

TEACHING DISCIPLINARY DISCOURSE AND IMPLEMENTING  
LANGUAGE-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM AT TERTIARY LEVEL:  
PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

THESIS

Submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements of the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS  
of Rhodes University

by

CANDICE ANNE CALDWELL

January 1997

Supervisor: Professor V.A. DeKlerk  
Co-Supervisor: Professor G.P. Barkhuizen

## ABSTRACT

The premise of this thesis is that "learning", particularly in terms of students and universities, is capable of being seen as a specific and developed culture. This study is a contribution to the ethnography of that learning, the ultimate aim being to produce a descriptive theory of learning as a cultural system.

This research was conducted within the context of the recent proposals made by the South African Commission on Higher Education. The proposals relevant to this study were, broadly, increased access to higher education and national funding for academic staff development programmes.

There are, however, serious obstacles in the way of realising the aims of the higher education system outlined by the NCHE. Given the limited time and resources available for higher education development, it is imperative that the major flaws and obstacles in the system be identified and addressed as soon as possible.

In view of this need, it was the concern of this study to conduct research which would assist in the designing of staff development programmes for academics teaching in English-medium tertiary institutions, like Rhodes University, where more than half the intake of first-year students already speaks English as a second, or other, language.

Founded on the social constructionist view of knowledge, the aim of the study was to identify the needs of academic staff as well as the possible obstacles to the implementation of a "Language Across the Curriculum" policy. A genre-centred, ethnographic approach was used to access a disciplinary discourse community (the Psychology Department) in order to describe the practices of the community as well as to analyse the community's orders of discourse, particularly those which occurred at points of contact between lecturers and first-year students.

It is argued that staff development programmes should promote the use of collaborative learning, which implies a reframing of the roles of both academic staff and students.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **Chapter 1 : Introduction**

1.0 The South African Context	1
1.1 Academic Support in South African Tertiary Education	3
1.2 The Implications	6
1.3 The Research Aims	7
1.4 The Research Context	8
1.5 The Research Subjects	10
1.5.1 The Staff	10
1.5.2 The Students	10
1.6 Outline of Chapters	12

### **Chapter 2 : Review of related literature**

2.0 Overview	13
2.1 Discourse	14
2.1.1 Discourse and the "Orders of Discourse"	14
2.1.2 Discourse, Ideology, Power	19
2.1.3 Access to Discourse and the Discourse Community	21
2.1.4 The University as a Discourse Community	24
2.1.4.1 The University	26
2.1.4.2 The Departments	28
2.2 Genre and Genre Analysis	32
2.2.1 Learning and the Teaching of Genre	36
2.2.1.1 Learning and Language Acquisition	37
2.2.1.2 The Teaching of Genre	39
2.3. Conclusion	44

### **Chapter 3 : Methodology**

3.0 Overview	46
3.1 John Swales' Genre-based Model	47
3.1.1 Ethnography	49

3.1.1.1 The Staff	53
3.1.1.2 The Students	55
3.1.1.3 The Supplemental Instruction Tutors	56
3.1.1.4 The Academic Development Programme Staff	56
3.1.1.5 The Psychology Department	56
3.1.2 Evaluations and Validations	56
3.1.3 Discourse Analysis	57
3.1.3.1 Analysis of Lectures	59
3.1.3.2 Student Lecture Notes and Essays	63
3.1.4 Methodology	64
3.2 Conclusion	65
 <b>Chapter 4 : Findings and Discussion</b>	
4.0 Overview	66
4.1. Ethnography	66
4.1.1. The University Community	68
4.1.1.1 The Students	68
4.1.1.2 The Staff	71
4.1.2 The Psychology Department as a Community	75
4.1.2.1 Joining the Community	78
4.1.2.2 The Discipline and the Course	79
4.1.3 Writing	84
4.1.3.1 Staff Perceptions of Academic Writing	85
4.1.3.2 Who Should Teach academic writing?	89
4.1.3.3. Student Perceptions of academic writing	93
4.1.4 The Tutorial Programme	96
4.1.5 Lectures	103
4.2 Evaluations and Validations	107
4.3 Discourse Analysis	109
4.3.1 The Lectures	109
4.3.2 The Lecture Notes	123
4.3.3 The Students' Essays	130

4.3.3.1 The ALRP Evaluation of Student Writing	130
4.3.3.2 The Writing Tasks and the Writing Guide	132
4.3.3.3 The Feedback	135
4.4 Conclusion	135
 <b>Chapter 5 : Conclusion and Suggestions</b>	
5.0 Overview	137
5.1 Obstacles to Access: Can Teaching the Discourse be Incorporated into the Curriculum of the Discipline?	138
5.1.2 The University	138
5.1.3 The Image of the Department and its Attitude Toward First-year Students	140
5.1.4 Approach to Teaching in Psychology 1	141
5.1.4.1 Lectures	141
5.1.4.2 Tutorials	142
5.1.5 Writing	143
5.1.6 The "genre" of Psychology - The Discipline's Perspective on Language	143
5.2 Suggestions for Further Innovations	147
5.2.1 Lecturer Training	147
5.2.1.1 Reframing the Roles	148
(a) Reframing the Teacher Role	148
(b) Reframing the Student Role	149
5.2.1.2 Finding out about the students	150
5.2.1.3 Lecture Presentation	151
5.2.2 Writing	152
5.2.2.1 The Disciplinary Discourse Continuum	153
5.2.2.2 Teaching Writing in Psychology 1	155
(a) Creating the Infrastructure	155
(b) The Writing tasks	156
(c) Writing as Conversation	157
5.2.3 The Role of ADP and ELAP	159

5.3 Conclusion	160
<b>Bibliography</b>	162
<b>Appendices</b>	
1 Staff Questionnaire	179
2 Exemplifying Quotes from Interviews	180
3 Psychology Department Academic Development Policy	184
4 Psychology Department Academic Development Curriculum for the First Year	185
5 Psychology Department First-year Assignment Assessment and Feedback form	186

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks go to:

- ◇ the students and staff of the Psychology department at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, who were so supportive and so tolerant of my constant questioning. Special thanks go to the members of the Academic Literacy Research Project team with whom I learnt so much and who encouraged me to take the research further
- ◇ my friends, for their support and patience, especially those who suffered alongside me: Sally Hunt, who tirelessly served as a live-in advisor, human thesaurus and proof-reader; and Peter Cross, for giving up many hours of precious time to help me format and print this thesis
- ◇ my own disciplinary discourse community, the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Rhodes University, where I have had ample guidance on my way to becoming a fully-fledged community member
- ◇ my co-supervisor, Professor Gary Barkhuizen, for sharing with me his own experience of "The Thesis" and kindly reading drafts during his time off
- ◇ my Head of Department and supervisor, Professor Vivian de Klerk, for her faith in me and all her help, both as teacher and supervisor  
and lastly
- ◇ my parents, for their unconditional support and for tolerating my "professional student" tendencies.

This work is dedicated to Bronwyn Fisher, who first taught me that climbing high means respecting the drop below you and never underestimating how far you still have to go.

The financial assistance of the Centre for Science Development (HSRC, South Africa) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### THE SCOPE AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Reconstruction and development in Higher Education will only be meaningful if it translates into real improvement in the appropriateness and effectiveness of the teaching-and-learning process for a student body with diverse needs ... While there is a key role for Academic Development specialists in the development process, the nature and scale of the developmental work required necessitates that most of it be carried out by, or in partnership with, mainstream academic staff as a responsibility and expression of their scholarship.  
(Scott, 1994, p. 6-7)

Because in the longer term the universities will simply not be able to cope with the student need for educational support, they will have to introduce structural changes and focus on staff development ... Educational support will have to cease to be a peripheral activity. Instead it must become a mainstream function, integrated into the departments, curricula and structures of the institutions.  
(Agar, Hofmeyer & Moulder, 1991, p. 19)

#### 1.0 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Wilcox (1982) notes that the denial of equal educational opportunity to diverse sectors of the population is probably the key problem in contemporary education around the world. In South Africa, attempts are being made to redress this problem across the educational spectrum. This thesis examines some of the linguistic issues prevalent at tertiary level, focusing on Rhodes University in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

In April 1996, the National Commission on Higher Education in South Africa (NCHE), established by presidential proclamation in February 1995, released a discussion document entitled *A Framework for Transformation*. In formulating its proposals the Commission was informed by two broad sets of issues: the South African higher education system, which has been shaped largely by apartheid, and global changes, which have had a significant impact on the size and nature of higher education institutions.

In an article examining the major recommendations of the Commission, the chairperson of the NCHE, Jairam Reddy (1996), writes that a breakdown of South African higher education



student demographics demonstrates stark inequality: 54 percent of young white people are in higher education compared with six percent of black people (p.8). He notes further that internationally, higher education institutions have expanded from an elite to a mass and universal level, making higher education accessible to an increasing number of people, not only those aged 18 to 24 years, but also adult learners, minorities, workers, the disabled etc. The Commission therefore proposes that participation in higher education should "increase within a national policy framework of growth linked to capacity, resource availability, enhancing quality and the broad human resource needs of the country" (Ibid.).

Scott (1994) points out, however, that experience in South Africa and abroad indicates unequivocally that widening access without ensuring that the educational process can meet the legitimate needs of the student intake is a hollow exercise (p. 4). Thus, a policy ensuring increased access to higher education will not, on its own, ensure that the benefits will extend to historically excluded groups. To achieve this, institutions need to strive for equitable access to one of their most valued social resources; namely, their discourses and communicative events. The major theme of this study is how universities, and disciplines, can increase the "accessibility" of their discourses via "academic development" (AD).

With regard to AD, the Commission proposes that "national funding should provide for academic staff development programmes to enhance skills in curriculum development, course design and teaching methods ... national funding mechanisms should also create a national curriculum and academic development agency" (Ibid.).

Notable by its absence is any proposal regarding academic development for students. While the Commission does propose the provision of funding for "entry level courses" and restricted funding for career, curriculum and personal counselling for students, the proposed focus of development programmes is the academic staff rather than the students.

The rationale for such a proposal lies in the past experience of both local and international institutions. In the last 15 years, South Africa's historically white (or "open"), English-medium universities have experienced a steady increase in the proportion of English-Second-

Language (ESL) speakers registering each year, particularly students from former Department of Education and Training (DET)<sup>1</sup> backgrounds. In January 1996, more than 47% of those registering at Rhodes University were non-English speakers. Recent research (De Klerk, 1996) shows that the overwhelming majority of students at Rhodes are very happy with an English-as-medium-of-instruction policy and the university is therefore not currently contemplating a switch in language policy. As De Klerk (1996, p. 127) notes, "second language students at Rhodes today are clearly not willing to sacrifice their own futures on the altar of linguistic diversity".

This does not, however, preclude the need for English-medium universities to "monitor the linguistic situation on their campuses, in order to keep abreast of demographic changes and their linguistic consequences" (Ibid., p. 115). With the emphasis now on increased access to higher education, the student bodies of these institutions will continue to change, becoming more representative of the broader society, and thus the demand for appropriate educational support and institutional development will increase proportionately.

Universities can therefore no longer assume a generally shared culture amongst students nor can they assume that university learning can "rise up from a uniformly literate intellectual landscape ... (for) there are different literacies" (Taylor et al., 1988, p. 4). Academic literacy should thus be seen as something which needs to be cultivated within the university context itself. Because it is crucial in the university's construction of "culture, meaning and knowledge" language needs to be accorded a central place in university work (Bond, 1993, p. 21).

### 1.1 ACADEMIC SUPPORT IN SOUTH AFRICAN TERTIARY EDUCATION

A large amount of research has been conducted nationally, and within specific institutions, on what higher education institutions are doing to cope with the changing profile of their student bodies. The establishment of student support in the form of Academic Development

---

<sup>1</sup> The DET was the education department providing schooling for African children under the Nationalist government.

Programmes (ADPs), "foundation" subject courses and remedial English, or English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses characterises the response of most "open" universities. On the other hand, assistance for staff, rather than students, has long been the dominant model of academic support in historically black universities: "With a numbers problem and a different philosophy, they started ADPs aimed mainly at lecturers" (Hofmeyer & Spence, 1989, p. 47). This leads one to question the philosophy behind the "open" university approach to AD. Rosenberg and Dison (1995) sum it up in the following way:

Such students have typically been seen [by these institutions] as 'problem', or 'at risk' students, who, as a result of their impoverished educational backgrounds and linguistic deficits, need remediation in order to function effectively within the University. The cause of failure has been blamed on the students' inability to cope with the demands of academia, rather than the university's inability to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (p. 1).

