writing will be.

Learning how to write for academic purposes involves a three-stage process: planning, drafting and revising. Each stage in the process requires various techniques to help you learn how to write more effectively. At the same time, these stages do not necessarily follow each other in perfect order, 1, 2, 3. In fact, in most cases, there is a cycle involving planning and drafting, more planning and then more drafting.

At the end of the whole process, you have a completed essay: the end product.

Let us discuss and work through each of the stages in more detail.

2.3.1 Planning

Planning includes all the strategies and techniques you use to gather information before you begin writing the essay, assignment, or examination question. There are many ways to gather information and four techniques are discussed below: activating prior knowledge, making notes, using outside sources of information, and doing primary research.

2.3.1.1 Activating prior knowledge

Activating prior knowledge entails trying to see what ideas you already have about a topic. With many of the topics you are writing about, you will already have some information about that topic from previous course work, other classes, your life, and your experiences.

For example, in the field of education, most of us have background knowledge and information because we have been students at some time in our lives. Use your background knowledge of when you were a pupil in school to help answer a question about how students will react to some aspect of education.

To activate your prior knowledge, it is important to arrange your ideas on the paper in front of you. Therefore, it helps to jot down your ideas.

The most important strategy is to start writing. You will discover ideas that are in your mind, even before you start thinking about the topic seriously.

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

2.3.1.2 Making notes from texts and outside sources

Making notes from your texts is a very important step in the writing process. Read your study manual and take notes. (Follow the procedures mentioned in 2.2.1 above: Reading for writing.) You will also need to make notes from your reading of outside sources.

A very important aspect of note-taking is using keywords. Keywords are the essential words in the question or assignment that guide you in your answer. As a key opens a locked door so, the keyword 'opens' the question. Write down the facts and examples associated with the keywords from the reading material. Make sure you make a note of the author and the page number of the reference in your notes so that you can use it in your essay.

2.3.1.3 Investigating outside sources of information

Another way of gathering information in this pre-writing stage is to **investigate outside sources of information**. These sources would include reading the recommended books, or parts of them and doing library research on your topic, focussing on aspects relevant to your keywords.

However, outside sources also include people. Interview authorities on the topic, ask questions of experts and other people. For example, you could interview the principal of your school, the head of the Management Committee, or a parent in the PTA if your topic deals with school administration.

2.3.1.4 Primary research

Primary research is a very specific technique for gathering information. This is where you investigate a topic by conducting your own experiments. Such experiments could include interviewing 20 school teachers on a topic, using questionnaires for all the students in your class, etc. For example, experienced writers will undertake a primary research experiment before deciding on a topic for an essay. They need to find out some basic information before they plan the essay.

In all these planning activities, the primary emphasis is on transferring your ideas onto paper and gathering together all the ideas you can on the given topic. Remember that at this stage, the emphasis is on the **ideas**, rather than on the correct grammar or spelling.

2.3.2 Drafting

The next step is to begin the actual writing of the essay. At this stage, you will work at organizing your academic essay, and on how to fulfil the expectations of the writing task.

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

2.3.2.1 Organization

During this part of the writing process, you need to arrange your ideas in the best possible manner, to suit the question and the assignment.

There are many ways in which to draft an essay. Many students use strategies such as mapping, or listing ideas.

It is always difficult to start, but it helps if you start your introduction by repeating the words of the question or topic, for example: 'In this essay/assignment I will describe/discuss ...' You may want to use sub-headings to help your reader make sense of the steps in your argument. In this case you need to look at technical aspects of writing such as the numbering.

Study the following outline.

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

OUTLINING EXAMPLE

Introduction

- 1. **First main point**
- 1.1 Subpoint of 1
- 1.1.1 Sub-subpoint of 1.1
- 1.1.2 Sub-subpoint of 1.1

- 1.2 Subpoint of 1
- 1.2.1 Subpoint of 2
- 1.2.2 Sub-subpoint of 1.2

- 2. **Second main point**
- 2.1 Subpoint of 2
- 2.1 Sub-subpoint of 2.1
- 2.1.2 Sub-subpoint of 2.1
- 2.1.2.1 Sub-sub-subpoint of 2.1.2
- 2.1.2.2 Sub-sub-subpoint of 2.1.2

- 2.2 Subpoint of 2
- 2.2.1
- 2.2.1.1
- 2.2.1.2
- 2.2.2

- 3. **Third main point**
- 3.1
- 3.2
- 3.2.1
- 3.2.2

Conclusion

This type of outline uses the decimal system of numbering. Each of the main ideas of the essay are the **main points**, while the sub-points are subsections of the idea expressed in each main point. The sub-subpoints are further divisions of this idea. The sub-subpoints are smaller divisions of the subpoints, and the sub-sub-subpoints are even smaller divisions of the sub-subpoints.

Of course, each of your ideas may not have sub-sub-subpoints, especially at the beginning of an essay. But if you are writing longer essays, reports, or research documents, you may have to use all of these divisions. The most important strategy is to divide your topic into main points and subpoints so that you can arrange your information appropriately.

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

You also need to remember that everyone may use outlines differently at different times. When you are writing an essay for an assignment, the example above will be suitable. However, when you are writing an essay-type examination question, you may not have the time or the paper space to write such an elaborate outline. In that case, the outline can be modified to accommodate a short list of ideas. It is also important to bear in mind that an essay on a literary text does not contain numbering.

2.3.3 Revising

This is the last stage in the writing process, but perhaps also the most important. Revising includes all the techniques and strategies you use to check yourself and to check your writing. Another word for revising is 'reviewing'. 'View' means 'to look at' and the 're-' comes from Latin, meaning 'again'. So, 'to review' means 'to look at something again'. In this case, to review means to look at your essay again with new eyes, to read your own work as if you were reading it for the first time.

There are several important aspects to remember about revision.

2.3.3.1 Give yourself enough time

One of the most important elements of rewriting is for the writer to allow himself or herself time. In order to look at your writing in a new way, you must give yourself a break after the initial writing stage.

For example, if you finish an assignment on a Friday, do not try to make the corrections and rewrite the essay until after the weekend – it would be even better to wait a week. Of course, this means that you have to plan your writing timetable so that there are enough days to allow you to take a few days off.

In this way, your reading of the essay will be fresh and you will intercept a lot of your mistakes. Sometimes writers leave out parts of sentences or sections of a paragraph when they are copying the final essay. This is a common mistake, especially when they are rushing to meet a deadline.

2.3.3.2 Write multiple drafts

Giving yourself enough time is only the first element of revision. Another important aspect is to allow ample time for rewriting the essay several times, that is for writing multiple drafts. A draft is your **working** copy of the essay. Each time you write another draft, you are making changes and improving the quality of the essay.

Each essay should be written in draft form at least twice: once to get the ideas and all the supporting data down on paper, and at least once more to make corrections and to edit and redraft. Most writers agree that the more they rewrite an essay, the better it gets.

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

There are four levels involved in the drafting process: the essay as a whole, the paragraphs, the sentences, and the words:

- a. **Essay level:** At this level, you read the essay for the general topic and ideas. Check the assignment question and make sure all the keywords are addressed in your essay. Also, check the overall organization of the essay, such as the introduction, body and conclusion.
- b. **Paragraph level:** At this level, the corrections focus on the organization of each paragraph. Make sure that the ideas in each paragraph are supported by good evidence and that the ideas are well organized.
- c. **Sentence level:** The corrections that you make at this level have to do with grammatical accuracy and punctuation. Read your essay aloud to make sure that the language is correct.
- d. **Word level:** At the word level, the corrections deal with correct vocabulary (check your keywords again) and spelling.

When you are revising your essay, start at the first level and work your way through the essay, making changes, adding, omitting, trying to improve your writing each time.

2.3.3.3 Work with your peers

Peer work entails working with a partner or with a group to discuss ideas and help one another write better. Sometimes peer work will be organized by the lecturer of the class, but not always. Often students can create peer work opportunities on their own initiative.

Students writing the same assignment can work together, gathering information, discussing the keywords and ideas in the question, etc. The most effective use of group work may be in this rewriting stage.

Give your completed essay to a friend, a family member or another student to read. Ask them to give suggestions about the ideas forwarded in your essay and the support for those ideas. If your peers have a problem understanding your writing, probably your lecturers will, too!

(Note that peer work does not mean that all the students work together and copy one another's assignments. This is a very serious academic offence and may lead to failure for the students. This is called **plagiarism** and will be discussed at the end of the **writing skills** section. Stay tuned ...)

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

The three aspects mentioned above (enough time, multiple drafts and peer work) are only some of the ways that writers use to revise their essays. Other writers prefer to ask themselves questions to check their work. One example of such a checklist is given below. You can use this type of question list to check your writing before you hand in an assignment or an essay.

REVISION CHECKLIST

Use the following checklist of questions to help you edit and correct your assignments.

CONTENT

Did I answer the assignment question?

Did I answer all parts of the question?

Are my ideas supported?

Did I explain my ideas fully?

Did I give reasons why my ideas answer the question?

Did I use examples to support my ideas?

Did I explain why those examples are good to use?

Did I prove I know the information discussed in the assignment?

Did I define any necessary terms, to show my understanding?

Did I illustrate my knowledge of theory with appropriate examples?

Do I need to add anything to support my answer?

Do I need to delete anything to make my answer better?

ORGANIZATION

Did I follow the organization asked for in the assignment question?

Introduction:

Is my introduction structured?

Did I address the question in the introduction?

Do I have a directly stated focus to my answer?

Is the focus in the introduction?

Body:

How have I structured my answer?

Is this structure logical?

Does this structure support the question?

Did I use good headings to help organize my answer?

Did I use transitions (sign-post words) to help guide the reader?

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS**Conclusion:**

Do I have a conclusion?

Did I summarize my main points?

Did I give recommendations for further research?

How did I end the essay?

What is the impression I have left with my reader?

VOCABULARY

Did I use proper vocabulary from the course to prove I understand the material?

Did I use appropriate terminology in answering this question?

Did I use a formal, academic register, appropriate to an academic essay?

LANGUAGE USE

Is my writing grammatically correct?

Have I checked my spelling?

MECHANICS

Bibliography: [If required]

Did I use the proper bibliography format [follow the instructions in the tutorial letter]?

Did I refer to the references in my paper?

Did I use proper citation format when referring to the sources?

Readability:

Is my handwriting legible?

Have I used appropriate headings?

Do I have easily recognizable paragraph breaks?

These last few questions will give you an overall evaluation of your writing:

What else do I need to do to pass this assignment?

Have I proved to the lecturers that I know the material?

What more can I do to make this assignment fulfil their expectations?

What can I do to push this essay beyond the expected, beyond the merely satisfactory?

How did I or can I prove that I understand this information?

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

2.4 PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a very serious offence at university level. In some cases, students who plagiarize will automatically fail the assignment, and sometimes they even fail the course because of plagiarism.