Starfield (1994) contends that two distinct phases in the development of ADPs can be identified: the initial phase in which the main focus is on English language and study skills programmes, and a second phase in which the content areas become the focus of the support initiative (p. 16). As a result of work done by researchers like Starfield, Rosenberg (1995) and others, many historically white South African universities, including Rhodes University, have entered or are being encouraged to enter, this latter phase.

While changes cannot happen overnight, all the evidence suggests that ADPs at the "open" universities should continue to transform themselves towards faculty-based, or Language Across the Curriculum (LAC), models: "Only through faculty-based models will departments take responsibility for underprepared students and address the problem on the scale that it demands" (Hofmeyer & Spence, 1989:47).

As important as the issues of "scale" and "responsibility" are, research also shows that, from a pedagogical point of view, an integrated model is the most effective choice. In her discussion on linking ESL and content in higher education, Sarah Benesch (1988) concludes that general language courses fail because:

while [they] can provide a glimpse into various disciplines, [they] cannot provide the depth of information and types of analysis in one field which are necessary to develop the cognitive skills required for a specific academic course. A typical college course builds on itself as the semester progresses, presenting a set of principles and ideas and technical terminology. Learning is cumulative...students are asked to become socialised into the culture of the discipline, to use its tools of analysis, and to think like a specialist. To be proficient in an academic discipline is to have a sense of the discipline as it unfolds through time. (p. 96)

Rosenberg and Dison (1995) note that for many years, language has been seen as incidental to academic disciplines other than those explicitly teaching languages and literature. Lecturers have identified certain problems which students have as "language problems" and therefore not the domain of mainstream subject lecturers. The vital role that language plays in grappling with ideas, developing an understanding of concepts and constructing knowledge has been taken for granted (p. 2).

In a recent report on her ongoing evaluation of the English Language for Academic Purposes (ELAP) programme at Rhodes University, Rosenberg (1995) concludes that the problem with general academic support programmes, such as the ELAP course, is that the perceived role and ultimate effectiveness of the course within the mainstream rests on two misconceptions: that language skills learned in a course such as ELAP are transferable to other courses and that academic language is unvarying (p. 4).

It is important to note at this point that a LAC approach does **not** negate the need for courses such as ELAP or any other first-year foundations courses. Proposing LAC, along with these courses, at tertiary level rests on the premise that there is an academic discourse as well as disciplinary discourses. That is, there are some discourse conventions that are shared by all academic disciplines. However, each academic discipline also has its own way of making sense of experience, which is embedded in the discourse conventions of the discipline.

Bartholomae (1985) argues that students entering academic disciplines must learn the genres and conventions that members of the disciplinary community employ. Without this knowledge, he contends, students remain locked outside of the community's discourse. Starfield (1994) notes, however, that in many teaching situations students are left to "figure

out" for themselves what constitute appropriate texts and the meanings of genres within a discipline (p. 17-18). While this "osmosis pedagogy" worked reasonably well when most students were white, middle-class, English first-language speakers with advantaged secondary schooling, it is proving less than successful in many of the multilingual, multicultural classes at universities.

Thus research shows that students clearly need more than a dose of language skills administered by ESL teachers who are not expert members of each academic discourse community: "Initiation into the ways of knowing and doing of a discipline requires the active participation of accomplished members of the community" (Ibid.).

For many university lecturers, however, the language of their discipline and its methods and approaches have become so automatised that they are unable to tell their first-year students "how-to-do" the course. Cope and Kalantzis (1990) argue that "the entire emphasis on transmitting content through the curriculum has been at the expense of learning how to learn, or the process of learning" (p. 123). Students are expected to understand and reproduce the appropriate genres of academic argument without any explicit instruction.

## 1.2 THE IMPLICATIONS

The NCHE proposals, along with the research on which they are based, imply a new "look" for both the historically white university, and its academic staff. While the accepted assumption is that every university academic is a teacher, many do not think of themselves as "teachers" and, at present, it is not deemed necessary for academics to have formal teaching qualifications. Thus, in light of current research, the question that must be asked is, what can be done to assist lecturers in making the transition? That is, what should be included in academic staff development programmes?

One approach to answering this question is to examine it from a LAC perspective. Somehow, students need to come to terms with the linguistic features of their various disciplinary

discourse communities, and staff need to be able to help them do this. The implications for research, according to Johns (1990), are as follows:

Researchers must attempt to determine the nature of academic institutional discourse through needs assessment and task analyses and to describe, among other things, the sociolinguistic context and the nature of writing tasks students must perform (p. 213).

In 1995, the Psychology department at the University began a research project which attempted to address all these issues. Responding to a call from the ADP for research investigating aspects of academic development in the University, the project committee set out to examine the Department's approach to, and attitudes towards, AD. The research design included both a student and staff survey and I was hired by the Department to conduct the latter. The results of this survey, which will be discussed at a later stage, provided invaluable information regarding staff attitudes towards AD and the incorporation of language "skills" teaching into mainstream curricula. In their report, Psychology's Academic Literacy Research Project (ALRP) team concluded that

It is not possible for the staff to assist with basic literacy training. Furthermore, should the department adopt an AD policy that moves away from an 'add-on' approach to a more integrative one, it will require assistance in such a transition. Special planning needs to be given to motivating staff to engage in developing their own teaching skills. They need to be shown ways of developing their skills as part of ongoing work and in ways which do not add an extra burden (Fisher et al., 1995, p. 73).

The motivation for the research discussed in this study comes directly from the needs mentioned above.

### 1.3 THE RESEARCH AIMS

The primary concerns of the staff in the Psychology department are as follows: Firstly, that they do not have the time to engage in any of the "extra" teaching that AD implies; secondly, if curriculum changes are what is required, in what areas should these changes be made? And thirdly, where do they acquire the knowledge or skills required to implement these changes?

This research rises to the challenge posed by staff resistance by attempting to answer some of these questions as well as providing some evidence that **different** teaching does not necessarily imply **more** teaching. Because of the exploratory nature of this research it is open-ended. Therefore there is no one particular research question but rather several points of focus which will be drawn together to provide a holistic view of the discourse specific to the discipline of psychology.

This study approaches the problem by adopting a genre-centred methodology based primarily on the writing of the applied linguist John Swales. His approach incorporates principles of Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, Critical Language Awareness (CLA) and Genre Analysis. By adopting this comprehensive, qualitative approach my aim is, firstly, to illuminate a specific context into which the teaching of disciplinary discourse could be incorporated. And secondly, to try to sensitise faculty in the discipline to the fact that,

in contrast to the specialised rhetorics they routinely use in their professional writing, the genres of the undergraduate curricula are characterised by quite different textual features and conventions, given their classroom-based contexts and rhetorical functions (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995, p. 13).

#### 1.4 THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

As mentioned, this study is based on the ALRP that was begun by the Psychology department at Rhodes in 1995. The research process involved was seen as a means to starting a fuller reflection of what is meant by academic development in relation to the discipline and profession of Psychology.

The question posed by the research team was, "in what way do we expect our graduates to be different from when they first entered the University?" (Fischer et al., 1995, p. 3). They realised that the answer to this question depended on whether Psychology was understood to be: a discipline with roots in the social and natural sciences and in the humanities; a profession with a body of practitioners who operate under statutory regulations and professional constraints; or a broad domain of skills and knowledge that can be usefully

employed by individuals in their personal life or used as a resource to address human needs in a range of vocational or community settings (Ibid.).

The focus of the project was "literacy", in the sense that literacy means "a set of practices, ways of thinking and being familiar with the "language" for engaging with texts" (Fischer et al., 1995, p. 2). In light of the three relevant, yet quite distinct, branches implicit in "Psychology" (as given above), the research team settled on three main areas of focus - academic, professional and vocational - and then defined literacy in relation to each of these. What follows is the working definition of academic literacy as generated by the research team.

**Academic Literacy:** The set of competencies required to think critically, ask questions, communicate and access relevant resources within the discipline of Psychology at the tertiary education level. Among these competencies are: the ability to read complex texts; communicate through writing; attend and participate in lectures; access and use resources including the library, computers and staff and peers; and write exams.

While this definition is not necessarily central to this study, it is significant to all the data collected from the staff questionnaire and the interviews, since staff were asked to consider it when completing the questionnaires.

Beside the fact that I was invited to become involved in this research, there are a number of other factors that make the Psychology department a particularly useful context for such a study. Most importantly, the original study was internally motivated, which means that all those involved were interested and co-operative.

Secondly, the discourse of Psychology as a discipline spans both the humanities and the pure sciences while incorporating both a positivist and social-scientific approach to its content. This scope makes an analysis of the discourse particularly useful with regard to generalising the results.

Thirdly, the discipline has an extremely well-developed system of writing conventions based on the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. While this manual is



ostensibly a guide for the professional writing of psychologists, it has been proposed that "APA style" is not just a collection of arbitrary stylistic conventions but "also encapsulates the core values and epistemology of the discipline. APA style ... serves as an important socialisation experience for Psychologists" (Madigan et al., 1995, p. 428).

Finally, the Psychology department is one of the largest on the Rhodes University campus and draws students not only from the Arts faculty but also from Social Science, Commerce and Science. It therefore regularly has one of the highest first year enrolments in the University (350-400 students) making it an ideal context in which to conduct this sort of research. Scott (1994) argues that

by targeting high-enrolment courses and by co-ordinating efforts so that basic design work is made available for use in different ways across the sector, a significant impact can be made in key problem areas and the initial investment of time and resources can yield important long-term benefits (p. 18).

## 1.5 THE RESEARCH SUBJECTS

The people focused on in this research are the academic staff of the Psychology department and first-year students registered for Psychology 1 in 1996.

### 1.5.1 THE STAFF

At the time this research was conducted, the Psychology department at Rhodes consisted of two Professors, one Associate Professor, two Senior Lecturers, seven Lecturers, four Junior Lecturers and several part-time temporary teaching staff-members. Every member of staff was asked to complete a comprehensive questionnaire, the aim of which was to ascertain their activities and assess their attitudes in relation to a range of issues within the scope of "academic literacy". Each of the staff members who completed the questionnaire was then interviewed, during which time the questionnaire data was expanded or clarified.

### 1.5.2 THE STUDENTS

The reasons for focusing on the first-year class are as follows:

1) The 1995 ALRP highlighted a significant difference in what staff expected of their second year students as compared to their first year students with regard to reading and writing competencies. This implies a general assumption that acquisition of the discourse occurs at some point during the first year.

2) Many staff members view the first year Psychology course as a "filter" year, after which "we can get on with the business of teaching Psychology". This again implies that those students who make it to second year have acquired a "skill" in their first year that others have not.

3) Acquiring academic discourse has as much to do with socialisation as it does to do with academic study. Since most students feel "part of the community" by the end of their first year, a study like this needed to track their progress from day one.

Of the 357 students in the first year class, 228 were female and 129 were male. There were 251 students who regarded English as their mother-tongue, 67 for whom it was Xhosa and the balance of the class spoke a variety of other languages, both South African and foreign. The majority of the class was registered in the faculty of Arts (165), followed by Social Science (39), Commerce (15) and Science (5).

Data collection was restricted to those students in the class who were attending University for the first time. 63% (224) of the class were "first-years" and the data collected from these students includes questionnaire responses, interviews, lecture notes and essays. I attempted to initiate a journal-writing exercise at the beginning of the year but this proved unsuccessful due to lack of co-operation from those who volunteered.

Other data collected and analysed during the course of this study include recordings of three lectures, various "handouts" and guidesheets given to students during the year and a record of my own responses to the course since I was also registered for Psychology 1 this year.

## 1.6 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter two is a review of the literature related to the access routes suggested in Swales' (1990) genre-centred model of analysis. "Discourse" provides the locus of this discussion which examines discourse and contemporary discourse practices, the relationship between discourse, power and ideology, the origin of discourse and genre analysis, and the concept of "discourse community".

Chapter three provides a description of Swales' model and how his proposed methodology was applied in this study with regard to data collection and analysis.

Chapter four is a descriptive-interpretive account of the findings presented in line with Swales' model.

Chapter 5 draws together and presents the salient features of the practices and genres of the Psychology department, identifying possible points of focus for staff development programmes.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.0 OVERVIEW

John Swales (1990) argues that a genre-centred approach offers a workable way of making sense of the myriad of communicative events that occur in contemporary English-speaking academe. His methodological framework suggests four possible routes via which a researcher may access the discourse community in question: ethnography, evaluations and validations of instructional material, discourse analysis and methodology. This research has focused on two of these four routes, namely, discourse analysis and ethnography. Ethnography is suggested as a means to accessing the discourse community being studied, while discourse analysis is the approach suggested for examining the genres of the community. The discussion in this chapter revolves around these four, inextricably linked concepts which have been artificially separated into sections simply for the sake of clarity.

Discourse Analysis is discussed in relation to the general concept of "discourse". This discussion examines discourse and contemporary discourse practices, the relationship between discourse, power and ideology, the origin of discourse and genre analysis, and the concept of "discourse community". The discussion includes a look at the University as a discourse community and examines the difficulties new students experience in entering this community. Finally, this section also shows the link between discourse and genre analysis, attempting to define the concept of genre and look at the debates surrounding the learning and teaching of genre.

Ethnography is discussed briefly in this section as a method of investigating discourse communities. A more detailed discussion follows in Chapter three.

## 2.1 DISCOURSE

In his introduction to language policy, power and inequality, Tollefson (1995) states that "research in applied linguistics must incorporate, as a central concept, the issue of power" (p. 1). This issue is certainly central to any discussion of discourse since, as Frow (1989) argues, all discourse is informed by power [and] is constituted as discourse in relation to unequal patterns of power. Every use of discourse is at once a judgement about its relation to dominant forms of power and either an assent or a resistance to this relation (p. 208).

This discussion of discourse therefore reviews the relationship between discourse, power and ideology and also addresses the issue of access to discourse and how this relates to the University as a social institution. I then move on to discourse analysis and discuss how it relates to genre and genre analysis.

### 2.1.1 DISCOURSE AND THE "ORDERS OF DISCOURSE"

Sociolinguists, like Gee (1990), Kress (1985) and others, have developed a new and fairly sophisticated notion of discourse. Gee calls Discourse, with a capital D, a sort of "identity kit" which includes ways of talking and writing and acting so that you play a social role that can be recognised by others. He says,

Each social institution commands and demands one or more Discourses and we acquire these fluently to the extent that we are given access to these institutions and are allowed apprenticeship within them (cited in Angelil-Carter & Paxton, 1989, p. 8).

Fowler (1996) defines discourse in relation to the more recent functionalist (or Hallidayan) formulation of "register", pointing out an important distinction between the two: whereas a register is a variety of language, a discourse is a system of meanings, within the culture, which pre-exists language (p. 7). Thus one speaks of texts being "in" some register, whereas several discourses may be "in" a text.

Language use, conceived as social practice, is the central tenet of most definitions of discourse. Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1996) too holds this position and distinguishes further the concept of "orders of discourse" (a term adapted from Foucault) for the overall configuration of discourse practices of a society or one of its institutions (1996, p. 71).

Fairclough (1996) argues that contemporary "orders of discourse" have a property which distinguishes them from earlier orders of discourse: they are becoming deeply and distinctly affected by what he calls a *technologisation of discourse*. This he defines as an institutionalisation of circuits connecting research, design and training (Ibid..).

This theory is extremely relevant to contemporary educational transformation and Fairclough refers regularly to the changes taking place in the institutional practices of British universities. The state of flux within which South African tertiary education now finds itself allows a reasonable comparison of these two systems and this theory provides a very interesting, albeit ambivalent, perspective on both the changes occurring at present and those being suggested for the future. For this reason I would like to explain his theory in some detail, placing this study within the theory as an example of research which could be seen as buying into, or feeding off, the "technologisation" process.

Fairclough provides five characteristics of the technologisation of discourse as a framework for elaborating the abovementioned definition:

1. the emergence of expert "discourse technologists"
2. a shift in the "policing" of discourse practices
3. the design and projection of context-free discourse techniques
4. strategically motivated simulation in discourse
5. the pressure towards standardisation of discourse practices.

(Ibid., p. 73)

While there have long been specialists in persuasive and manipulative discourse, contemporary "technologists of discourse" are said to have certain distinguishing features.

One is their relationship to knowledge: they are social scientists, or other sorts of "experts", with privileged access to scientific information, and their interventions into discursual practices therefore carry an aura of "truth". Another feature is their relationship to institutions, where they are likely to hold accredited roles either within the institutions or as expert outsiders brought in for particular projects (Ibid.). For example, Fairclough mentions the two recent additions of *staff development* and *staff appraisal* to the institutional practices of British universities - additions which will soon be features of the South African system. He argues that both the training of staff and the training of appraisers are partly training in a variety of discourse practices - lecturing, organising seminars, tutoring, writing research proposals - and that both directly employed staff and outside consultants are being drawn into specialised institutional roles and practices, partly as discourse technologists (Ibid.).

While discourse practices are normally subjected to checks or sanctions, Fairclough suggests that the effect of the technologisation of discourse is to shift the "policing" of these practices from a local institutional level to a trans-institutional level, and from categories within particular institutions to discourse technologists as outsiders. An example of this would be the discursual dimensions of the shift in universities from the practices of academics being judged by their peers to their practices being measured and evaluated according to externally generated criteria (Ibid., p. 74).

With regard to the third characteristic, discourse technologists design and redesign what Fairclough calls "discursual techniques", such as lecturing or interviewing, to maximise their effectiveness and change them effectively (Ibid.). He argues that the tendency is for such techniques to be increasingly designed and projected as "context-free". This tendency is evident in training where there is a focus upon the transferability of skills - "teaching for transfer". University English for Academic Purposes courses (such as ELAP at Rhodes), where skills are being taught specifically for transfer to other academic contexts, could be seen as an example of this tendency.

The redesign of discourse techniques involves extensive *simulation*, by which he means the conscious and systematic grafting on to a discourse technique of discourse practices

originating elsewhere, on the basis of a strategic calculation of their effectiveness (Ibid.). In this case he refers particularly to the simulation of meanings and forms which imply social relations and identities associated more with the domains of private life than with institutional events, such as interviews. This process is referred to as "conversationalisation"; institutional appropriation of the resources of conversation and apparent democratisation of institutional discourse (Ibid.). He notes further, that these are tendencies rooted in broader currents of contemporary cultural change - democratisation, consumerism - which can be regarded as being exploited for strategic and instrumental ends in the technologisation of discourse. This makes the cultural values attaching to informal, conversationalised institutional discourse profoundly ambivalent (Ibid.).

The final characteristic of discourse technologisation is that it apparently constitutes a powerful impetus towards standardisation and normalisation of discourse practices, across as well as within institutions (Ibid., p. 75). Fairclough argues that all the above characteristics are centralising and standardising pressures upon discourse practice.

Technologisation, as a characteristic of contemporary orders of discourse, can be related to changes affecting modern society. One such change is the set of upheavals and restructurings which, Fairclough notes, have been affecting various domains of professional work since the mid-eighties, highlighting, to an unprecedented degree, discursal and communicative skills in these professions (Ibid.). He argues that such upheavals seem to favour an intensification of discourse technologisation. Universities, for example, both in Britain and South Africa, have, and are, experiencing major externally imposed changes (cuts in government finance, imposition of market conditions of operation, mechanisms to ensure answerability and "relevance") as well as internal organisational changes (institutional plans, the training and appraisal of staff, etc.). These changes are seen as requiring new skills in teaching, management and so on, entailing access to knowledge and techniques from outside higher education. Fairclough claims that the decreasing autonomy of universities has made them more "permeable" to such external influences and it is, in part, externally designed discourse techniques (for lecturing, tutoring, counselling, etc.) that are being imported.



One of the implications of the abovementioned changes is that many institutions are undergoing processes of deprofessionalisation and reprofessionalisation (Ibid., p. 77). In the case of university teachers, Fairclough sees the process as actually involving a decrease in autonomy. Traditional constructions of professional identity, which centre upon relatively autonomous research and scholarship, are under pressure from new models which construct the academic as multiskilled: dispersed across a complex set of duties and functions each of which involves training in specific skills - including research, teaching, administrative, promotional and counselling skills. In terms of the technologisation of discourse, these changes in professional identity seem to go along with the impetus to train academics in the range of externally designed discoursal techniques already referred to (Ibid.).

As mentioned earlier, it could be argued that the sort of research forming the basis of this study stems directly from the fact that contemporary orders of discourse are being affected by "technologisation": this research suggests that an investigation elucidating the discourse practices of an academic department (by its own members or an outside "expert"), specifically the Psychology department, can assist lecturers in acquiring the skills they need to democratise, or make more accessible, the discourse of their discipline. Fairclough (1996) maintains that resulting competence- or skills-based approaches to language education harmonise with the technologisation process in that any such approach "focuses on training in context-free techniques (skills),... is a pressure for standardisation of practices [and] ... fits with the autonomous notions of self, each individual being construed as housing a configuration of skills which can be worked upon and improved" (p. 82).

I do not believe, however, that any research advocating a policy of Language Across the Curriculum (LAC), or related in any way to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) or rhetorical genre studies, can be seen as supporting "context-free techniques" or the "standardisation of practices". One of the crucial tasks of such an analysis is to describe and expose the "manufacture of consent" implicit in the very idea of "context-free techniques" or "standard" practices (van Dijk, 1996).

Nor do I believe that "technologisation", a process that is undeniably underway, need be seen as something insidious, undermining the autonomy of academics and resulting in the promotion of ubiquitous, uncreative "techniques". Unequally distributed access to, and control over, the means of public discourse and communication allows institutions to influence the structures of text and talk in such a way that the knowledge, attitudes, norms and ideologies of the recipients are affected in the interest of the dominant group (van Dijk, 1996, p. 85). As Morphet (1992) notes, with regard to the South African context,

in our discourse, education is the pleasant story which power tells to the powerless in order to make secure its own hiding place within the same order of power. The South African educator subject is constituted in the place where the destructive dark side of enlightenment is masked by the transposition which makes the promise that if education is given freedom will follow (cited in Angelil-Carter & Paxton, 1993, p. 22).

It may well take outside "discourse technologists" (specialists in manipulative discourse) and a shift in the "policing" of institutionalised discourse to expose and rectify inequitable practices. Furthermore, updated, externally designed "discoursal techniques" and a move towards the "democratisation of institutionalised discourse" might propel a shift in the status quo, encourage a questioning of accepted norms and lead to the redressing of power imbalances.

I have referred briefly to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and the issue of *access* to discourse, noting in Chapter 1 the fact that, simply because South African Universities are now more accessible to previously excluded groups of people, this does not mean that everyone has equal access to the discourses associated with academia. I will now address these issues in more detail, considering the implications unequal access has for those wishing to join the University community.

### 2.1.2 DISCOURSE, IDEOLOGY, POWER

In his discussion of power and language, Corson (1993) notes that Marx & Engels (1976 [1846]) were the first to link the two by way of ideology. That influence continues through

the work of key interpreters in the Marxian tradition on this topic, such as Gramsci, Habermas, and Bourdieu, who see structure and agency as key concepts in addressing the issue; and who see power over discourse as a means for elevating the needs and interests of non-elite groups above those of the system that is designed and controlled by elites (Ibid., p. 2).

Antonio Gramsci (1948, in Corson, 1993, p. 6), for instance, highlights the non-coercive aspect of domination, comparing it with the more obvious coercive forms of power. His concept of "hegemony" describes the organisation of consent through invisible cultural dominance, rather than through visible political power. In developed modern societies, control is exercised in a "modern" way which gives stability by basing power on wide-ranging consent and agreement and results in the dominated becoming accomplices in their own domination. So it is argued that power hegemonies are reinforced from both sides of the power relationship: in their language usage, the non-dominant adhere to the linguistic norms created by dominant groups, while not recognising that they are being "voluntarily coerced" (Ibid.).

There are psychological pressures from both sides of the power equation which help the powerful by converting coercive forms of power into what is perceived instead as legitimate authority (Wrong, 1979). Fairclough (1992) notes in this regard that the ideologies embedded in discursive practices are most effective when they become naturalised, and achieve the status of "common sense" (p. 87-88). Thus socialisation into the role of an accomplice in one's own domination in social settings is manifested in a use of linguistic norms that acknowledges the legitimacy of those imbalanced social relations (Corson, 1993, p. 6).

Critical Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), terms first used by Fowler (1979) and others, are primarily engaged in the formulation of a principled account of the relationship between language, power and ideology and the way in which texts, through the selection of specific linguistic structures and lexical items, encode these relationships and reflect the interests of particular groups of people, most especially the dominant and the powerful (Fairclough, 1992). Kress (1996) notes that CL and CDA have, from the beginning,

had a political project: "the issue has ... been one of transformation, unsettling the existing order, and transforming its elements into an arrangement less harmful to some, and perhaps more beneficial to all the members of a society (p. 15).

The naturalised or "common sense" status of ideologies should therefore not be overstated: the above reference to "transformation" points to ideological struggle as a dimension of discursive practice, a struggle to reshape discursive practices, and the ideologies built into them, in the context of the restructuring or transformation of relations of domination. This is a particularly important point to bear in mind when discussing orders of discourse in the South African context: relations of domination have recently undergone rapid and dramatic transformation and all social institutions, in a bid to reflect the "new" power relations in the country, are now faced with a reshaping of discursive practices.