2.4.1 What is plagiarism?

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-----|
| - | Copying another person's words? | Yes |
| - | Copying another person's ideas? | Yes |
| - | Not citing sources of information? | Yes |
| - | Copying someone else's essay? | Yes |

In order to stop plagiarizing, students need to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

We referred to plagiarism in section 2.3.3 on Revising. Plagiarism is using someone else's ideas, words, sentences, or phrases, and presenting them as your own. Plagiarism could entail copying another student's essay or answer to an assignment, copying material from a study manual or a textbook without references, or using someone else's ideas and pretending that they are yours.

2.4.2 How do I avoid plagiarism?

In order to avoid plagiarism, you need to include proper citations and references for the following in your essay:

- Quotations
- Paraphrases
- Tables, graphs, etc.

This means that you must be sure that you know exactly how the lecturers in your course and in your department want you to write the references for your essays/assignments

2.4.2.1 Learn how to use quotations properly

For citations, include the name of the author, the date of the publication and the page reference.

Punctuation: Use inverted commas when you copy the words of others exactly: ' ... '

Look at the following two examples:

According to Goodwin (1991:8), 'plagiarism is a big deal in the United States'.

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

Plagiarism has become 'a big deal in the United States' (Goodwin 1991:8).

2.4.2.2 Learn how to paraphrase

When you express an author's ideas in your own words, you should still include the author's name and the date of the publication.

Example:

Goodwin (1991) has done considerable research into the issue of plagiarism in the ESL context.

2.4.2.3 Learn how to synthesise

Synthesis entails the integration of ideas. For citations, include the author's name and the date of the publication.

Example:

Many researchers feel that plagiarism is a very important issue in ESL composition (Connor 1992, Goodwin 1991).

2.4.2.4 Learn how to make a correct list of sources

This is called a bibliography or a reference list. Follow the model prescribed in the tutorial letters provided for each course.

Always write down important information when you take notes from your study manuals and textbooks (page numbers, etc.) so that you have all the information when you need to compile your list of references.

Remember, if you are not sure about plagiarism, or if you have any doubts about whether you have plagiarized someone's work, ask your lecturer ... but do this before it is time to hand in the essay or paper!

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

The following are examples of the kinds of essays you will be expected to write in the final exam. You might like to plot the kind of essay you would write. Try this activity in groups and put your planning on a transparency. You can then share your thoughts with the rest of the class.

- 1 Abortion on demand should be legal. Do you agree with this statement?
- 2 Should English be used as the medium of instruction in all secondary schools in South Africa?

UNIT 2: WRITING SKILLS

- 3 The government should spend more money on developing pre-primary schools than on funding universities. Do you agree with this statement?
- 4 Tertiary education is a right and not a privilege. Do you agree with this statement?
- 5 Should all universities in South Africa have their own entrance examinations?
- 6 Should corporal punishment be abolished in schools?
- 7 English should gradually be introduced as medium of instruction from Grade 6. Prior to this level, all teaching should be done in the mother tongue. Do you agree with this statement?
- 8 Should sex education at school be compulsory?
- 9 The death penalty for serious crimes should be reinstated. Do you agree?
- 10 Should physically handicapped children attend ordinary schools?

UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS

UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS

The purpose of this unit is to

- give you the tools to help yourself when you do not know how to pronounce an English word.
- explain the rhythm of English speech.
- give you examples of, and practice in, the use of classroom English.

3.1 The pronunciation of English words

The purpose of this unit is not to teach you English pronunciation (we hope that you have mastered the basics by now!) but to show you how to make sure of the pronunciation of a word by looking it up in a dictionary. Study the following example:

(From *CIDE*): category

- **Ignore** the strange symbols after the word *category*; these are international phonetic symbols which interest only language scholars.
- **Ignore** the signs for the British pound (£) and the American dollar sign (\$), they refer to the different pronunciations in England and the USA.
- However, you do need to look at the **high stress marks** (') and the **dots** (.) in between sections of the word:

'kæ . ə . gri

UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS

High stress mark	Dots
<p>These signs tell you where the main emphasis of the word is and which parts of the word you need not pronounce. English has many silent sounds: think of <i>knee</i> and <i>knife</i>, and of <i>plough</i> and <i>although</i>!</p> <p>If you look at the word <i>category</i> again, you will see that there is a high stress mark right at the beginning of the word: 'kæ . ə . gri', which means that the main emphasis falls on the first part of the word. In English we say <i>category</i>, and not <i>category</i>. Look at the pronunciation of the word <i>categorical</i>: 'kæ . ə . 'gɒr . l . kəl'</p> <p>Can you see where the stress mark is? Do you see that it has moved? Now we say <i>categorical</i>.</p>	<p>1. The main entry in bold is separated by dots: ca . te . go . ry</p> <p>Here, the dots tell you where you can break off a word at the end of a sentence. You can write: ca = tegory; or cate = gory; or catego = ry.</p> <p>2. If you look at the dots in between parts of the pronunciation word 'kæt . ə . gri', can you see which part of the word is silent? Can you see that there are no dots between <i>-go-</i> and <i>-ry</i>? This means that in English we say 'category' and not '<i>category</i>': the 'o' sound is not pronounced.</p>

Exercise A

Try to pronounce the following words by paying attention to the high stress marks and the dots. Rewrite the words by underlining that part where the main stress is and drawing a line through silent sounds, for example:

par . lia . ment /'pa: . il . mənt/ The word is pronounced: **parliament**

opponent
irrelevant
patronize
illegitimate
democracy

UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS

3.2 The rhythm of English

When you know where to put the stress in a word, you already know quite a lot about the rhythm of English sentences, because a word is generally pronounced the same way, whatever its position in the sentence. Unlike some African languages and Chinese and Japanese, the tone of a word in English does not carry much meaning, and the length of a word does not depend on its position in the sentence. However, you can let your voice rise and fall to indicate to your listeners whether you are asking a question, giving an order or making a statement.

- When you ask a **question** or when you are unsure, your voice generally rises at the end of the sentence:

How do you do? I don't know!

- When you give an **order**, you start off high and end low:

Keep quiet!

- When you make a **statement**, your voice generally drops at the end of the sentence:

The Congo basin is flooded by the Congo river during the rainy season.

Generally speaking, your voice drops at the end of a sentence to signal to other people that you have finished talking.

Warning: Teachers may get into the habit of lowering their voices at the end of every sentence. This can sound very authoritarian. Make sure that your voice rises when you ask a question, otherwise your students may be too intimidated to answer!

3.3 Communication in the classroom

Outcomes-based education emphasizes the learner and his/her needs. This approach is called 'learner-centred', which means that the learner, and not the teacher, is at the centre of the teaching-learning process. The teacher is a **manager**: s/he does not stand in front of the class talking all the time, s/he **organizes** activities and **manages** interaction by dividing students into pairs or groups. S/he moves along the groups or pairs, encouraging learners and noting weaknesses for future reference.

In a learner-centred classroom, language is used for the following purposes:

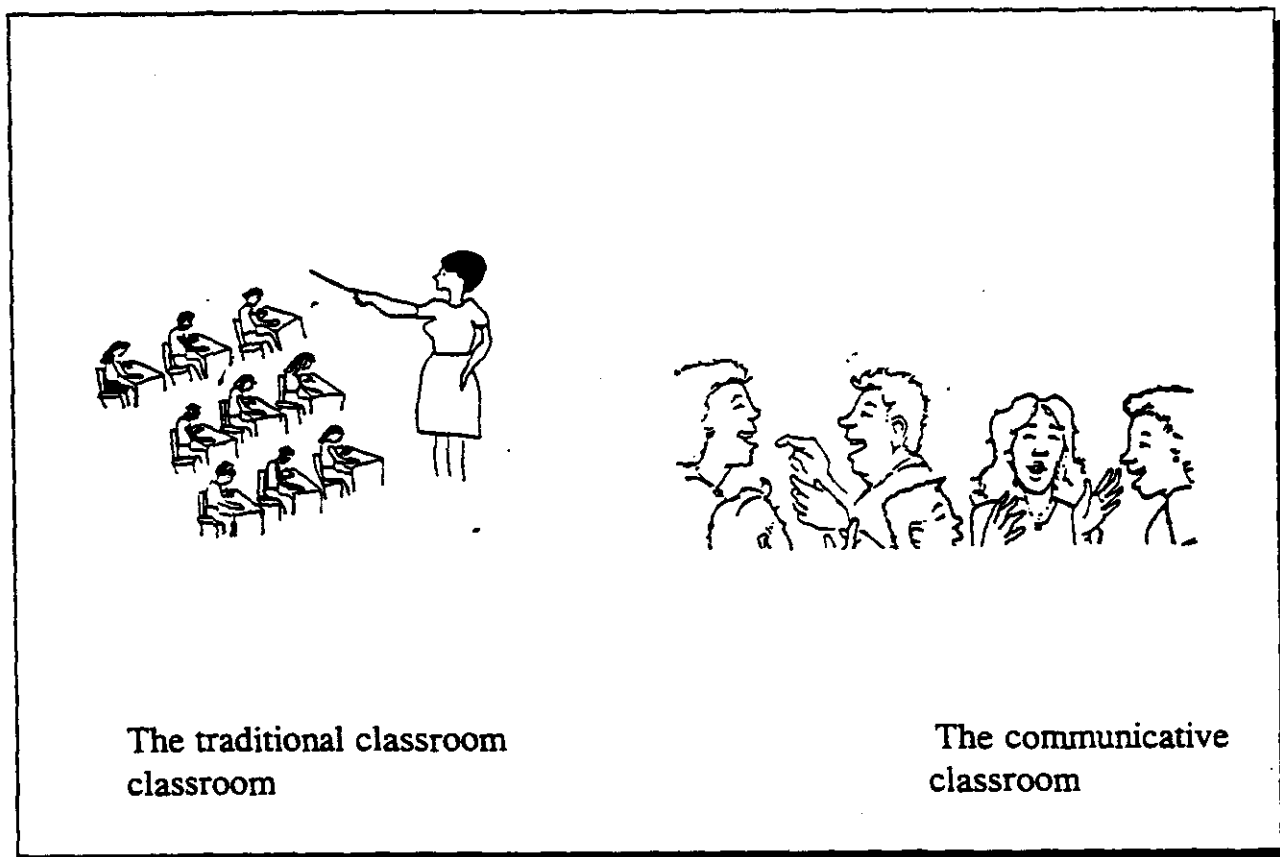
UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS

- To create a warm and accepting atmosphere in the classroom
- To communicate instructions clearly, unambiguously and adequately
- To get learners to work, to co-operate

Let us look at these three points more closely.

3.3.1 Creating a warm and accepting atmosphere in class

A learner-centred approach is difficult for both the teacher and the learner to handle, because it goes against our traditional idea of what school should be like. Teachers are used to standing in front, talking, and learners are used to sitting in rows, listening.