Clarence (1992) asserts that it is precisely in making hidden meaning explicit that CL can make a significant analytical contribution. The initiation of critical debate implies at least that the "effect of ideologies" is rendered visible and brings with it the possibility, within determining social and historical constraints, of previously unseen options. It implies that if the construction and intention of dominant discourse conventions and practices can be better understood, they can also be critiqued and either accepted or rejected.

Within this framework of discursively mediated dominance, I now turn to an important dimension of this dominance, namely, patterns of access to discourse.

### 2.1.3 ACCESS TO DISCOURSE AND THE DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

One major element in the discursive reproduction of power and dominance is the very access to discourse and communicative events. Van Dijk (1996) shows that patterns and strategies of discursive access may be spelled out for virtually all social domains, institutions, professions, situations and genres. He notes, however, that these patterns differ depending on various social or institutional roles, gender, age, position, context or topicality (Ibid., p. 87). Thus although a relevant concept in the study of discourse and power, "access" is a rather

vague notion and requires further specification: he mentions four dimensions of access which allow one to make the necessary analytical distinctions: planning, setting, controlling communicative events, and scope and audience control (Ibid., 87-88).

Plans usually imply decisions about the setting (time and place), and an "agenda" for talk, as well as the participants being invited or ordered to appear; for example, a professor deciding to set a test. For educational encounters, students may take the initiative, but lecturers usually decide about the setting.

There are many elements of the setting of communicative events that may be controlled by different participants (Ibid., p. 87). First of all, who is allowed or obliged to participate, and in what role, may be decided by the powerful participants who control the interaction. As mentioned already, time, place and circumstances of text and talk may similarly be controlled by powerful actors. Other circumstances, like distance and positioning, may also involve differential patterns of access for different participants.

Van Dijk (1996) maintains that the third, and crucial, form of access consists of the power to control various dimensions of speech and talk itself: which mode of communication may/must be used (spoken, written), which language may/must be used by whom (dominant or standard language etc.), which genres of discourse are allowed, which types of speech acts, or who may begin or interrupt turns at talk or discursive sequences (p. 88). Besides these overall constraints, participants may have differential access to topics, style or rhetoric. For example, students attending a lecture may be required to speak the standard language, to answer (possibly ask) questions only (and only when required to speak), to speak only about the topic being discussed, and using a polite, deferential style. Power and dominance may thus be enacted, confirmed and reproduced by such differential access to various forms of discourse in different social situations (Ibid.). With regard to institutions of higher education and access to the discourse of academe, Bizzell (1982) believes

that the abstracting, formalising power of academic work enables us to understand our experience in ways not made available by common sense or folk wisdom. We ought not to pretend to give people access to this power by

admitting them to college<sup>2</sup> and then prevent them from really attaining it by not admitting them into the discourse community (p. 206).

The final dimension of access is scope and audience control. That is, for certain situations (such as lectures or tutorials) initiators or participants may allow or require specific participants to be present (or absent), or allow or require these others to listen and/or to speak. Discourse access, especially in public forms of discourse, therefore also, and most crucially, implies audience access (Van Dijk, 1996).

Van Dijk concludes that most of the forms of discursive and communicative access discussed above, such as control of setting, interaction, topic or style will be geared towards the control of the minds of participants, recipients or the audience at large, in such a way that the resulting mental changes are those preferred by those in power, and generally in their interest (Ibid., p. 89).

While it may seem extreme to accuse Universities of "mind-control", there are many writers (for example, Van Dijk, 1996, Graaf, 1994, Rudolph, 1994, Farris, 1993) who charge these institutions with functioning as instruments of the *status quo*. Farris (1993), for example, contends that when lecturers teach, or make use of writing in any course, they teach not just a version of reality -they teach *their discipline's* version of reality, its assumptions, key words, and ways of knowing (p. 2). And, it is often

a **hegemonic version** of reality that is deposited and withdrawn, marketed and consumed, a normative discourse that suppresses conflict, not a set of disciplinary code-cracking tools that encourage and reward critique of the very assumptions and terms of analysis at the core of that knowledge (Ibid.).

Critical Linguistics, as an approach to language teaching, is referred to as either Critical Language Study or, most frequently, Critical Language Awareness (CLA). A critical linguist, in any setting, is described as attempting to uncover and "de-mystify certain social processes in ... societies, to make mechanisms of manipulation, discrimination, demagoguery and

---

<sup>2</sup> Much of the literature discussed in this chapter has been drawn from research conducted elsewhere - particularly America, Australia and England. The quotation of these foreign resources leads to some inconsistency in the use of terminology (such as "colleges" rather than "universities"). It is hoped that these terms will be understood in the context of the discussion.

propaganda explicit and transparent [and]...to understand how and why the reality is structured in a certain way" (Wodak, 1989, p. xiv). It follows from this that the first step towards empowering students, via CLA, is through an awareness of the discourse community, of what the conventions of that community are, where they come from and what their effects are so that students are no longer naively manipulated by them (Clark, 1992). Teaching academic skills should therefore include critically exploring with students the notion of an "academic discourse community" and how it is that certain forms of knowledge and ways of telling that knowledge have evolved in the way that they have.

#### 2.1.4 THE UNIVERSITY AS A DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

Swales (1990) defines discourse communities as "sociohistorical networks that form in order to work toward sets of common goals" (p. 9). While they vary in the degree to which they demand a major commitment to their work and rigid adherence to their discourse conventions, he suggests that for any social group to be considered a discourse community it should meet the following six criteria:

1. There must be some common, public "goal" the group seeks to accomplish, some work the participants are trying to perform together. These goals may be formally inscribed but are usually tacit. It is commonality of goal, not shared object of study that is critical, even if the former often subsumes the latter (Ibid., p. 24).
2. There must be some discursive "forum" accessible to all participants; oral, visual, and/or print media may be involved. This criterion is quite stringent (Ibid.).
3. The group must use its forum to work toward its goal by "providing information and feedback". Thus membership implies uptake of the informational opportunities (Ibid.).
4. The group develops expectations for how productive exchanges of information should proceed, which is to say that the group shares discourse conventions or "genres". These may involve appropriacy of topics, the form, function and positioning of discursive elements, and

the roles texts play in the operation of the community. In Psychology, for example, the prose style created by adherence to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) has created a specialised genre of writing. In so far as "genres are how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them" (Martin, 1985, p. 250 in Swales, *Ibid.*), these discursal expectations of the group are created by the genres that articulate the operations of the discourse community (*Ibid.*).

5. In addition to owning genres, a discourse community has acquired some specific lexis. This specialisation may involve using lexical items known to the wider speech community in special and technical ways. For example, in the case of psychology, words like "complex" and "chronic" have very different meanings when used within the discipline and students must therefore "re-learn" words they often already know. Most commonly, however, the inbuilt dynamic towards an increasingly shared and specialised terminology is realised through the development of community-specific abbreviations and acronyms (*Ibid.*): examples from psychology include "APA" and "DSM IV", the recognised Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of professional psychologists.

6. There must be a "critical mass" of experts in the group at any given time: people who are intimately familiar with the specialised genres with which the group seeks to accomplish its goals and who thus can initiate novices. The "survival of the community depends on a reasonable ratio between experts and novices" (*Ibid.*).

These criteria emphasise that for Swales, a discourse community is a social group using language to accomplish work in the world - the context of appropriate social behaviour provides cues for how best to employ the discourse conventions to accomplish this work.

Research within discourse communities has particular congruence with ethnography as a research method. Wilcox (1982) defines ethnography as, first and foremost, a "descriptive endeavour in which the researcher attempts accurately to describe and interpret the nature of social discourse among a group of people" (p. 458) (See Ch 3 for a full discussion of this research method). Critical ethnography, a style of analysis and discourse, embedded within



conventional ethnography goes a step further: conventional ethnographers study culture for the purpose of describing and analysing it to interpret meanings; critical ethnographers do so to change it. Critical ethnography is conventional ethnography with a political purpose (Smith, 1996, p. 5).

Notable for this study is that ethnographers have most frequently framed their view of educational institutions around the concept of cultural transmission. In this view, the institution acts primarily as an agent of the culture, transmitting a complex set of attitudes, values, behaviour and expectations which will enable a new generation to maintain the culture as an ongoing phenomenon (Ibid., p. 463). Ethnography is therefore inclined to see the ESL student, in particular, as becoming socialised or acculturated into the learning culture of an English-speaking university (Benson, 1994, p. 192). Critical ethnography would approach this by questioning the value of this acculturation, that is, asking not only "what is going on here?", but also "what could or should be going on here?"

While Swales's conception of discourse community has not gone uncriticised, his six criteria provide, if nothing else, a fair guide for determining whether social groups can be considered discourse communities. And since both the University and its constituent academic departments clearly meet the six given criteria, they can indeed be considered discourse communities. While the larger university community necessarily encompasses the smaller departments, the goals, participatory mechanisms, genres and specific lexicons differ sufficiently from larger institution to department, and from discipline to discipline, to consider them autonomous academic discourse communities.

#### 2.1.4.1 THE UNIVERSITY

Chiseri-Strater (1991) points out that, from a student's perspective, "discourse community" is a "misnomer, as community implies a place where the norms of behaviour are shared and understood by all, not only those in control" (cited in Olivier-Shaw, 1996, p. 21). From the students' perspective, the literacy norms of the disciplines usually remain invisible, not offering access to membership of any discourse community.

The ideological nature of academic institutions as well as their gatekeeping function is acknowledged by many authors (see, for example, Freed and Broadhead, 1987; Prinsloo et al, 1993; Graff, 1994; Rudolph, 1994). Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, universities are often said to function as instruments of the *status quo*, a charge that has not been news since the 1960s. Unlike other critics from the political left, however, Bourdieu, Passeron and de Saint Martin (1965; translated 1994) argue that universities exert a conservative social influence not by transmitting an intellectual heritage but by failing to transmit it. According to these authors, the university helps maintain the social *status quo* by withholding the mastery of "academic discourse" from the student body, thereby perpetuating the monopoly of the few over what they call the "cultural capital" of knowledge. By rewarding the students from privileged backgrounds who come in already able to talk the university's talk, the institution keeps the rest in their place. There is no conspiracy, but students end up being deprived of the academic discourse that they are expected to speak and that they need in order to get ahead.

At an English-medium university, such as Rhodes, the predominant academic culture is Western, rather than African, a manifestation of the historical dominance of whites in South Africa. Thus, as Hunt (1996) notes, English-speaking students have far more of an advantage than simply sharing a language with the majority culture; they share, in addition, a wide variety of norms and expectations with regard to education. By contrast, ESL students coming into contact with the Western culture of academia, are in the position of "visitors" to the "host" culture. In order to succeed within this cultural setting, they need to conform to the norms of the university which implies that some sort of adaptation is required.

Assimilation (rejecting one's own culture and embracing another) is the integration strategy often associated with such minority-majority cultural contact (Hunt, 1996, p. 28). In recent research conducted at Rhodes however, De Klerk (1996) found that the obligation at the University for students to be competent in English reduces the positive potential of integrational motivation. So assimilation, and the consequential loss of former linguistic identity in the attempt to be perceived as English, is seldom encountered at Rhodes, especially in the light of renewed pride in ethnic identities (p. 2). She concluded that the

informants in her study appeared rather to be aiming at "temporary acculturation". That is, adopting the target language group's values and life-style only while at Rhodes (Ibid.).

Any attempts to integrate ESL students into the dominant culture must be undertaken with extreme sensitivity. However, if they are going to acquire the discourse, some assistance with integration, albeit temporary, seems both imperative and, in light of the abovementioned research, not unfavourable. This is particularly true when one considers the enormity of the task facing those entering the academic community for the first time:

Students have to appropriate (or be appropriated by) a specialised discourse, and they have to do this as though they were easily and comfortably one with their audience, as though they were members of the academy, or historians or psychologists; they have to invent the university by assembling and mimicking its language, finding some compromise between idiosyncrasy, a personal history, and the requirements of convention, the history of a discipline. They must learn to speak our language. Or they must dare to speak it, or to carry off the bluff, since speaking and writing will most certainly be required long before the skill is "learned". And this, understandably, causes problems (Bartholomae, 1988, p. 273).

Add to this the idea that students have to "appropriate" not just the language of the university but also the discourse of each of the disciplines within which they register. Then take into account the fact that the discourses of many South African students are very distant from that of the university, and the task begins to take on overwhelming proportions.