Therefore, it may be difficult to change, to get learners to talk to one another in a co-operative manner (that is, not to shout one another down) and to accept the fact that the teacher will be moving among them, but not necessarily always talking to the group, or giving the final answer. The teacher can help by acknowledging the learners' right to talk without being constantly interrupted or corrected.

Building learners' confidence starts with basic things such as greeting them, either as a group or in small groups as they come into the class. The teacher should build on this greeting by using the language that people use in everyday situations, for example:

UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS

Teacher: Good morning everybody!

Learners: Good morning sir/madam!

Teacher: And how are you after your hard match yesterday, Siphos? or

How's your cold, Lindiwe? or

Why are you all looking so glum?

Etc.

In this way the learners get used to the teacher taking a personal interest in them and the atmosphere in the class becomes more relaxed.

Similarly, learners should be greeted when they leave the teacher's class, for example with:

Goodbye, see you tomorrow! or

Goodbye, don't forget the homework! or

Goodbye, enjoy the weekend!

These social rituals can be extended to include the following:

LANGUAGE FUNCTION

Thanking a student for doing something

Apologizing for a mishap,

a misunderstanding,

or when you are unable to keep a

promise.

EXAMPLE

Thanks/Thank you, Peter!

Oops! Sorry!

I'm sorry, I misunderstood you.

I'm really sorry!

I apologize, but ...

UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS

Introducing yourself:	Boys and girls, I'm Mrs More, and I'd like to get to know all of you!
a new student: or	Class, meet Mary Mahlangu. Mary, this is 8C.
another adult to the class:	Class, I would like to introduce to you, Mr Siboni, our Inspector. Mr Siboni, this is 8C.
Congratulating the class or a student on something:	Well done! I'm proud of you! Congratulations on your birthday/achievement, Peter!
Wishing them well:	Enjoy the weekend/holiday! Best of luck for the exams/competition! I wish you all the best for Christmas/ Easter, etc.

Remember that when you teach through the medium of English, you teach language every time you speak. Your language use provides constant input: How you use the language should be a model for your learners.

3.3.2 Giving instructions for class activities

As stated above, instructions must be

- clear (in simple language).
- unambiguous (only one interpretation must be possible).
- sufficient (they must include everything the learners have to do).

When class activities are conducted, you should take care to guide the learners step by step. If the activity demands that learners be grouped, you will have to teach them how to do this in an orderly fashion. Once they get used to group and pair work, organizing will run more smoothly.

It is always a good idea to tell the learners what they are going to do. Uncertainty not only inhibits learning, but also encourages disorderliness. Your first step then would be to outline the activity, for example:

'You are going to listen to a tape recording of a song. I will hand out one copy of the words of the song to each group. You will see that some of the words have been left out. I want you to listen to the song once, without writing anything. Then I will play the song again and one person in the group can start filling in the words. Then you will have 5 minutes to discuss the words and I will

UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS

then play the recording a final time so that you can make sure of the words you filled in. After that I will put the whole song with all the words on the overhead projector.'

Remember that you will give as many **don't** instructions as positive ones (do instructions). When you start with a step-by-step approach to this activity, you may find yourself saying things like:

'Read through the song quickly. **Don't** fill in anything at this stage. Peter, put down your pencil. Right, now listen carefully and **don't** write anything yet.'

And so on.

The following are some of the most commonly used forms of instructions:

- I want you to ...
- I **don't** want you to ...
- Listen/read/discuss/ ...
- Turn to page 345, please.
- **Don't** read/start/ ... yet.
- Could you move to the next group, John?

3.3.3 Getting learners to work and cooperate

When class activities are introduced with an outline of the activity and an instruction or two, learners are not always sure when they are to start and how they are to go about the work. It is therefore a good idea to get them started with an explicit command, such as:

- You may start.
- Start now, please.
- Get going! (This is very informal.)

You may also want them to know **how** they should cooperate:

- Start by discussing the problem with your neighbour for five minutes.
- For the next five minutes the group leader will explain the activity to you.
- The group leader will start and then the rest of the group will each have a chance, going clockwise round the circle.
- Mary will read and you must ask her questions. Put up your hand when you have a question and she will point to you when you should ask it.
- While I am writing on the board, I want each of you to look up the first five words in your dictionaries.

In this way, learners know exactly what they should do and how they should go about doing it.

UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS**3.3.4 The teacher as disciplinarian**

One of the teacher's most difficult tasks is to maintain discipline without becoming authoritarian and making learners too scared to open their mouths. Scaring learners is disastrous in a language class, because even when they are told to speak, their fear will make them stutter and stammer. The teacher has to walk a tightrope between authoritarianism and a total lack of control.

Remember, a class is like an engine: When it is buzzing, it is working.

The purpose of maintaining discipline is twofold: In the first place, it is necessary in order to get work done. Unruly learners must be organized to do their work. In the second place, discipline must be maintained to protect the slow workers and the timid learners. They cannot assert themselves and their work suffers if the teacher allows things to get out of hand.

The following are some of the ways in which you can maintain discipline:

LANGUAGE FUNCTION**EXAMPLE**

To **order** students to do/not to do ...

Keep quiet! Everybody, sit down!
Get going! Don't do that! Leave the pictures alone!

To **promise** rewards

I shall read a story once you have finished the work.
Those who get more than 7 out of 10 need not do the homework.

To place a **condition** on activities

If you finish before the end of the period, I will read you a story.

To **threaten** students

(Caution: make sure you can carry out your threats!)

If you don't stop talking now, I will increase the homework drastically.
For each minute lost, an extra sentence will be added to the exercise.
Depending on your behaviour during the group activity, the test on Thursday will include or exclude Chapter 4.

UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS

3.3.5 The teacher as examiner

It is impossible, even for first-language speakers, to speak flawlessly. However, the one instance when a language teacher cannot afford to make grammar mistakes, is when asking questions or setting tests and examinations. For this reason it is very important that you study the following summary of question forms in English:

A Use of *do*, *does* (present tense) and *did* (past tense):

When these words are used on their own to form questions, they are usually at the beginning of the sentence and are followed by the basic form of the verb (without any endings):

Present tense singular: Does Hamlet feel sorry for his sister?

Present tense plural: Do Hamlet and Ophelia agree on a course of action?

Past tense: Did Shakespeare write this drama to make a political statement?

B Reversal of word order:

With the verbs *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *has*, *have*, *had*, *will* and *shall*, the word order of the sentence changes:

Statement: Hamlet was pretending to go mad.

Question: Was Hamlet pretending to go mad?

Statement: I have already written my essay on *Hamlet*.

Question: Have you written your essay yet?

NOTE: *Has*, *have* and *had* are only used in this way when they are used to form the perfect tenses. Otherwise *do*, *does* and *did* have to be used, for example:

Does Hamlet have respect for Ophelia?

Did Hamlet's childhood experiences have an influence on his adult life?

C Use of question words (e.g. *who?* *what?* *why?* *how?*)

Question words can be used in three ways:

- On their own:

Statement: Many people used the bathroom.

Question: How many people used the bathroom?

Statement: Sam killed the dog.

Question: Who killed the dog?

UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS

- * In combination with *do*, *does* and *did*, when the rule for these three words applies:

Statement: He shot the man three times.

Question: **How** many times **did** he **shoot** the man?

Statement: I think Mrs Sibiya will win the election.

Question: **Who** do you think will win the election?

- In combination with *am*, *is*, *are*, and so on, with the inverted word order:

Statement: They will have to write twice.

Question: **How** many times will they have to write before they pass?

Statement: I am entitled to argue this way.

Question: **Who** am I to argue?

The language used by the examiner can be responsible for learners failing or passing the test. If the instructions are vague and the language incorrect, learners will not be able to demonstrate their knowledge. The responsibility of formulating questions and instructions clearly is enormous. All questions, whether in class situations or in tests or examinations, must be formulated with care and revised thoroughly before they are presented to the learners.

3.3.6 Oral evaluation

Many teachers and lecturers think that oral evaluation is easy and that they need not prepare anything. It is, however, imperative that you prepare questions beforehand and on paper so that you need not hesitate and look for words when the learner is already nervous and unsure. If the teacher is not well-prepared, s/he communicates uncertainty to the learner, which is not conducive to optimum performance.

Oral evaluation is of particular importance when you do continuous assessment, as is required in outcomes-based education.

Questions for oral evaluation differ from those used in written evaluation in two ways: they are less precise in the first place, and can be elaborated upon (when the learner does not understand immediately) in the second place. Questions like the following are usually asked:

- What do you think of ...?
- What are the reasons for ...? (Instead of 'Name three reasons for ...' which is the written format.)

UNIT 3: SPEAKING SKILLS

- Mention a few aspects of ...
- What caused ...?

and direct questions like:

- Did Mr M like his students?
- Where was the murder committed?

As you can see, it is not necessary to give the learners the format of their answers, because you can always stop them when you have heard enough. In this sense, oral questions are easier to set, because they are more direct.

Oral evaluation must also be done with a prepared memorandum that contains the answers to your questions and the mark allocation. You also need to keep a class list ready at all times to record the learners' performance.

UNIT 4: LISTENING SKILLS**UNIT 4: LISTENING SKILLS**

The purpose of this unit and the accompanying audio tape recording is to exercise and improve your listening comprehension of spoken English.

Read the questions in Section A and switch on the tape recorder. Your lecturer will read you the first half of a short passage. Do not attempt to answer the questions while the passage is being read to you. Listen carefully and when the lecturer has finished reading, jot down the answers to the questions.

SECTION A

- 1 Where did the concert take place?
- 2 What was the concert in aid of?
- 3 What were the white soldiers doing?
- 4 Who was the main sponsor of the concert?
- 5 Why was it not a good idea to try to dance?
- 6 What was the writer's opinion of the music?

When you have finished, discuss your answers with your lecturer. Now read the questions in Section B and listen to the rest of the passage. Answer the questions briefly.

SECTION B

- 1 What is the name of the group of six little girls from Veda?
- 2 What is Steve Kekana's musical trademark?
- 3 What were Jambo's frontline dancers wearing?
- 4 Which song is regarded as PJ Powers's signature tune?
- 5 The writer claims that Powers was guilty of an error of judgement when she threw T-shirts into the audience. What word does he use that implies 'error of judgement'? If you are not sure, listen to the tape again.
- 6 Why was it not a good idea to throw T-shirts into the audience?

SECTION C**4.1 CATEGORIES OR GENRES OF SPEECHES**

This section includes a series of extracts from speeches and public comments made by famous people. The purposes of these speeches fall into the following categories:

Assurance	Warning
Denial	Promise
Expressing an opinion	Paying tribute
Resignation from a post	Acceptance of a post

UNIT 4: LISTENING SKILLS

4.1.1 Listen to the extracts and then tick the columns to indicate the function of each extract.

EXTRACT NUMBER														
FUNCTION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Assurance														
Denial														
Expressing an opinion														
Resignation from a post														
Warning														
Promise														
Paying tribute														
Acceptance of a post														

4.1.2 Listen to the extracts again and where possible, write down examples of the language or structures used that enabled you to identify the functions of the speeches.

4.2 PROVERBS

This section looks at some proverbs in English. Although used sparingly in everyday conversation, proverbs tend to crop up when the speaker is stuck for something more appropriate to say. The actual meanings of these proverbs has to be learnt, as they are not obvious from the individual words that make them up.

4.2.1 Predicting content

The words in Columns A and B of the table below can be used to make 12 English proverbs, for example 'Silence is golden'. Do you recognize any others? Try to predict what some of them may be. In the Prediction column, write the numbers of the words in Column A and the letters of the words in Column B to make a proverb. The first one has been done for you.

UNIT 4: LISTENING SKILLS

A		Prediction	Listening	Proverbs
1	silence	a hear	lc	Silence is golden
2	rains	b fire		
3	lovely weather	c golden		
4	pennies	d pours		
5	everything comes	e ducks		
6	can't believe	f spilled milk		
7	no smoke	g to him who waits		
8	only get	h silver lining		
9	every cloud	i feather		
10	crying	j pay for		
11	knock down	k pounds		

(Adapted from *Listening: Advanced*. Revel and Breary)

- 4.2.2 Listen to the radio advertisement for a car. This advertisement features a conversation between a man, Dennis, and a woman, Susan. It is hardly a realistic conversation as it is almost entirely made up of proverbs. How many can you identify? Compare your answers with those of a fellow student.
- 4.2.3 Listen to the advertisement again and match the two halves of each proverb. Write the numbers of the words in Column A and the letters of the corresponding words in Column B in the **listening column**. How many of your predictions were correct?

4.3 WIND









- 4.3.1 Listen to the passage that your lecturer reads to you and then decide whether the following statements are true or false:
- Without wind, life on earth would be much less difficult but more unpleasant.
 - On the whole, the earth loses each day the same amount of heat that it receives.
 - Typhoons transfer heat from warmer parts of the earth to cooler parts.
 - Countries can avoid contaminating the earth by testing nuclear bombs in remote places.

UNIT 4: LISTENING SKILLS

- e Space is being polluted by man's industrial activity.
- f The masses of particles that astronauts can see in the atmosphere are getting smaller.

4.3.2 The passage that you have just heard illustrates the importance of wind. However, wind can also be an incredibly destructive force. Certain signals have been developed to serve as a warning system to alert people to dangerously strong winds. In the next extract, you will hear a description of these warning signals and the lights which are used to warn ships and aircraft of these dangerous winds. On the next page there is a table of these symbols. In some cases some of the symbols have been incorrectly drawn or the lights have been incorrectly arranged. Listen to the description and decide whether the symbols and lights are correct. If this is the case, put a tick in the correct column provided. The first two have been done for you as an example.

UNIT 4: LISTENING SKILLS

WARNING SIGNALS				Key	
Signal		Display		Corrections	
		Symbol	Lights	Symbol	Lights
Stand By	1		(W) (W) (W)	✓	(W) (W) (W)
Strong Wind	3		(G) (W) (G)		
NW'ly Gale or Storm	8NW		(W) (W) (G)		
SW'ly Gale or Storm	8SW		(G) (W) (W)		
NE'ly Gale or Storm	8NE		(W) (G) (G)		
SE'ly Gale or Storm	8SE		(G) (G) (W)		
Increasing Gale or Storm	9		(G) (G) (G)		
Hurricane	10		(G) (R) (G)		

UNIT 4: LISTENING SKILLS

4.4 EXTRACT FROM NEPI REPORT

After you have listened to the extract from the NEPI report on language, answer the following questions:

- 4.4.1 Briefly explain what is meant by saying that language can develop or hinder parental participation in school events.
- 4.4.2 According to the passage, an accent or a dialect may trigger 'negative stereotyping'. What do you understand by this phrase?
- 4.4.3 Why may some children prefer their parents not to come to school?
- 4.4.4 The article says that children who do not wish their parents to come to school often neglect to pass on newsletters or notices from the school. What other ways, do you think, could children use to discourage their parents from going to school? Mention any two ways.
- 4.4.5 Obviously, if schooling is to be successful, the community must become involved. The article mentions two ways in which staff at schools, where parents express difficulty regarding the medium of instruction, could overcome this difficulty. What are these two ways?
- 4.4.6 In the last line, the article says that, although it is expensive to send out newsletters in all the home languages, there will be a much greater price to pay if this is not done. What is meant by this?

4.5 IMPROVING HEALTH STANDARDS

Listen to the extract that will be read to you and decide whether the following statements are true or false.

- 4.5.1 The nineteenth century Industrial Revolution improved the health standard of workers enormously.
- 4.5.2 The nineteenth century social reformers tried, but failed, to improve health standards.
- 4.5.3 Life expectancy has risen, mainly because infant mortality rates have fallen.
- 4.5.4 The life expectancy of mature adults has not changed much over the past century or so.
- 4.5.5 Because of improving health standards, the money modern society spends on health care is decreasing.
- 4.5.6 Modern medicines are carefully tested before they are sold so that all their effects are known.

UNIT 4: LISTENING SKILLS

4.5.7 The demand for mental hospitals is beginning to decline rapidly as governments build more of them.

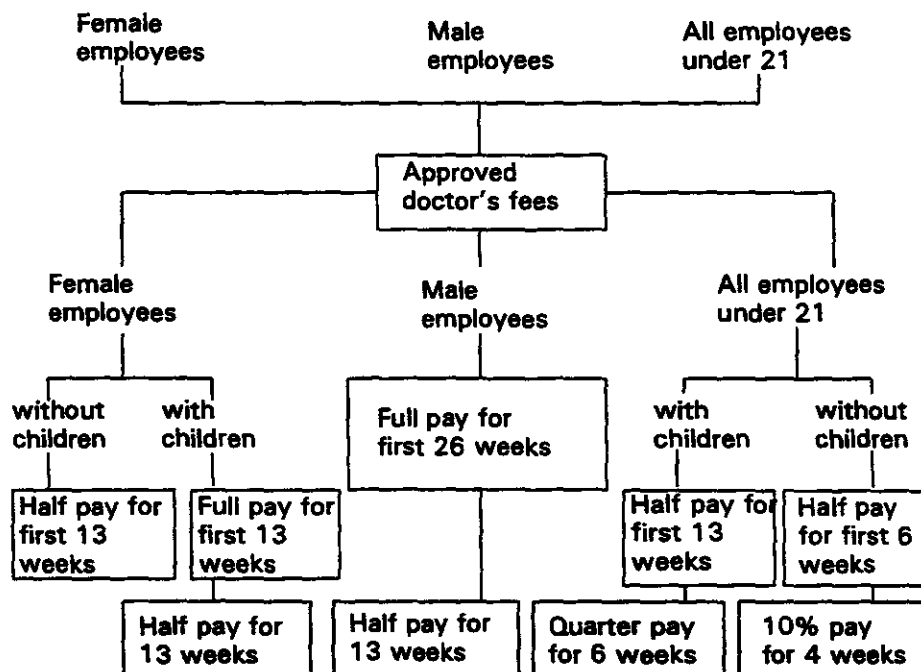
4.5.8 The problem of disease in modern society can be solved by following the same approach that succeeded a century ago.

4.6 EMPLOYMENT SICKNESS PLAN

Study the diagram entitled **Employment Sickness Plan**. Then find answers to the questions that follow:

EMPLOYEE SICKNESS PLAN

What you get from the company:



Choose the correct answers to the following questions. In each case, circle the letter of the correct option.

4.6.1 Which group is paid approved doctors' fees?

- A Female employees
- B Male employees
- C All employees under 21
- D All of the above

UNIT 4: LISTENING SKILLS

4.6.2 Which group is paid the least?

- A Employees under 21 without children
- B Female employees without children
- C Female employees with children
- D Employees under 21 with children

4.6.3 Which group receives the most benefits under the plan?

- A Female employees with children
- B Male employees aged 21 or older
- C Male employees under 21
- D Female employees under 21 with children

4.6.4 If a female employee under 21 with children was sick for 6 weeks, how much of her salary would she receive?

- A Full pay
- B Half pay
- C Quarter pay
- D Ten percent pay

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY


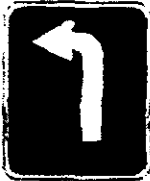

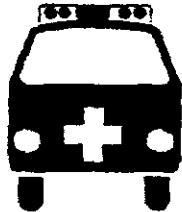


The purpose of this unit is to raise your awareness of the use of signs and symbols and to improve your comprehension of their use.

5.1 THE USE OF VISUAL INFORMATION IN TEXTS

The information that we derive from texts is usually represented in words, sentences or paragraphs. However, information can also be represented in a visual form, such as drawings, illustrations, pictures, paintings, sketches, photographs, graphs, charts, etc.

Exercise

We make use of visual information in our daily lives. Here are some examples of signs or symbols that we commonly use. How many do you recognize? Write down the meaning attached to each symbol in the space provided.

		
1.....	2.....	3.....
		
4.....	5.....	6.....

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

It is important that you should know what signs mean when you come across them. In your texts you will deal with visual information which is more complex than the examples shown above.

5.1.1 Why present information in a visual form?

Information can sometimes be very confusing when presented in long written paragraphs. Visual aids can make information and concepts clearer. We use visual aids to save space and time (we can reduce and summarize large amounts of information in a small space). Visual aids also make texts more interesting, and easier to understand and to remember. Decoding (understanding) visual information forms an important part of your studies. It is, therefore, important that you know how to access information in visual form.