#### 2.1.4.2 THE DEPARTMENTS

Despite their temporal shifts of character and their institutional and national diversity, Becher (1989) shows that disciplines may appropriately be conceived of as having recognisable identities and particular cultural attributes. Citing Clark (1963), he notes that "the disciplines exist as separate estates, with distinctive subcultures" (Ibid., p. 23). Referring to the various disciplines as "academic tribes", Becher (Ibid., p. 24) notes that they define their own identities and "defend their own patches of intellectual ground by employing a variety of devices geared to the exclusion of illegal immigrants". Some are purely structural features, such as the building occupied by a particular department. Existing alongside these features,

however, and exercising an even more powerful integrating force, are the "tribes" more explicitly cultural elements, the most important being their linguistic and symbolic forms of communication and the meanings they share.

Spivey et al. (1992), along with Swales (1990) and Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995), view each discipline a student chooses to study as a social group, or discourse community, that the student seeks to join: "a group whose members share assumptions about what objects are appropriate for examination and discussion, what operating functions are performed on those objects, what constitutes 'evidence' and 'validity', and what formal conventions are followed in that discourse" (p. 1).

It may not necessarily be true that all members of the community "share" these assumptions, nor are many of the assumptions explicit. But the fact that the academic discourse community, like all communities, is not monolithic means that different members of the community do different things and power is unequally distributed. It is the senior members of the community who establish the rules of behaviour for the community and it is easier for staff to flout those rules than students.

Freed and Broadhead (1987) note that the legislation itself takes the form of institutional norms, which "govern rhetorical decisions designed to make a text adhere to accepted practices within a profession or discipline" (p. 156). As applied to texts, these norms include documentation practices, in-house style of format guides and group or disciplinary injunctions such as those prescribed in the APA style manual. Institutional norms, however, do not have to be formalised or codified in written documents, and they make conduct as normal and unobtrusive as breathing. Although the norms and their effects never exist a-contextually, quite often they are not perceived because the context is invisible, transparently bound to the ordinary and everyday. However unseen they may be, however, the norms define the writers' community, a context that conditions, governs and constrains, not just the message, but the writer producing it (Ibid., p. 162).

Authorship is the major function of a disciplinary community and status in such a community is tied, to a large extent, to the establishment of an authoring identity - an identity that is constructed intertextually; academics enhance their value to institutions through research and publishing. However, as Rudolph (1994) points out, the greatest constraint resulting from these activities is on the amount of time faculty members allocate to interacting with students. Writing research papers, books and grant proposals is an investment of time which pays straightforward and measurable dividends. "While faculty are also required to demonstrate their merit by teaching and advising students ... the time commitment is greater (or qualitatively different) and the payoff less clearly measurable" (p. 206).

Thus students entering English-medium universities face environments which are unidirectional - the entire agenda is set by the faculty members, with little or no input from the students - and in which the "opportunities for direct initiation into the academic culture are few and the demands of the already-competent within the culture are many" (Johns, 1990, p. 212). As part of his/her socialisation into an academic discipline, a student will also come into contact with two main categories of tacit knowledge:

One of them is the knowledge that has grown out of long experience in the discipline. It is a practical, almost subconscious knowledge or competence that the department elite fully masters. The most important ingredient is the knowledge and command of the repertoire of scientific discourses. The other category ... is generated by the students themselves as they try to make sense of what they are experiencing ... and for an understanding of what goes on in Academia they are both of great importance (Gerholm, 1985, cited in Becher, 1989, p. 26).

Bizzell (cited in Bartholomae, 1988) argues that the problems students face might be "better understood in terms of unfamiliarity with the academic discourse community, combined, perhaps, with such limited experience outside their native discourse communities that they are unaware that there is such a thing as a discourse community with conventions to be mastered" (p. 278).

In a study that examined the relationship between the acquisition of linguistic and social knowledge and the contexts in which they develop, Gutierrez (1995) found that many

students, especially those regarded as "at-risk", had had limited or no pre-university access to classroom communicative activities from which they could acquire a "valued version of academic discourse" (p. 31-32). As a result, they lack an understanding of the social and communicative demands of their new community which in turn makes it difficult for them to learn from the activities in which they attempt to participate. For example, Moll and Slonimsky (1989) argue that students from DET schools have only one groundrule for educational activities: "replicate what is given" (p. 161). Feedback these authors received from their ex-DET students at the University of the Witwatersrand indicates that students get very confused when confronted with the possibility that there might be a whole range of groundrules.

Thus the movement towards a more specialised discourse begins (or perhaps, best begins) when "a student can both define a position of privilege, a position that sets him against a common discourse, and when he can work self-consciously, critically, against not only the 'common' code but his own" (Bartholomae, 1988, p. 282).

In this effort, students often must "sacrifice some of the world view of their native cultures and of the academic cultures in which they were previously educated to gain acceptance into the English-medium university culture" (Johns 1990, p. 213). Other writers agree that "knowledge of academic discourse ... grows out of (students') enculturation to the 'forms of talk' of the academy" (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995, p. 10): Gee (1990) argues that

Discourse practices are always embedded in the particular world view of particular social groups; they are tied to a set of values and norms. In apprenticing to new social practices, a student becomes complicit with this set of values and norms, this world view. The student is acquiring a new identity, one that at various points may conflict with her initial enculturation and socialisation, and with the identities connected to other social practices in which she engages (p. 67).

Research like De Klerk's (1996) however (cited above), shows that such "enculturation" may well be temporary, serving little more than an instrumental purpose. In line with this, Swales (1990) maintains the position that "discourse conventions can be employed in a detached, instrumental way" (p. 30), rather than acknowledging that participation in a discourse

community entails some assimilation of its world view. He gives the following three reasons for holding this position: first it is "possible to deny the premise that participation entails assimilation. There is enough pretence, deception and face-work around to suggest that the acting out of roles is not that uncommon" (p. 30). Secondly, sketching the boundaries of discourse communities, as he has, implies (a) that individuals may belong to several discourse communities and (b) that they will vary in the number of communities they belong to and hence in the number of genres they command.

Thirdly,

to deny the instrumental employment of discourse conventions is to threaten one common type of apprenticeship and to cast a hegemonical shadow over international education. Students taking a range of different courses often operate successfully as 'ethnographers' of these various academic milieux and do so with sufficient detachment and instrumentality to avoid developing multiple personalities (p. 30).

He also avoids taking a position whereby a "foreign" student is seen, via participation, to assimilate inevitably the world-view of the host discourse community. While this may happen, he refuses to accept that discourse conventions cannot be successfully deployed in an instrumental manner.

Whether one accepts the instrumental employment of discourse conventions or not, the question is: how do students acquire these conventions? Or, following Fairclough's (1992) definitions of "discourse" (which refers to language use as a mode of social practice) and "genre" (which refers to a particular type of convention) (p. 125), the question can be rephrased as follows: How do students acquire the genres of the various academic discourse communities to which they apprentice themselves?

## 2.2 GENRE AND GENRE ANALYSIS

In his conception of "discourse community", Swales (1990) maintains that one of the characteristics that established members of the community possess is familiarity with the

particular "genres" that are used in the communicative furtherance of the community's goals. Asserting a relationship between the concept of genre and that of "discourse community" is a slippery proposition because neither concept refers to a static entity. Nevertheless, recent research in composition studies and discourse analysis (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995) supports the view that studying the genres of professional and disciplinary communication provides important information about the textual dynamics of discourse communities.

The notion of genre has, in recent years, been reconceived so that, while recognising that genres can be characterised by regularities in textual form and substance, current thinking sees these similarities as deriving from the similarity in the social action undertaken (Freedman & Medway, 1994).

Freedman (1993, p. 225) notes that impetus for this reconceptualisation has come from many sources. Some of the most prominent are these: speech-act theory with its emphasis on doing things with words; recent or recently discovered literary theory, especially that of Bakhtin (1986), with its emphasis on the utterance as the appropriate unit of analysis, on genres as typified forms of utterance, and on the dialogic nature, the addressivity, and the responsiveness of genres to their social, linguistic, and historical contexts; philosophic work on argumentation, especially that of Toulmin, Rieke and Janik (1979), which distinguishes modes of arguing according to their disciplinary setting; and the socially based linguistics of M.A.K. Halliday (1978), especially his discussions of register and genre.

Freedman (1993) notes that the most elaborated definition of genre (at the time of writing) is that given by John Swales as a chapter in his book "Genre Analysis" (1990). Drawing on much of the literature cited above, Swales' definition includes the following: "A genre is a class of communicative events (p. 44) ... The principle criterial feature that turns a collection of communicative events into a genre is some set of shared communicative purposes (p. 46) ... The rationale behind a genre establishes constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their content, positioning and form" (p. 52).

Freedman (1995) draws attention to the fact that there are important differences in the way in which the term "genre" is used in the North American rhetorical tradition as opposed to the



way it has been used by applied linguists. It is significant to note these differences since this research draws on the work of both traditions, but tends more towards the analysis favoured by rhetorical genre scholars.

The first difference that Freedman (1995) emphasises is that while Swales and scholars in the tradition of Halliday acknowledge, even insist on, the social dimensions of genre, rhetorical genre scholars probe far more deeply into the social and cultural contexts (for example, Miller, 1984, Bazerman, 1992, Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995). In this latter work, the primary focus of the analysis is not so much on an explication of the rules governing textual features but rather on a highly nuanced and sophisticated discrimination of the range of sociocultural, historical, ideological, and political dimensions of the rhetorical exigencies which elicit the textual features characterising the genres (Freedman, 1995, p. 74). Miller (1984) sees the work of genre scholars as ethnomethodological: specifically, explicating the knowledge that practice makes. And both the knowledge and the practice include, but subsume, linguistic and discourse rules.

As a consequence of this kind of analysis, a different conception of genre emerges: there is far greater recognition of the degree to which contexts and our interpretations of those contexts shift. These theorists therefore share a relatively fragile, dynamic and shifting sense of genre (Freedman, 1995). Central to this notion of genre, although not always made explicit, is the recognition of agency - the power of an individual to reshape, realign, or reaccentuate a genre. Genres are not seen as totally deterministic and determining, but this is not to say that there is no recognition of the shaping power of already existing genres. In other words, there is a dialectal tension between the agent and the genre (Ibid.). Significantly, the sociologist of choice is Giddens (1984), for whom structure and agency exist in reciprocal relation (a slightly more detailed discussion of this theory follows later in this section).

Finally, and in particular contrast with the Sydney School's genre work, the rhetorical genre tradition has not, thus far, had an interest in direct application to pedagogy as a major focus. Freedman (1995) argues that the explicit teaching about specific genres and their features, as

recommended by the Sydney School scholars, is not really possible since we can analyse with precision only those genres that arose in the past, in response to circumstances that undoubtedly no longer hold true (p. 75).

It is argued that recent discussions of genre enable us to observe genre itself as "a system for administering communities' knowledge of the world - a system for housing knowledge, producing it and practising it" (Giltrow and Valiquette, 1994, p. 47). Such advances lead to reflection on the nature of this knowledge and its distribution and reproduction: How do the genres of, for example, the academic disciplines configure those communities' knowledge of the world? And, moreover, how is knowledge of the genres themselves conserved by members of those communities and acquired by newcomers?

In attempting to answer these questions, genre theorists (like Berkenkotter and Huckin) have been attracted by Anthony Giddens' theories. His ideas offer access to the circumstances of agency, the quality of individuals' participation in social structure. Insisting that lay members of a community maintain a stock of knowledge of the community's ways of doing things, Giddens analyses this stock of knowledge as comprising both "practical consciousness" - implicit in daily practice, including individuals' monitoring their own and others' conduct - and "discursive consciousness" - what they would say if asked for the reasons for what they are doing (Giltrow & Valiquette, 1994, p. 48).

When a teacher writes in an academic genre herself, or when she monitors or evaluates students' performances in a genre, she executes practical consciousness. But when she explains the rules of the genre, or when she explains her evaluation of students' attempts in the genre, she executes discursive consciousness. And discursive consciousness can suppress or even distort elements of practical consciousness (Ibid.).

One element of practical consciousness that may resist discursive disclosure is a genre's routine pattern of presupposition: a pattern that calls for the assertion of some information as new and the assumption of other information as given, and established as background knowledge (Ibid.). For users of the genre share not only knowledge of the genre but also a

particular configuration of knowledge-of-the-world, this common ground forming a community interest.

Shared knowledge-of-the-world can be a boundary-forming condition of the discourse community that uses the genre. An individual writer's eligibility for membership in that community can be measured by his/her competence in estimating the shared-knowledge standing of certain propositions (Ibid., p. 49). As Kaufer and Carley (1993, cited in Spivey et al., 1992) have recently argued, one of the elements that separates academic discourse from other kinds of professional discourse is the unspoken mandate that disciplinary discourse expand the culture. In other words, students must learn how to contribute to knowledge in a discipline - a complex task that requires a comprehensive understanding of what is and what is not a contribution (p. 53).

This knowledge of knowledge is seen to form part of the writer's knowledge of the genre. But since it does not comprise a formal feature, *per se*, it may tend to lodge in practical rather than discursive consciousness and resist exposure as expressed rules (Giltrow and Valiquette, 1994). Thus, while a newcomer to a genre used by a particular disciplinary community may be able to infer from one or two samples the citation practices of that genre, this newcomer would not be so likely to make reliable inferences about the community's shared-knowledge dispositions. Such knowledge of knowledge (of disciplinary genres) may take longer to acquire, or be less susceptible to instruction (Ibid., p. 49).

### 2.2.1 LEARNING AND THE TEACHING OF GENRE

Learning the genres of disciplinary or professional discourse [is] similar to second language acquisition, requiring immersion into the culture and a lengthy period of apprenticeship and enculturation. In contrast, undergraduate university students ... learn many institutional, or curriculum, genres (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995, p. 13).

Before discussing the teaching of genre, I would like to mention, briefly, the key assumptions about learning and language acquisition underlying this study. A theory of second language acquisition is relevant in that, for students, the standard forms of academic discourse are, in a

sense, a new language which they must acquire if they are to communicate effectively within the culture (Kutz, 1986, p. 388).

#### 2.2.1.1 LEARNING AND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

With regard to learning, this research takes as a central premise the non-foundational social constructionist view of knowledge. In this view, knowledge is not an entity that is transferred from one head to another, but is rather a consensus among the members of a community of knowledgeable peers - something people construct by talking together and reaching agreement (Bruffee, 1993, p. 3). Bruffee (1986) posits that this alternative

identifies knowledge and language and regards them as inseparable. Placing language at the centre of our understanding of knowledge and of the authority of knowledge, it thereby places reading and writing equivocally where ... it belongs, at the centre of the liberal arts curriculum and the whole educational process (p. 778).

This view of knowledge is shared by proponents of situated learning, a field in which there is a common recognition of the importance of the social and of collaborative performance in learning. The commonalities underlying this field are that: learning and knowing are context-specific; learning is accomplished through processes of coparticipation or collaboration; and cognition is socially shared (Freedman, 1995, 76). Both situated learning and genre studies place great emphasis on activity and action - knowing and learning through doing, rather than transmission. Central notions are performance, participation, and collaboration (Ibid., p. 77).

Research into factors determining the success of people acquiring a second language supports the importance of underlying cognitive processes during the production of academic discourse. Important in this regard is Cummins' (1986, p. 152) distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive/ Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). The BICS/CALP framework proposes that language proficiency can be conceptualised along two continua: The first continuum relates to the amount of contextual support available when expressing or understanding meaning. On the one extreme is context-embedded communication where the language is supported by contextual cues and

participants can actively negotiate meaning by indicating, for example, whether or not the message has been received - i.e. they draw on BIC skills. On the other extreme of the continuum is context-reduced communication, which is based almost exclusively on linguistic cues to meaning with very little, or no contextual support and this draws on CALP skills.

The second continuum relates to the degree of active cognitive involvement in the task. Cummins and Swain (1986) conceptualise cognitive involvement as the amount of information that must be processed simultaneously, or in close succession, by the individual involved in the task (p. 153). The more cognitive involvement demanded, the more CALP skills will be used.

In terms of this theory it is argued that if children do not have the opportunity fully to develop BIC skills in their first language, they will not develop CALP skills in that language. Changing the medium of instruction to another language in the fifth year of schooling (as in the case of former DET systems) retards the development of CALP skills even further, as they can only be developed once BIC skills have been acquired in the second language.

Starfield (1994, p. 177) argues that Cummin's theory of the role of language in learning clarifies the relationship between language and cognition and also explains why students coming from an ex-DET background are inadequately prepared for the tasks which face them at university. She argues that in the DET schools, CALP skills are never really acquired in the first language, due to the change of medium of instruction in Standard 3 (the fifth year of school). CALP skills then have to be acquired in a second language, but in reality, because of limited English proficiency and difficult content (Macdonald, 1990 p. 40), pupils are forced to learn by rote and CALP skills are never sufficiently developed.

In the language of schema theory, which posits that meaning is constructed through the interaction between the text and the background knowledge of the individual, ESL speakers, operating in an unfamiliar second language context in which a high degree of CALP skills are

required, are unlikely to have available all the necessary schemata to interpret texts in a context-reduced environment.

#### 2.2.1.2 THE TEACHING OF GENRE

Research shows that although experts in a discipline practice the "accepted reader and writer roles and the social purposes for writing and other activities in their disciplines, these rules are often not articulated because the knowledge is generally tacit and rules of use are applied without conscious attention" (Johns, 1990, p. 213). As a result, professors often cannot explain the institutional or discipline-specific conventions of their disciplines, nor can they provide the practice that leads to understanding these conventions.

With regard to university texts, Cope and Kalantzis (1990) note that very few indicate consciousness of their own roles as models of discourse, and certainly not to the point of evolving an explicit language development pedagogy. What students do in class generally does little to teach writing in these new discourses. And writing of any length is always set to be done outside class time. So how do students acquire this genre knowledge or disciplinary discourse? In other words, how do they become academically literate?

One suggestion is that they work it out for themselves using their sources of "information" as models (Ibid.). Without explicit instruction as to how to organise the facts, students learn by copying the textbook and trying to put this "in their own words". As Bartholomae (1988) puts it, the academic writer "inherits the language out of which he must fabricate his own messages. He is therefore in a constant tangle with the language, obliged to recognise its public, communal nature and yet driven to invent out of this language his own statements" (p. 284).

Students face this challenge as a sort of logistical double bind and the solution is a shrewd compromise in which copying is still the essential means of learning to write in the discourse of the discipline. The irony is that it is this invisible curriculum, which they learn by their own resources, that can mean the difference between success or failure.

It is often argued in a common-sense way that "language levels" in text books are too high for particular groups of students and therefore are the cause of many of their problems. These students need better written, less pretentious, jargon-free texts. This notion is based on the belief that for any technical term there exists already a perfectly adequate "common or garden" word which could be used in its place (Cope and Kalantzis, 1990). However, the discourse of any discipline describes the world in technical terms which are not simply translatable into everyday language. It is this that constitutes psychology, for example, as a peculiar discipline and as a discourse. Moreover, technicality is a shorthand enabling concise communication between specialists (Ibid.). Simplifying the language does not in itself give more students access to the power of the discipline's discourse.

In further defence of disciplinary discourse: social science subjects do not represent "simple, wanton elitism and exclusion, as progressivist critics of traditional curricula have often suggested. They cannot be watered down without compromising the peculiar interpretative power of the disciplines" (Ibid., p. 132). Yet the real practices of the traditional academic curriculum, as described in the way students learn factual writing, are clearly discriminatory. Even assignment copying or the compromise of partial translation "into your own words" is easier with some family assistance or in print-immersed environments in which the power of and importance of factual text is self-evident.

Cope and Kalantzis (1990) contend that such discriminatory pedagogy, which allows social context to determine educational outcomes, needs to be replaced by one that makes disciplinary genres, such as generic models in textbooks, explicit and to teach them directly within educational institutions:

The teaching of social science, in other words, would ideally be a self-conscious exercise in teaching language, as much as it is a matter of imparting discipline content. Students disadvantaged educationally because of social background especially need this sort of explicit skill teaching for the sake of social equity. An explicit teaching in the learning setting is a more efficient process for all students than picking up the language through repeated copying while pretending not to be copying (p. 132).

It is appropriate, at this point, to appreciate that the explicit teaching of genre is a fairly contentious matter. While many educators, writing teachers and theorists agree that to empower disadvantaged students, genre must be taught, there are also those who assert the importance of genres but oppose teaching them explicitly. They point to the fact that much genre knowledge lives in the social unconscious of the discourse community and that for individual writers, genre knowledge is often at least partly subliminal. Therefore, since many - perhaps most - experts use their genres without explicit conscious knowledge or control, what is the rationale for asking students to develop explicit, conscious knowledge of a genre's defining characteristics?

In his discussion of how "Discourses" are acquired, Gee (1990) presents an argument that nullifies explicit genre teaching. Firstly, he (Ibid.) draws a clear distinction between "acquisition" and "learning":

Acquisition is a process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models, a process of trial and error, and practice within social groups, without formal teaching.

Learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching (though not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher) or through certain life-experiences that trigger conscious reflection (p. 146).

He then argues that Discourses are mastered through *acquisition*, not learning. That is, Discourses are not mastered by overt instruction but by enculturation (apprenticeship) into social practices through scaffolded and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse. If you have no access to the social practice, you never get into the Discourse (p. 147).

Thus, he would argue, that in an academic discipline like psychology, you can overtly teach someone (the content knowledge of the discipline of) *psychology*, which is a body of facts and theories; however, while knowledge of some significant part of these facts and theories is necessary to being a psychologist, you cannot overtly teach anyone *to be (to behave like) a psychologist*, which is a Discourse - all you can do is let them practice being a psychologist (apprentice them) with people who are already in the discourse (p. 147). "To confuse what is



in a textbook and being a psychologist is to confuse the props with the play, products with processes ... The confusion is ever present and is disastrous in thinking about literacy" (Ibid.).

Stephen Krashen (1981, 1992) has long argued that nearly all second-language learning entails "acquisition": the subconscious inferring of the rules of language use on the basis of comprehensible examples of the target language during the process of authentic language tasks. Freedman (1993) notes that more recently, Krashen has extended this argument to the acquisition of written discourse. Thus he states unequivocally: "Competence in writing does not come from the study of form directly ... it is acquired subconsciously; readers are unaware they are acquiring writing competence while they are reading, and are unaware of this accomplishment after acquisition has taken place" (cited in Freedman, Ibid., p. 230).

In directing attention to studies which show the positive relationship between reading for pleasure and the development of writing abilities, Krashen suggests that, as a result of engaging with the content in authentic language tasks, the relevant rules are inferred subconsciously (Ibid., p. 231).

Elbow (1991) not only represents the extreme opposition to explicit genre teaching, but advocates the teaching of *non*-academic discourse. While acknowledging that not helping underprepared students with academic discourse is simply leaving a power vacuum and thereby reward privileged students who have already learned academic discourse at home or in school, he asserts that the use of academic discourse often masks a lack of genuine understanding: "Many students can repeat or explain a principle in the academic discourse of the textbook but cannot simply tell you what's going on around them on account of that principle" (p. 137).

Elbow (Ibid.) draws attention to the pedagogically crucial distinction between how academics write to each other and how they have come to expect students to write to them as teachers:

We see here the ubiquitous authority dimension of discourse. Students must write "up" to teachers who have authority over them - often being assigned to write to experts about a subject they are just struggling to learn. In contrast,

academics write "across" to fellow academics - usually explaining what they have worked out to readers who don't know it (p. 139).

He concludes that academic staff are usually more anxious than students about sharing their writing with each other. But, the voice and stylistic conventions of academic discourse serve extremely well to cover this understandable anxiety. He believes that the conventions of academic discourse still carry vestigial traces of the "authority transaction" of trying to show off to impress those who have authority over us (Ibid.). And just how do academics create authority and credibility when they write to each other? "The most obvious way is to take a ride on the authority of others ... using footnotes and quoting important figures" (p. 149).

Elbow (Ibid.) concludes that the reason we cannot teach academic discourse is because there is no such thing to teach: genres are becoming blurred and the focus of academic discourse is more and more often discourse and thinking itself - that is, much academic discourse is metadiscourse:

And don't forget to notice how fast academic discourse is changing. Yet it seems that many academics seem more nervous about changes in discourse - and especially incursions of the vernacular - than about changes in ideas or content or doctrine. Many happily proclaim that there is no truth, no right answer, no right interpretation; many say they want more voices in the academy, dialogue, heteroglossia! But they won't let themselves or their students write in language tainted with the ordinary or with the presence and feelings of the writer" (Ibid., p. 152).

To place this argument in the South African context I refer to Bond (1993), who reminds us that many of the current models (from abroad) for teaching academic discourse have been designed with English first-language speakers in mind. He warns against reducing the Second Language factor to irrelevance in our attempts to understand the cognitive and epistemic demands of academic literacy and asks the following questions: Have we satisfactorily distinguished the issues of learning in a second language from those of underpreparedness? And, in our context, does "mainstreaming" need to be complemented by general foundation or even language proficiency courses? "Are we really agents of transformation ... or are we simply orienting new learners to established academia?" (p. 19)

This particular study is primarily concerned with the problems of sensitising faculty to the discourse of their discipline because, as Coe (1994) argues, while unconscious knowledge may suffice for writers, teachers should explicitly understand the genres they teach. They should ask how the form is functional: What purpose does this genre serve? How do its particular generic structures serve those purposes? How is it adapted to its particular readers? How is it appropriate to its context of situation? "If you can't answer these questions, you don't have a reasonable basis for asking students to follow the rules - and humanists should be reasonable, not dogmatically authoritarian" (p. 161).