5.1.2 How can you understand information in a visual form?

<p>The following questions will help you to decide what a visual aid is about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the title (if any)? (The title gives information about what the visual aid is about. Find out what the title is.) • How is the information presented and arranged? (Make sure that you know which units of measurement are used and how the information is arranged.) • What is the purpose of the information? (Reading the text and the visual aid together will help you to understand what the information is about. We use visual aids to clarify, summarize or show trends and special relationships.) <p>If you look at the diagrams on the next page, you will see what we mean by visual information, and how useful it can be.</p> <p>(Diagrams taken from <i>Biology</i> by Solomon <i>et al.</i> 1996)</p>	<p>Visual information includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - signs - graphs - symbols - pictures - diagrams - photographs - maps - charts - tables - flow charts - mindmaps - classification trees - drawings
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UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

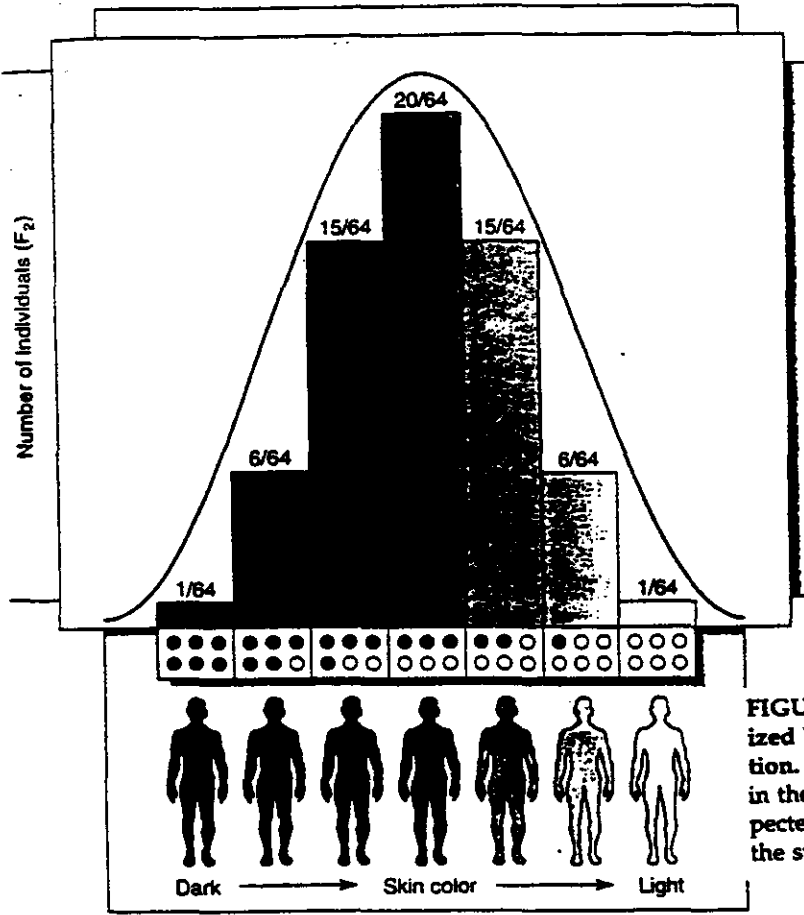


FIGURE 10-20 Polygenic inheritance is characterized by a wide range of phenotypes in the F₂ generation. The bars indicate the expected phenotypic ratios in the F₂ generation shown in Figure 10-19. This expected distribution of phenotypes is consistent with the superimposed normal curve.

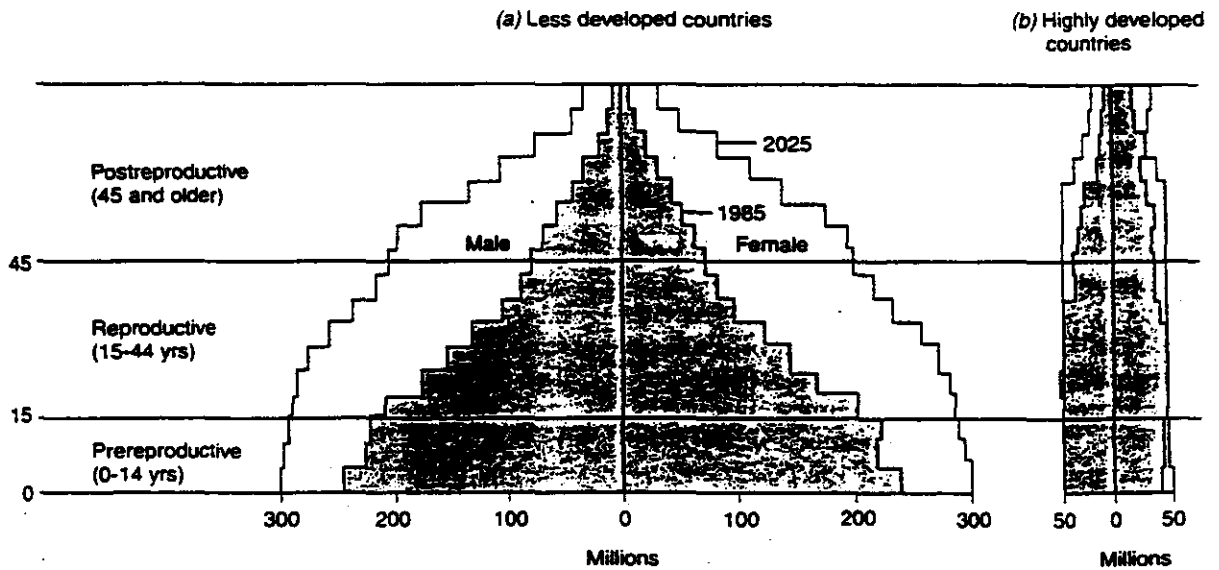


FIGURE 52-15 Less developed countries have a much higher percentage of young people than do highly developed countries. As a result, less developed countries (a) are projected to have greater population growth than are highly

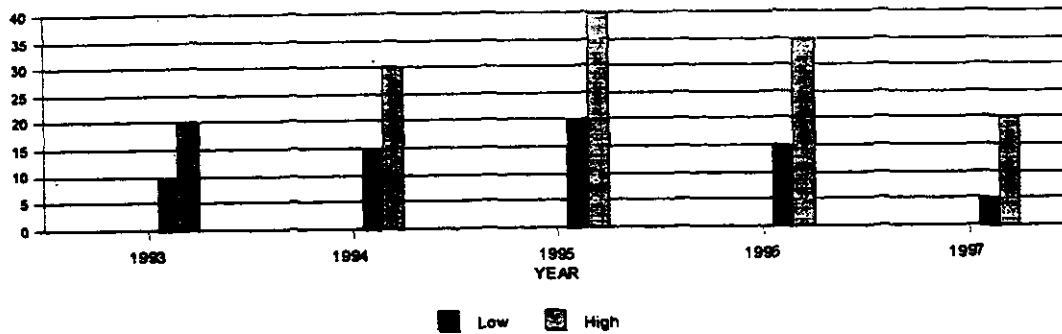
developed countries (b).

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

5.2 BAR GRAPHS

We can use bar graphs to compare several items or data (information). These graphs have a horizontal scale (the x-axis) and a vertical scale (the y-axis). The graph below shows how temperatures have ranged over five years during the month of December.

Average December temperature



Exercise 2

To find out what the bar graph is about, answer the following questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1 What is the title?

.....

2 How is the information presented and arranged?

.....

3 What is the purpose of the information?

.....

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

Exercise 3

Two bars are used for each year, one for average low temperature and one for average high temperature. The bars are shaded differently. The height of each bar indicates the temperature. For example, the 1993 bars are 10E and 20E high. Can you determine the height of the 1996 bars? The bars are 15E high. In 1993 and 1997, the average lowest temperature was below 15E.

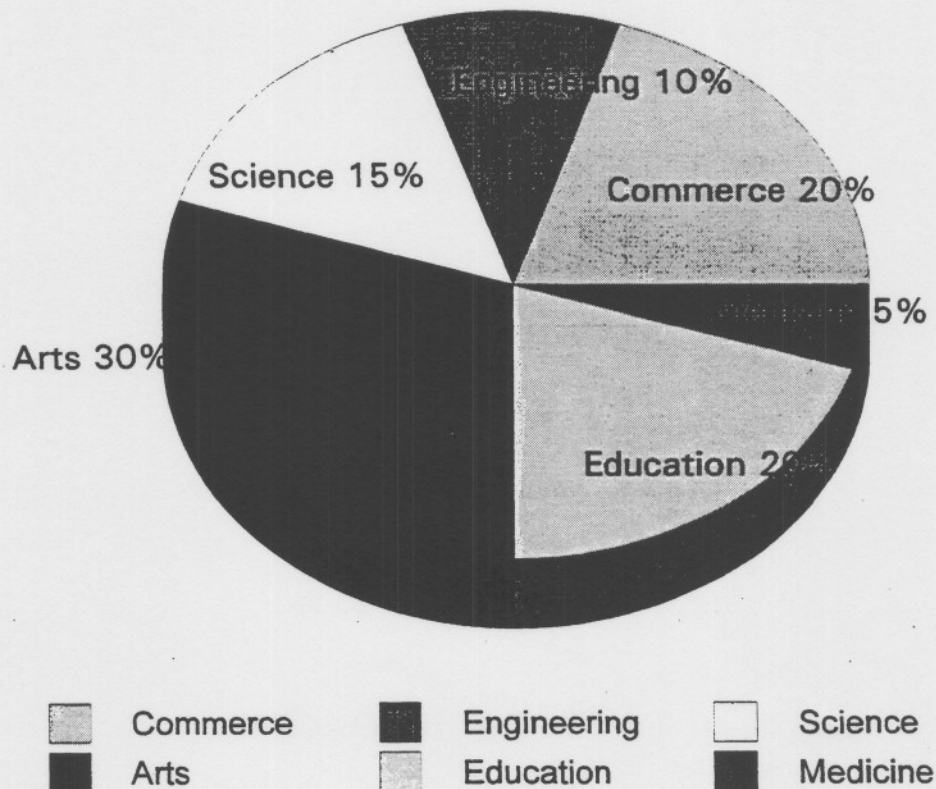
Now answer these questions to check your understanding of the bar graph.

- 1 What was the average highest temperature in 1994?
- 2 Which year had the lowest average temperature?
- 3 Which year had the same average highest temperatures?
- 4 Which year had the greatest difference between the average low and average high temperature? Calculate the difference.
- 5 Calculate the difference in lowest average temperatures between 1995 and 1997.

5.3 PIE CHARTS

The pie chart resembles a pie that has been cut into slices, hence its name. The circle graph, or pie chart, presents information as part of a whole. The entire circle is equal to 100% and each piece is a *fraction* of the 100%. The graph below shows the number of students registered in the different faculties of a university.

Students registered in different faculties



UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

Exercise 4

Answer the following questions from the information in the pie chart.

1 What is the title?

.....

2 How is the information presented and arranged?

.....

3 What is the purpose of the information?

.....

This pie chart gives information about the registration of students in each faculty at a university. The whole circle represents the total percentage of students registered at the university, which is 100%. The size of each faculty indicates the percentage of students registered. For example, 10% of the registered students are in the Engineering Faculty. To find the actual numbers, we would have to find out how many students were registered at the university. For example, if 10,000 students were registered, then it means that only 1 000 students are studying engineering. (Can you work out how we got to this number?)

Exercise 5

Answer these questions to check your understanding of the pie graph.

1 What is the percentage of students in the Science Faculty?

2 Which two faculties make up 50% of all students registered?

3 In which two faculties are the numbers of students exactly the same?

4 Which faculty has the lowest number of students?

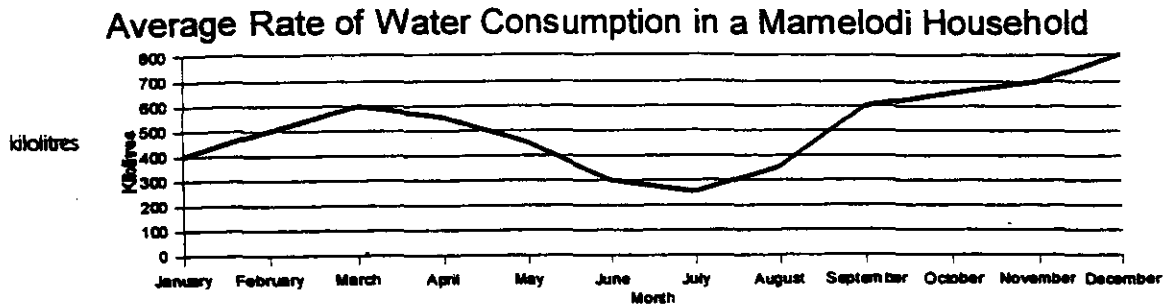
5 Which faculty has the highest number of students?

6 How much bigger is the registration in the Education Faculty than that of the Arts Faculty?

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

5.4 LINE GRAPHS

A line graph shows whether there has been an increase or a decrease in data or information over a period of time. Line graphs have vertical (y-axis) and horizontal (x-axis) scales. Each point plotted on a graph has a value on both scales. The line graph below shows the average rate of water consumption in a Mamelodi household.



Exercise 6

1 What is the title?

.....

2 How is the information presented and arranged?

.....

3 What is the purpose of the information?

.....

In this graph we can see how much water is used, on average, in a Mamelodi household from month to month. The month is indicated on the vertical scale (y-axis). For example, in January, the average water consumption was 400 kilolitres. As the lines move up or down, they show whether the amount of water consumed increases or decreases. For example, there was an increase in water consumption from January to March but a decrease from March to July.

Exercise 7

1 In which month was the most water used?

2 In which month was the least water used?

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

3 In which months did the water consumption remain the same?

.....

4 By how much did the water consumption decrease between April and June?

.....

5 By how much did the water consumption increase between August and November?

.....

5.5 TABLES

Sometimes information can be represented in the form of a table. In Physics, for example, a table can be used to show the relationship between phenomena. The table below shows the energy changes a falling object undergoes:

Energy changes in a falling object

ALTITUDE (in m)	POTENTIAL ENERGY (joules)	KINETIC ENERGY (joules)
100	1000	0
75	750	250
50	500	500
25	250	750
0	0	1000

Exercise 8

1 What is the title?

.....

2 How is the information presented and arranged?

.....

3 What is the purpose of the information?

.....

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

The information in this table is arranged in vertical columns and horizontal rows. The first column gives the altitude in metres, the second column gives the potential energy in joules and the last column represents the kinetic energy in joules. To obtain information about the energy changes that occur at a height of 100m, you will have to look at the 100m row. Here the potential energy is 1000 joules and the kinetic energy is 0. By looking across each row, you will be able to obtain information about the potential energy and kinetic energy at a specific height.

Exercise 9

Fill in the gaps, using information from the table.

- 1 At a height of 25m the potential energy is and the kinetic energy is
- 2 The kinetic energy and potential energy are the same at aof 50m.
- 3 As the potential energythe kinetic energy
- 4 The sum of the potential energy and kinetic energy at any point is equal to This means that the energy remains
- 5 At the potential energy is 1000 joules and the is 0 joules.

5.6 PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Below we have included additional tasks to help you to practise the skill of understanding visual information in texts. Remember to look carefully at all visual representations in texts and then to try to link the information that they present with the information in the written text.

Exercise 10

The table below shows the potential difference, current and resistance in a circuit.

Potential difference (volts)	Current (ampères)	Resistance (ohms)
1,5	0,5	3
1,0	0,5	2
0,5	0,5	1

- 1 Provide an appropriate title for the table
- 2 What is the potential difference when the resistance is 2 ohms?

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

3 What is the resistance when the potential difference is 0,5 volts?

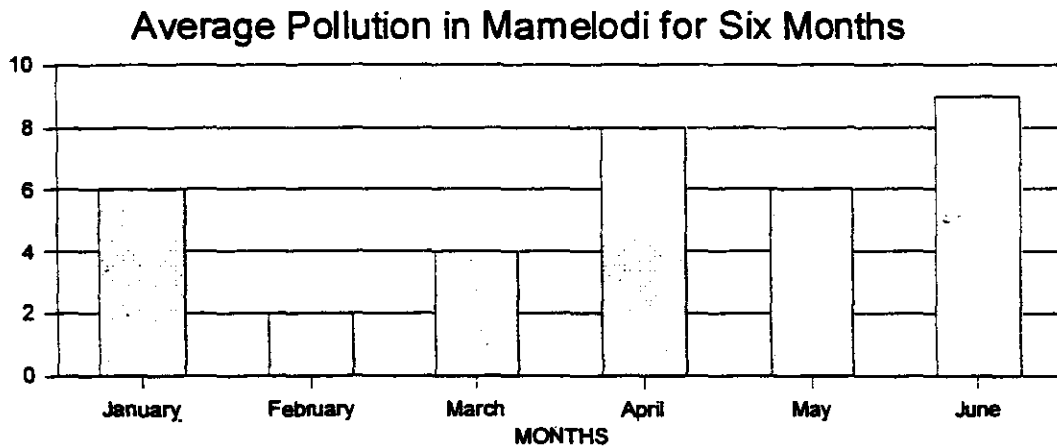
Fill in the correct terms in sentences 4 and 5.

4 The potential difference ranges from volts to volts and the resistancefrom 3 ohms to 1 ohm.

5 The current remains while the potential difference and the resistance

Exercise 11

The bar graph below shows the average pollution levels (on a scale of 1 to 10) in Mamelodi for the first half of the year.



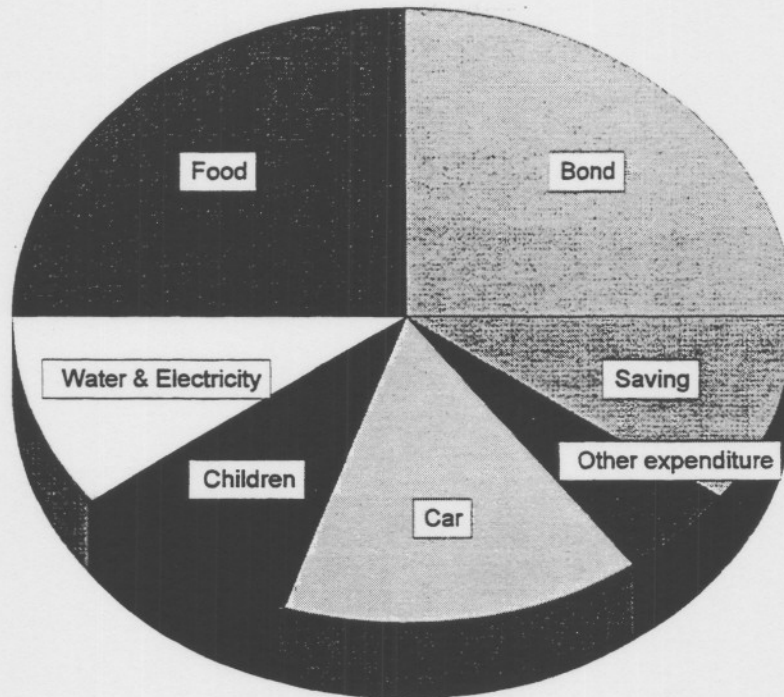
- 1 What was the pollution level in March?
- 2 Which month had the highest level of pollution?
- 3 Which months had the same level of pollution?
- 4 Which month had the lowest pollution level?
- 5 How much higher was the pollution level in June than in February?

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

Exercise 12

The pie graph below represents Dr Modiba's household budget:

MONTHLY EXPENDITURE



FOOD 25%
SAVINGS 10%
CAR 15%

BOND 25%
OTHER EXPENDITURE 10%
CHILDREN 10%
WATER & ELECTRICITY 10%

1 How much does Dr Modiba spend on food?

.....

2 On which items does she spend the same?

.....

3 Which two items take up 50% of her budget?

.....

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

4 Which item takes up the least of her budget?

.....

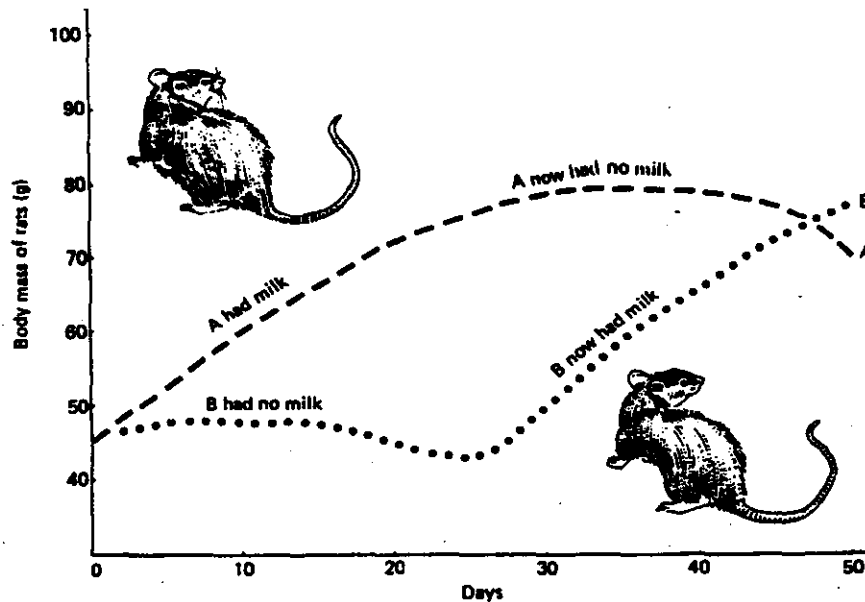
5 How much more does she spend on the bond than on her children?

.....

Exercise 13

Read the following text from *Living Biology Standard 10* (Kaske et al. 1996:26) and study the accompanying graph, before answering the questions below:

A scientist called Gowland Hopkins performed a classic experiment as early as 1910 which demonstrated the importance of vitamins. He fed young rats on a diet containing starch, sucrose, lard, salts and casein. Casein is a milk protein that contains essential amino acids. These rats stopped growing and died unless the diet also contained a small amount of milk each day. Since milk has very little energy value and contains no more amino acids than casein, there must have been other factors besides amino acids and calories present which promoted healthy growth in rats. These accessory food factors necessary for normal metabolism and growth were, of course, vitamins.



UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

1 What does the graph illustrate that is also mentioned in the text?

.....

2 What information does the graph give that is not mentioned in the text?

.....

3 What information does the text have that is not in the graph?

.....

4 What effect does the added visual information provided by the drawings of the rats have?

.....

EXERCISE 14

Match each term in Column A with its meaning in Column B by drawing an arrow to connect the two.

A	B
average	- from bottom to top
axis	- straight line between two points
calculate	- the action or process of thinking
consumption	- grouping of similar teaching departments
data	- state of balance
faculty	- use of balance
horizontal	- use of goods
phenomenon	- something that appears or occurs or is perceived
vertical	- generally occurring amount; arithmetical mean
visual	- related to what you can see
	- from side to side
	- related to hearing
	- known facts or information
	- using arithmetical means to work something out
	- accepting something as fact, even without proof

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

Exercise 15

Use appropriate words from the list in Task 14 to complete the following sentences:

- 1 The climbers used ropes to climb thecliff face near the top of the mountain.
- 2 My car is economical to run because the petrol is low even in city traffic
- 3 In most areas of South Africa the annual rainfall is low.
- 4 The lecturer used slides in her lecture as a aid .
- 5 The *El Niño* in the Pacific brings drought conditions to South Africa.