Nevertheless, this study also works towards suggesting a compromise that is relevant to the South African context and will hopefully satisfy the proponents on all sides of the "to teach or not to teach" debate. It includes, among other things, making students aware of the principle of discourse variation - between individuals and between communities - rather than trying to teach all the specific conventions they will need for particular disciplines. That is, if we cannot teach them all the forms they will need, we can sensitise them to the notion of differences in form so that they will be more able to look for cues and will pick them up faster when they encounter them. Elbow (1991) agrees that this inductive and scattered approach is messy and frustrating to students who want neat answers, but it avoids giving them universal standards that do not hold up empirically. And more than that, it is lively, interesting, and writerly because it's rhetorical rather than formal.

### 2.3 CONCLUSION

In South Africa, the underprepared are those students who, for multiple reasons, have not acquired the discourse of the university. If their becoming academically "literate" can only occur within the university, via direct initiation into the discourse of the various disciplines, then not undertaking this task is to exclude them (Angelil-Carter & Paxton, 1993). Ideally we should be attempting to create an empowering academic environment that provides students with the "code-cracking" skills they need to succeed without them having to assimilate the culture of academia. This study suggests, as an initial step, the elucidation of the (implicit) discourse practices of the disciplines via genre analysis. The value of this exercise lies in its

ability to do the following: Firstly, to sensitise staff to their own teaching practices, hopefully encouraging them to use the information to make their actions more explicit rather than assuming that students will "pick up" on what they are doing via their enculturation into the academic discourse community at large. And secondly, to build an awareness that the idea of a common, unified academic discourse, that faculty believe can be taught as a pragmatic neutral tool for the expression of ideas, is a politically and economically convenient myth which has allowed the disciplines to avoid responsibility for using language to help students conceptualise and participate in their disciplines (Farris, 1993, p. 1).

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### 3.0 OVERVIEW

This study is concerned with the role of language in an academic setting, with specific focus on the rhetorical styles and discourse types employed in that setting. The question asked is whether the teaching of these styles, unique to the given disciplinary community, can be incorporated into the curriculum of that discipline.

In order to investigate these issues I needed an approach that would shed light on the practices of the given community or, in Wilcox's (1982) words, one that would allow me to "make the familiar strange, to notice that which is taken for granted...and to question why it exists or takes place as it does, or why something else does not" (p. 458). This required a model that was both descriptively powerful and applicable to practical situations. John Swales' (1990) genre-based approach appeared to meet these requirements.

The approach is described as a theoretical framework which defines the scope and nature of academic discourse and which offers an approach to how it can be described and investigated (Long & Richards in Swales, 1990, p. viii). It is a model of applied linguistics that draws on linguistic and socio-linguistic theory as well as integrating the work of several different traditions. Swales (Ibid.) notes that the approach attempts to make a virtue of eclecticism for, "to be eclectic is to be able to borrow profitably from the activities of several distinct discourse communities" (p. 13).

The research approach used in this study may therefore be described as eclectic, and predominantly qualitative, an approach which differs from quantitative research in that procedures are less strictly formalised, the scope is initially not as rigidly defined, and a more philosophical mode of operation is followed. The particular style of qualitative research that seemed most appropriate to this study was grounded theory, the reason being that the theory is grounded in the data generated by the subject being studied. Strauss and Corbin (1990) define this theory more explicitly as follows:

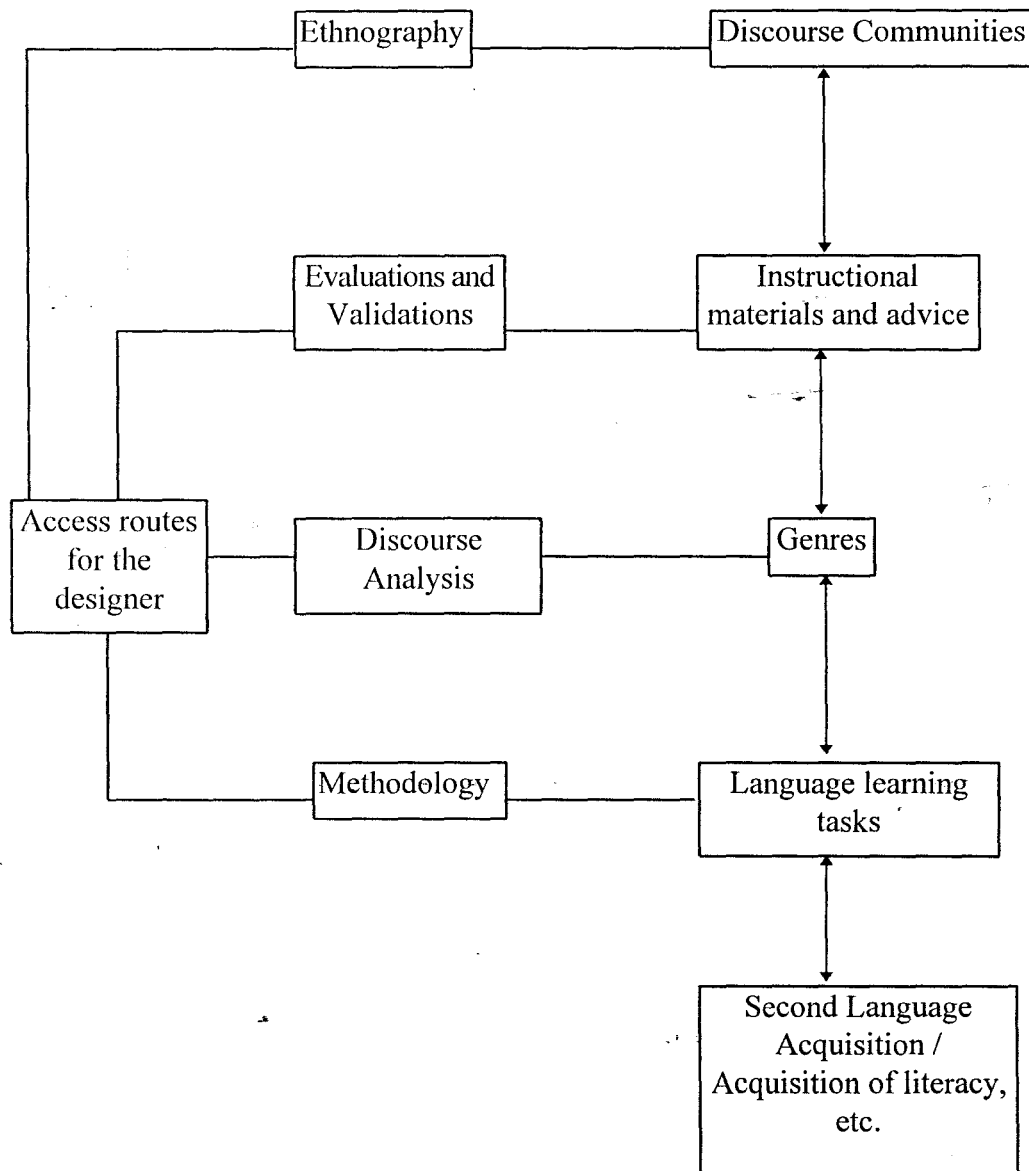
A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationships with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge (p. 23).

### 3.1 JOHN SWALES' GENRE-BASED MODEL (SEE FIGURE 1)

Swales (1990) proposes that those concerned with academic English programmes can adopt a four-fold investigative strategy for the realisation of their objectives. Figure 1 provides a schematization of the processes which, he notes, in reality are likely to be more overlapping and interconnected than the figure suggests. These routes are not ordered in any particular way; for example there is no presumption that exploring discourse communities should precede analysing genres or that genre analysis should precede the devising of tasks - which is why in Figure 1 the links between the levels have been characterised by double-ended arrows. He also does not insist that all the routes are essential to every investigation - rather, the four strands are offered as possible routes an investigator may follow. The flexible nature of this model has thus allowed me to place particular emphasis on two of the four strands, namely, Ethnography and Discourse Analysis.

What follows is an explanation of the four strands of the model and a description of how they have been applied in this study. It will become apparent that Swales' model is, on the whole, very broad and for this reason my approach has also been partly guided by the work of Vijay Bhatia (1993). Bhatia's model of analysis consists of seven steps that one may consider when undertaking a comprehensive investigation of any genre. Again, these steps are not ordered in any way and are all implied in Swales' model. I will therefore refer to those steps that I have used within the discussion of Swales' model.

*Figure 1 - Swales' Four-Fold Investigative Framework*



### 3.1.1 ETHNOGRAPHY

This strand comprises broadly ethnographic studies of the relevant discourse communities. This includes not only those communities students are trying to join (the Department), but also the controlling discourse community of the host educational milieu (the University).

Bhatia's (1993) fifth step suggests that a good genre analyst attempts to study the institutional context, including the system and/or methodology, in which the genre is used and the rules and conventions (linguistic, social, cultural, academic, professional) that govern the use of language in such institutional settings (p. 24). These rules and conventions are usually implicitly understood and unconsciously followed by the participants in that communicative situation. Unearthing them involves looking at institutional guidebooks as well as the social structure, interactions, history, beliefs and goals of the community.

Swales does not include a discussion of the research techniques associated with ethnography. However, since this approach provides the overarching framework for this study, I believe it is worthwhile detailing some of its distinguishing characteristics before discussing my fieldwork.

As a research perspective and as a methodology, ethnography falls within the interpretive research tradition. As an approach to research it is qualitative in nature rather than quantitative, although the ethnographer may draw upon quantitative techniques in the analysis and description of data (Spindler, 1987).

What makes ethnography distinct from other forms of qualitative research is its holistic and culturally contextualised analysis and interpretation of data. One's goal as an ethnographer is to focus on a setting and "discover what is going on there" (Wilcox, 1982, p. 458). One of the first precepts is that one attempts to set aside one's own preconceptions about what is going on and to explore the setting as it is viewed and constructed by its participants (Ibid.). Where the researcher has participant-observer status, ethnography will admit the "subjective experiences of both investigator and participants into the research frame, thus providing a



depth of understanding often lacking in other approaches to research" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 9). Thus, in Smith's (1996) words, the ethnographer is the research instrument, the participants are the population (p. 2). As he points out, for all our failings, what better instrument could we ever devise for observing and understanding human behaviour?

As implied above, no particular research technique is associated exclusively with ethnography. Rather, a key feature of the approach is that one never relies on only one means of gathering information; the strength of ethnographic fieldwork lies in its "triangulation". Johnson (1992) notes that "the value of triangulation is that it reduces observer or interviewer bias and enhances the validity and reliability (accuracy) of the information" (p. 146). The ethnographer therefore utilises observations made through an extended period of time, from multiple sources of data, and employs multiple techniques for ferreting out varying perspectives on complex issues and events. These techniques include observation and/or participant-observation, interviewing (usually informal or semi-formal), audio and video recordings, and the collection of relevant documents.

Johnson (Ibid.) cautions that the use of any or all of the techniques available does not make a study ethnographic, neither does triangulation. According to Smith (1996), ethnographic significance is derived socially, not statistically, from discerning how ordinary people in particular settings make sense of the experience of their everyday lives (p. 3). The ethnographic quality therefore unfolds through the analysis of the data and descriptive-interpretive written account that results.

Participant-observation, or observation, is the technique generally considered the "sine qua non of ethnography" (Smith 1996, p. 4). In the strictest sense of its meaning, participant observation refers to the "simultaneous occupation of a structural position within a social system and study of that system" (Philips, 1982, p. 202). "Observation" is distinguished from this by the fact that, interactionally, the observer's role is more one of reception of communicative behaviour than the participant-observer's role.

Participant-observation allows the researcher to comply with two of the central concerns of ethnographic research: Firstly, to be in a position both to observe behaviour in its natural setting and to elicit from the people observed the structures of meaning which inform and texture behaviour. This is important because the resulting description is expected to be deeper and fuller than that of the ordinary outsider, and broader and less culture-bound than that of the ordinary insider (Wilcox, 1982, p. 462).

The second concern of any ethnographer is to avoid altering or disrupting the social system being studied. S/he must attempt to disturb as little as possible the interactions s/he is observing, and must try not to predetermine responses by the type of questions asked (Spindler, 1987, p. 7). Being a participant thus allows the observer to remain as inconspicuous as possible.