UNIT 5: VISUAL LITERACY

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LPR5001.D05/mch

APPENDIX B

EVALUATION OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY COURSE (LPR5001) VISTA UNIVERSITY: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Campus: _____

Dear Students

Student number: _____

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the present LPR 5001 course, which is currently presented to first year students as part of the foundation course. Your input and advice would be appreciated.

Evaluate the statements below in terms of the keys provided. Indicate, on a scale of 1-4, your opinion on the present LPR 5001 course.

- 1 - Not at all
- 2 - Slightly
- 3 - To a certain extent
- 4 - Very much

	1	2	3	4
1. I knew what was expected of me in the course				
2. The course improved my reading ability				
3. The course helped me to write more fluently				
4. The manual is sufficient as it is				
5. There was enough opportunity for formative assessment				
6. I wanted to take the course				
7. The course improved my listening ability				
8. During the course I had enough opportunity for independent thought				
9. The course should be extended to one year				
10. The course improved my ability to speak English correctly				
11. The assignments did not help me to improve my English proficiency				
12. The listening exercises were interesting				
13. The comprehension passages helped me to understand English better				
14. My English proficiency improved by taking the course				
15. I needed a lot of guidance, as the course was too difficult				
16. The course helped me to work in groups				
17. My pronunciation improved				
18. The outcomes of the course were clear to me				
19. The comprehension passages were interesting				
20. The comprehension passages were outdated				
21. The manual does not provide enough material for the course				
22. The course did not improve my writing ability				
23. The assignments were set in such a way that I could complete them on my own				
24. There were not enough tests set during the course to see whether I was improving				
25. We should learn more formal grammar				
26. The course helped me to do assignments in other subjects				
27. The course improved my ability to speak English fluently				
28. The course gave me enough opportunity to work at my own pace				
29. I did not get the chance to learn from my mistakes				
30. I did not benefit enough from taking the course				
31. The course improved my English proficiency outside the classroom				
32. We should be taught less formal grammar				
33. The course was too short				
34. I learned writing skills that were useful to me				
35. The course helped me to write more correctly				
36. There was not enough opportunity for me to speak				
37. The course should have been more advanced				
38. The course gave me more confidence to use English				
39. During the course I had to do too much work on my own				
40. I would have liked to do more group work				

Section B:

Say whether you agree / disagree with the following statements:

	AGREE	DISAGREE
1. I would have preferred to use a textbook with the manual		
2. There were enough assignments in the course		
3. The course was interesting and I enjoyed taking the course		
4. The course did not help me at all		
5. I will recommend the course to my friends		

Please write a few sentences in which you express your general impression of the course. Refer to the above-mentioned aspects where possible. Please make suggestions as to how the course could be more effective, if necessary.

Thank you for your co-operation in making this survey a success.

APPENDIX C

**EVALUATION OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY COURSE (LPR5001)
VISTA UNIVERSITY: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LECTURERS**

Dear Colleagues

The purpose of this questionnaire is to evaluate the present LPR 5001 course, which is currently presented to first year students as part of the foundation course. Your input and advice would be appreciated.

Evaluate the following statements in terms of the keys provided. Indicate, on a scale of 1-4, your opinion on the present LPR5001 course.

- 1 - Not at all
- 2 - Slightly
- 3 - To a certain extent
- 4 - Very much

	1	2	3	4
1. Students knew what was expected of them in the course				
2. The course improved their reading ability				
3. The course helped them to write more fluently				
4. The manual is sufficient as it is				
5. There was enough opportunity for formative assessment				
6. They wanted to take the course				
7. The course improved their listening ability				
8. During the course students had the opportunity for independent thought				
9. The course should be extended to one year				
10. The course improved their ability to speak English correctly				
11. The assignments did not help them to improve their English proficiency				
12. The listening exercises were interesting				
13. The comprehension passages helped them to understand English better				
14. Their English proficiency improved by taking the course				
15. Students needed a lot of guidance, as the course was too difficult				
16. The course helped the students to work in groups				
17. Their pronunciation improved				
18. The outcomes of the course were clear to them				
19. The comprehension passages were interesting				
20. The comprehension passages were outdated				
21. The manual does not provide enough material for the course				
22. The course did not improve their writing ability				
23. The assignments were set in such a way that students could complete them on their own				
24. There were not enough tests during the course to see whether they were improving				
25. The students should learn more formal grammar				
26. The course helped students to do assignments in other subjects				
27. The course improved their ability to speak English fluently				
28. The course gave students enough opportunity to work at their own pace				
29. Students did not get the chance to learn from their mistakes				
30. Students did not benefit enough from taking the course				
31. The course improved the English proficiency of students outside the classroom				
32. Students should be taught less formal grammar				
33. The course was too short				
34. Students learned writing skills that were useful to them				
35. The course helped them to write more correctly				
36. There was not enough opportunity for students to speak				
37. The course should have been more advanced				
38. The course gave students more confidence to use English				
39. During the course students had to do too much work on their own				
40. I would have liked to do more group work with the students				

Section B:
Say whether you agree / disagree with the following statements:

	AGREE	DISAGREE
1. I would have preferred to use a textbook with the manual		
2. There were enough assignments in the course		
3. The course was interesting; the students and the lecturer enjoyed the course		
4. The course did not help my students at all		
5. I will recommend the course to my students		

Please write a few sentences in which you express your general impression of the course. Refer to the above-mentioned aspects where possible. Please make suggestions as to how the course could be more effective, if necessary.

Thank you for your co-operation in making this survey a success.

VISTA UNIVERSITY

TERM 1

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY 5001

LPR 100/440 5001

PRE-TEST

DURATION: 2 HOURS

MARKS: 100

**EXAMINERS: MRS H DIPPENAAR
LECTURERS FROM OTHER CAMPUSES**

INSTRUCTIONS TO INVIGILATORS

Provide each student with:

One question paper (8 pages)
Test paper

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

1. Answer ALL questions
2. This examination paper consists of 8 pages, including this cover page.

QUESTION 1

Write an essay of 250 - 350 words (1 - 2 pages) on ONE of the following topics.

- 1.1 "People don't get along because they fear each other. They don't know each other because they have not properly communicated with each other".

(Dr Martin Luther King)

What are your views? Respond to this and provide a title for your essay.

- 1.2 **No skills, no jobs, no security ...**

Bearing the above in mind, write an essay entitled: What future for the South African youth?

- 1.3 As a preservice secondary school teacher you will encounter teenagers. Are teenagers peculiar or not?

Write an essay entitled: Teenagers

[20]

QUESTION 2 (READ THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE THEN ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW)

UBUNTU

or not to?

1. What is *Ubuntu*? A while ago I thought I knew. *Ubuntu* was the essence of African morality and centred on the idea that 'A person is a person because of other persons'. It asked for our acknowledgment of reliance on others for one's very being as a person, for one's humanness. Therefore it implied something that was almost gratitude, an automatic respect to be paid to *homo sapiens* and each of its members. Human fellow feeling, kindness, compassion, mercy. A readiness to make an identification with any stranger as being in some deep way like oneself, even in fact part of oneself.
2. Archbishop Tutu is one of those who invoke *Ubuntu* as a spirit to guide social conduct. And he himself once provided a famous example of what I understood to be *Ubuntu* in practice. That was when he confronted a lynch-mob of young 'comrades' and prevented them from necklacing a wretch they believed had committed some offence against their cause.
3. How easily Tutu might have been turned upon for frustrating that blood-hunger, at the least been defied, mocked and subsequently smeared for being soft on the peoples' enemy. Whether or not he thought these thoughts, he must certainly have recognized the lethal mood of the mob.
4. He cut across all that- the danger to himself, the would-be executioners' certainty of being politically justified, the loyalty he owed to his and their struggle. He cut across to the humanity of the victim. That person was an extension of himself, and the miserable fellow's terror and agony became Desmond Tutu's own pain.
5. This version of *Ubuntu* suited me very well. But is this version correct? There is room for doubt.
6. Until a while ago, I believed it would have come down to the same thing. 'A person is a person because of other persons' seems to me to have much the same humane moral implications as the Judeo-Christian 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' or 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'.
7. But during the past year or so I've been hearing and reading things that have left me wondering whether I understand the word *Ubuntu* at all. These are the views of philosophers, academics, writers, theologians, sangomas, etc., most of them concerned with African Humanism, Pan Africanism or African religion. All of them, I gather, pay some kind of allegiance or lay some kind of claim to *Ubuntu* and relate it to the African emphasis on community, the social collective. Thus through them *Ubuntu* becomes associated with a set of ideas and attitude I sometimes find bewildering and disturbing.
8. These African thinkers tend to adopt a defensive stance against what they present as non-African influences in general. Aside from white arrogance and materialism, these include versions of individualism and rationalism. At their most radically purist they appear to despise and resent whatever they define as western, European, Christian, individualistic. They display a deep suspicion of 'western' science, logic, culture, morality, etc.
9. It would be presumptuous of me to dispute the validity of their attitudes. But how am I to proceed with my life as a South African if, for instance, individualism and 'western' logic are inherently wrong, at any rate un-African? And if the same applies to 'western' science, how is Africa to proceed?
10. And what does it say about *Ubuntu* if its philosophers are so inhospitable to difference? It certainly seems naive to have thought of *Ubuntu* as simple, 'human fellow feeling', as having much in common with Judeo-Christian humanitarianism and with liberalism. Perhaps it is less concerned with human identification than with coherence in the collective, the community, the party, the side, the team.
11. I remember a television debate in which a fundi (or was it a trade unionist?) equated *Ubuntu* with the attitude of solidarity that striking workers needed to generate to sustain their confrontational action. How much importance are we to attach to this argument? If it was correct, then it seems only a short stretch of definition to make the meaning of *Ubuntu* cover the mob mood of those vengefully determined 'comrades' whose act of execution was blocked by Bishop Tutu.

Lionel Abrahams-Sidelines 1997

- 2.1 What did the writer think Ubuntu means? ^{A person is a person because of other persons} (2)
- 2.2 "A person is a person because of other persons" How can you best explain this in relation to paragraph 1? ^{If you meet a stranger, maybe in a crowded market, you will see a person who is helpless and in need of help.}
- 2.3 Examine this extract from a dictionary: (2)

frustrate v. & adj. - v.tr. /frʌ'streɪt, 'frʌs-/ 1 make (efforts ineffective. 2 prevent (a person) from achieving a purpose. 3 (as frustrated adj.) A discontented because unable to achieve one's desire. B sexually unfulfilled. 4 disappoint (a hope). - adj. /'frʌstreɪt / archaic frustrated.
[ME f. L *frustrari* frustrate - f. *frustra* in vain]

In paragraph 3 the writer states that Archbishop Tutu could have been "turned upon for frustrating that blood-hunger".

- 2.3.1 From the dictionary entry, choose the meaning that comes closest to that of *frustrating* in the context of paragraph 3. ^{4 disappoint (a hope)} (2)
- 2.3.2 Write a sentence of your own in which you use *frustrate* as a NOUN, i.e. adapt the end of the word frustrate to function as a noun. (Please underline the noun you have formed). (2)
- 2.3.3 List three different types of information a dictionary entry may provide, other than the meaning of the word. (3)
- 2.4 How do the actions of Archbishop Tutu reflect the spirit of Ubuntu? ^{It reflects that we have to work together in spite of the way differences.} (3)
- 2.5 Write down FIVE points in your own words on what Ubuntu is. <sup>- Being a person with your whole respect to the other.
- Being obedient
- Being loyal</sup> (5)
- 2.6 With what sayings in paragraph 6 does the writer compare Ubuntu? ^{The Judeo-Christian} (3)
- 2.7 What has left the writer wondering about the meaning of Ubuntu? ^{The reading and hearing of the things that he has read & heard during the past year was left him wondering} (3)
- 2.8 According to the writer, explain what Ubuntu means to philosophers, academics, writers, theologians and sangomas. (3)

For each of the following questions choose the correct answer. Only write down the number and symbol of the correct answer.

- 2.9 Which of the following is the main point that the writer wants to make?

- A Ubuntu is not good.
B Ubuntu is for the people of the people by the people.
C Ubuntu has come to mean something else in recent years. ✓
D Ubuntu is a philosophy

(1)

To

2.10 Which three of the statements are true according to the passage?

- A Archbishop Tutu is one of those who invokes Ubuntu. ✓
- B A person is a person because of other persons. ✓
- C Ubuntu is a human right.
- D Archbishop Tutu confronted an angry mob. ✓
- E The writer was part of the necklacing mob.
- F The trade unionist had prevented the strike from continuing. (3)

2.11 Write a letter to the editor commenting on the article, "Ubuntu or Not to". (8)

[40]

QUESTION 3

Study the advertisement for Oxy Medicated Pads and Oxy Facial Wash and answer all the questions that follow.



The advertisement features a black and white photograph of three young people—a woman on the left, a man in the center, and a woman on the right—smiling and looking at a small box of Oxy Medicated Pads. In the foreground, there are two bottles of Oxy Facial Wash (one labeled 'SENSITIVE SKIN' and the other 'MOISTURIZING') and a box of Oxy Medicated Pads. The background is dark with the word 'ZITS' written in large, stylized, outlined letters. The overall aesthetic is grainy and high-contrast.

ZITS

**OXY Medicated Pads and OXY Facial Wash
Oxycute 'em in advance**

Use Oxy Medicated Pads to Oxycute zits - help kill them with kindness after one gentle, but seriously oxycutional dab. OXY Medicated Pads help kill acne-causing bacteria, soften and remove dead skin cells and dries and clears pimples. Make it part of your daily life and Oxycute 'em in advance. Used regularly Oxy Pads helps oxycute the surface bacteria which start zit attacks.

OXY Facial Wash is the oxycutional way to zap zits before they raise their ugly heads. Remove that excess dirt and oil, unblock pores and ensure clear and healthy looking skin. For sensitive skin use OXY Sensitive Facial Wash. Used regularly, OXY Facial Wash is the ideal alternative to soap, cleansing and blitzing zit formations before they've gathered their forces!

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3.1 Choose the correct answer.
"zap zits" is a form of

- 3.1.1 standard English
- 3.1.2 slang
- 3.1.3 tsotsi taal
- 3.1.4 colloquial English ✓

(1)

3.2 What do you think the words "oxycute 'em in advance" mean?

(2)

3.3 Who will this advertisement attract and why? *Many people, because* (2)
many of them it outline clearly the results in the statement form.

3.4 Name three ways in which Oxy medicated pads can help.

(3)

1. kill acne-causing bacteria. 2. Dries & clears pimples

3. Softer - remove dead skin cells

3.5 State whether the following are FACT or OPINION.

3.5.1 Oxy pads are medicated. *fact*

3.5.2 Oxy Facial Wash can be used instead of soap. *Opinion*

3.5.3 Oxy helps kill them with kindness. *OP*

3.5.4 Use Oxy Medicated Pads to oxycute zits. *opinion*

(4)

3.6 You have a teenage brother or sister who has a serious problem with pimples. Write a dialogue of 4 lines between you and your brother or sister where you try to convince him/her to try Oxy products.

3.7 Your brother/sister has tried the products and his/her problem is worse. Write down the argument that he/she had with you in dialogue form.

(8)

[20]

Myself: What an advert that I've read today about pimples

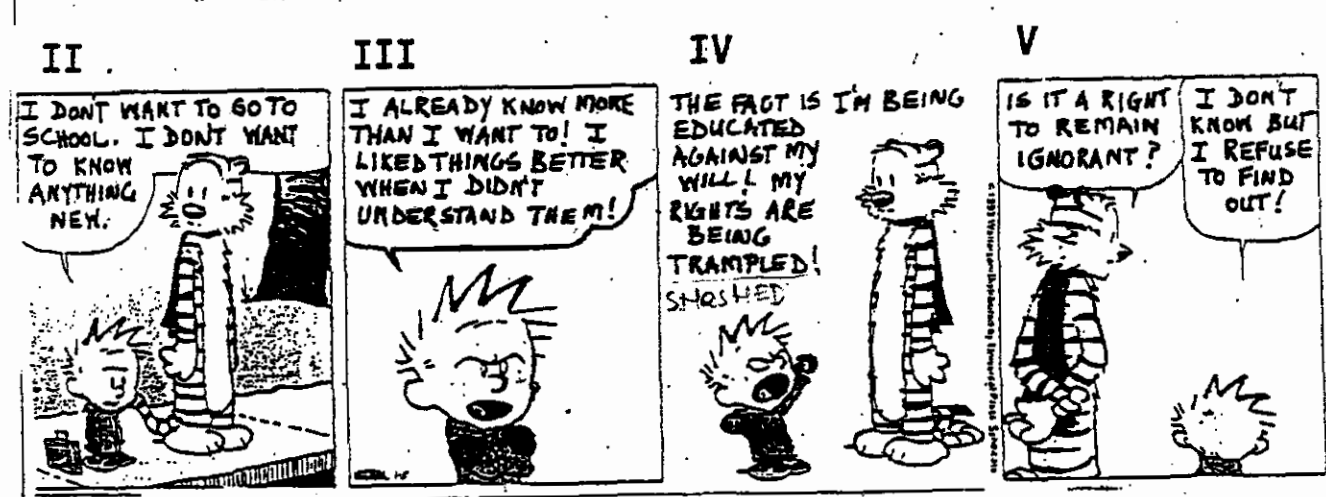
Brother: Which one sister?

Myself: Oxy Medicated Pads & Oxy Facial wash that can remove your pimples, water and remember to use it daily

3: Thanks for not giving a chance

QUESTION 4

Read through the following cartoon strip, then answer the questions that follow.



4.1 Supply one word of opposite meaning (an antonym) for each of the underlined words or phrases.

4.1.1 If you do not do something against your will (frame IV) you do it yourself
 4.1.2 If one's rights are not being trampled on they are heaved. (2)

4.2 In Frame III we read:

"I liked things better when I didn't understand them".

If these words are reported to another person he would do it as follows:

He said ~~that~~ he already know more than what he want to

He said that he 4.3.1 liked things better but when he don't understand them.

4.3.2 _____ (2)

4.4 Why are there so many exclamation marks (!) at the end of the boy's sentences?
 They seem to be angry. (2)

4.5 From what we see and read in the cartoon strip it is obvious that the little boy was _____ (complete the sentence to best describe the situation).

(2)

4.6 Combine the following two sentences to form a single sentence, by using: either _____ or _____

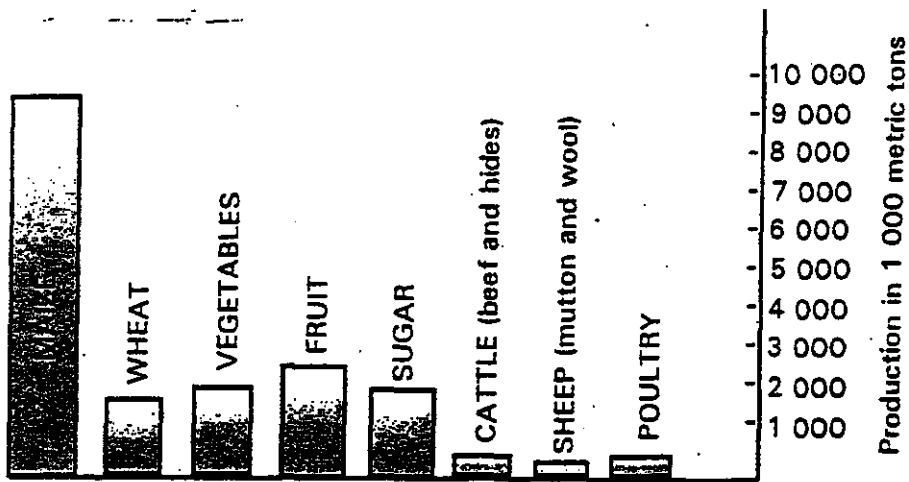
4.6.1 The boy is very lazy. The boy is very tired.

The boy is very lazy or very tired.

(2)

QUESTION 5

Study the following bar graph and answer the questions that follow.



South African's most important agricultural products in 1993

5.1 Which agricultural product had the highest tonnage? *Maize* (1)

5.2 Rank the products from highest to lowest tonnage. *M - Sheep - Poultry* (1)

5.3 Is South Africa a crop or stock (animal) producing country? Explain your answer. *A crop because the graph reflects main production in crop.* (2)

5.4 What do you think would happen to South Africa's agricultural production if there is a drought? *We will be bankrupt and many will die.* (2)

5.5 Which is South Africa's most important agricultural product? (1)

5.6 Rank the stock from lowest to highest. *sheep - Maize.* (1)

5.7 Compare the Wheat production with the production of maize.
By what tonnage does maize production exceed wheat? (1)

5.8 For what other purposes are sheep raised? (1)
[10]

TOTAL: 100

VISTA UNIVERSITY

TERM 1

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY 5001

LPR 100/440 5001

PRE-TEST

DURATION: 2 HOURS

MARKS: 100

EXAMINERS: MRS H DIPPENAAR
LECTURERS FROM OTHER CAMPUSES

INSTRUCTIONS TO INVIGILATORS

Provide each student with:

One question paper (8 pages)
Test paper

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

1. Answer ALL questions
2. This examination paper consists of 8 pages, including this cover page.