A final significant feature of ethnographic research is that ready-made instruments and overly precise formulations of the problem are seen to close off prematurely the process of discovery of that which is significant to the setting. One begins fieldwork not with a *tabula rasa* but with a foreshadowed problem in mind. However, the problem is of necessity general in scope. Wilcox (1982) notes that because one assumes as an ethnographer that parts of the system can be understood only in the context of the working whole, one cannot predict in advance precisely where one should focus (p. 459). Thus it is crucial to begin the research without specifically predetermined categories of observation. An essential part of the research task is discovering what is significant, what makes sense to count, what is important to observe. One is continuously involved in a process of inquiry.

To sum up, the inquiry process that is "ethnography" is carried out through a series of acts performed by the researcher: maintaining and developing one's relationship with the people one is with to ensure the flow of data; employing a variety of research techniques to collect a wide range of data, and remaining in the field long enough to ensure that one has been able to observe events often enough to note regularities and irregularities and interpret them with confidence (Wilcox 1982, p. 460).

One of the primary techniques used in this study was interviewing. According to Smith (1996), an interview can be regarded as "anything that intrudes upon the natural setting and is done with the conscious intent of obtaining particular information directly from participants" (p. 4). Key-informant interviewing is the most purely anthropological of these techniques. Informant refers to an individual in whom one invests a disproportionate amount of time because that individual appears to be particularly well informed, articulate, approachable or available (Ibid.).

The informants who participated in this study were the academic staff of the Psychology department, the students registered for Psychology 1, the Supplemental Instruction (SI) tutors and the staff of the Academic Development Programme. Before discussing the approach I took with each group I will briefly consider my own role as a "research instrument".

Since the commencement of this study in June 1995 I have been both a participant-observer and an observer: I was hired by the Psychology department to work on their Academic Literacy Research Project because they needed an "outsider" with some background in applied language issues to conduct the "Staff Audit" component of their project. I had never been a student in the Psychology department before and I was therefore an "outsider" in that respect. However, I have been a student at Rhodes University for over six years and have consequently acquired background knowledge about the Department simply by being a member of the University community for an extended period of time. What enabled me to act as a true observer, however, is the fact that I had never participated as a member of staff within the community and was therefore neither familiar with the practices of the staff nor with the staff members themselves.

At the beginning of 1996 I registered for the introductory first-year credit, Psychology 1, and became a participant-observer in the sense that I took part in every aspect of the course: attending lectures and tutorials, handing in assignments and writing tests and, most importantly, making friends with other students registered for the course. I had a number of reasons for registering for the first year course rather than simply "attending" it as I could have: firstly, I wanted my experience of the course to be as similar as possible to that of the

first-time students attending it. That is, I wanted to be "on the scene", actively participating and therefore experiencing, along with the other students, the process of becoming an apprentice member of a new discourse community.

Secondly, I hoped that the added pressure of trying to obtain the credit would prevent me from losing touch with the community for any reason throughout the year, thus ensuring that I acquired "in-depth knowledge of the situation being studied" (Philips, 1982, p. 201). Traditionally, the expectation is that ethnographers remain in the field for at least one year (Philips, 1982 and Smith, 1996). Thus rituals that are the focus of study (such as lectures and tutorials in this case) will not merely be observed - they will be seen within the full cycle of activity and discussed with both those who participated in them and those who observed them.

Finally, I hoped that registering for the course would help me remain as "inconspicuous" as possible allowing me to "become part of scenery" (Smith, 1996, p. 2). I kept a journal throughout this time and this is the only data I have that could really be described as "field notes".

#### 3.1.1.1 THE STAFF

The Project Team, with whom I worked on the original "Staff Audit" component of this research, consisted of four members of staff ranging from a professor to a junior lecturer. Before even discussing the design of the Staff Audit (as they called it), we spent a great deal of time grappling with the concept of "academic literacy" and its relation to Psychology as a discipline and a profession (See section 1.4 for working definition). This provided me with a very good opportunity to get to know the members of staff on the team, to get a feel for the Department as a community and to get orientated.

We decided that the Staff Audit would require both a comprehensive questionnaire and interviews in order to extract the amount of information that was required. The questionnaire phase was also intended to be a consciousness-raising exercise, aimed at provoking reflection on what were probably implicit attitudes and practices. Along with this, it provided us with

an opportunity to inform staff in writing of the aims of the Project Team and provide them with the devised working definitions of academic literacy.

We then drew up a questionnaire, (see Appendix 1: The Instruments) the structure of which was built around the three definitions of literacy. As mentioned, the overall aim of the questionnaire was to assess staff members' activities and attitudes in relation to a range of issues, for each course, practical or tutorial they taught, or would be teaching, in 1995. The topics included: students' reading skills, writing skills, and the writing of exams; students' attendance and participation in lectures/practicals/tutorials; the promotion and use of resources, particularly the library, computers and experts/peers as learning resources; the promotion of professional and vocational literacy; and the advancement of research skills and expertise.

Fourteen of the sixteen staff members completed the questionnaire. To ensure confidentiality I examined the responses independently of the Project Team and extracted central themes that I thought would be worth expanding on in the interviews. Before presenting these themes to the Project Team I gave each member a full copy of the correlated (anonymous) questionnaire responses. This allowed them to highlight any significant issues that I, as an outsider, may have missed. Once we agreed on which issues should be raised in the interviews, I drew up a rough interview "schedule".

Every staff member who submitted a questionnaire was then interviewed for at least an hour. I recorded these interviews, during which the themes identified in the questionnaire data were presented to the staff, explored with them, their suggestions were recorded and the data was clarified or expanded.

I then correlated the data from the questionnaires and the interviews, extracted central themes and presented a report to the Project Team. For the purposes of this study, only the themes relevant to the implementation of a LAC program have been included.

### 3.1.1.2 THE STUDENTS

This component of the study had three elements: journals, key-informant interviews, and a class questionnaire.

In the hope of being able to describe "what it is like to be a first year Psychology student", I initiated a journal writing exercise at the beginning of the first term of 1996. Thirty students volunteered to write weekly journals for the duration of the first term. Unfortunately, only five students turned in journals at the end of the first week and only two wrote more than this one entry. When I tried to encourage people to write, most offered the excuse of "no time" or "too much work". The two students who did write a few times became two of my key-informants.

The interviews were semi-structured and were conducted at the beginning of the second term. Besides the two students who had written journals for me (both of whom spoke English as a second language), I selected, at random, four more students from the original list of those who had volunteered to write. The interview sample therefore consisted of six students, three mother-tongue speakers of English and three second-language speakers of English. The students were requested to bring their Psychology files or books with them to the interview as well as the first essay they had written for the course. I made copies of a sample of their lecture notes as well as the essays. The approach used to analyse this data will be discussed under "Discourse Analysis".

Finally, I drew up a questionnaire which was administered to all first-time students doing the Psychology 1 course. The aim of the questionnaire was to explore students' attitudes towards the language of Psychology as well as to get their opinions on the course. The questionnaire was handed out during the mid-year class test, and students were asked to complete it if they had time after the test. Alternatively, they could return it to the Psychology department. Of the 224 new students, 125 returned the questionnaire (a response rate of 56%).

### 3.1.1.3 THE SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION TUTORS

One of the SI tutors, a third year psychology student, became a key-informant with whom I discussed the course regularly on an informal basis. I recorded a mid-year SI presentation encouraging attendance at "exam feedback" sessions and conducted a recorded interview with my informant at the end of the year.

### 3.1.1.4 THE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME STAFF

I interviewed the ADP Staff Development Officer with regard to staff development policy and the orientation program offered to new staff members every year.

### 3.1.1.5 THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Finally, I used any relevant available literature on the Psychology department (such as Departmental Handbooks and promotional material) to complete the description.

## 3.1.2 EVALUATIONS AND VALIDATIONS

This is the second possible access route suggested in Swales' model. One major activity falling within this strand refers to the well-established practice of reviewing available instructional materials. This coincides with Bhatia's (1993) second step: Surveying existing literature. This includes practitioner advice, guide books, manuals etc. relevant to the speech community in question.

A subsidiary activity involves the empirical validation of claims made in textbooks, in handbooks and in other sources of advice and direction about the rationales and properties of genres. Swales (1990) argues that validation studies ground genre studies within the double context of, on the one hand, the prescriptive and advisory elements that may shape the production of exemplars and, on the other, the reactions of recipients to those exemplars.

Due to practical constraints, as well as my limited knowledge of Psychology as a discipline, I have not reviewed all the available instructional materials as suggested by this strand. One text I did examine, however, was the Psychology 1 "General Information" handout, since, as Swales suggests, such texts provide information about the perceived rationales and properties of the genres. They also lead us towards an awareness that official statements about communicative procedures within discourse communities may not always accord with actual practice.

### 3.1.3 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The emphasis in this third strand rests on the assertion that the targets of analysis should not be restricted to either finished or professional products. Other than the lectures, none of the texts analysed in this study could be termed "professional". While an analysis of journal articles and books may well have contributed to a description of the genre of Psychology, "the genres of the undergraduate curricula are characterised by quite different textual features and conventions" (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995, p. 13). I was interested only in analysing the discourse of the introductory Psychology course, particularly the "feature and conventions" apparent at points of contact between the staff and students.

The analysis in this study therefore focused on the lectures and the students' lecture notes as this was the only context in which staff had any real contact with the first-years. The texts analysed include:

- 1) lectures (a sample of three);
- 2) student lecture notes (a sample of six), and
- 3) student essays (a sample of six)

Swales does not recommend any particular approach to discourse analysis. He notes however that his proposed approach has long been influenced by some of the major sociolinguists of the last two decades such as Halliday, Hymes and Gumperz. The frameworks and categories provided by Systemic or 'Hallidayan' linguists are regarded as particularly useful in that



functional language variation is regarded as "a contextual category correlating groupings of linguistics features with recurrent situational features" (Gregory & Carroll, 1978, p. 4).

Bhatia's (1993) sixth step refers to the levels of linguistic analysis available to the analyst. He proposes three levels of linguistic realisation on which the analysis may concentrate: lexicogrammatical features, text-patterning or textualization and structural interpretations of the text-genre. The analyses conducted in this study concentrate, to varying degrees, on all three levels:

With regard to the first level, the lectures and the students' essays were analysed using the VocabProfile computer program. This program compares the words in a text with the words in its three base lists to see which words in the text are in the lists and which are not, and to see what percentage of the items in the text are covered by the lists. The first of these base lists includes the most frequent 1000 words in English, the second includes the 2nd 1000 most frequent words, and the third includes words not in the first 2000 words of English but which are frequent in upper secondary school and university texts from a wide range of subjects. The sources of these lists are A General Service List of English Words by Michael West (Longman, London 1953) for the first 2000 words, and *The University Word List* by Xue and Nation in Teaching and Learning Vocabulary by I.S.P. Nation (Heinle and Heinle, Boston 1990) for the "academic" words.

The next step of the analysis focused on Bhatia's second and third levels: When analysing "professional" texts (i.e. the lectures) I concentrated on the structural interpretation level, while the analysis of student-produced texts (students' lecture notes), on the other hand, focused on the patterning of information.

Owing to a lack of "model" texts with which to compare the students' lecture notes, I used my own notes as "complete" models. While this may appear inherently subjective, it is important to bear in mind that no lecture notes can ever really be considered "complete". Using my own notes simply served as a point of comparison: what difference is there, if any, between

the notes of an "experienced" student and those of a new-comer? What follows is a brief discussion of how these texts were analysed.

### 3.1.3.1 ANALYSIS OF LECTURES

Benson (1994) notes that a lecture is patterned into certain classes of communication acts and an analysis of these acts is an "excellent beginning to an ethnographic study of a lecture class" (p. 193).

I taped three lectures throughout the year, each one from a different course, respectively "motivation and emotion", "brain and behaviour" and "developmental psychology". All three are courses that are always covered at first year level. My analysis of these texts was guided mostly by Lynne Young's (1994) research on university lectures.

The assumption underlying her work is that a knowledge of macro-structure is significant for comprehension and that if we can characterise the formal schema of university lectures for ESL students, their processing of information will be greatly facilitated.

Young works with the model of Systemic Functional Grammar and gives the following two reasons for doing so: first, it explicitly indicates the connection between the situational factors, or contextual constructs, and language choices (Ibid., p. 161). That is, it helps us better understand how and why language varieties resemble or differ from each other because we can characterise the nature of the situations which engender choices made when we communicate.

Her second reason for selecting this model is that it allows a researcher not only to identify the macro-structure of a language variety, but also, to greater or lesser degrees of detail, to identify the micro-features that make up this structure. She (Ibid.) argues that with such identification available, teachers of English can then acquaint students with the distinctive features of different varieties of language.

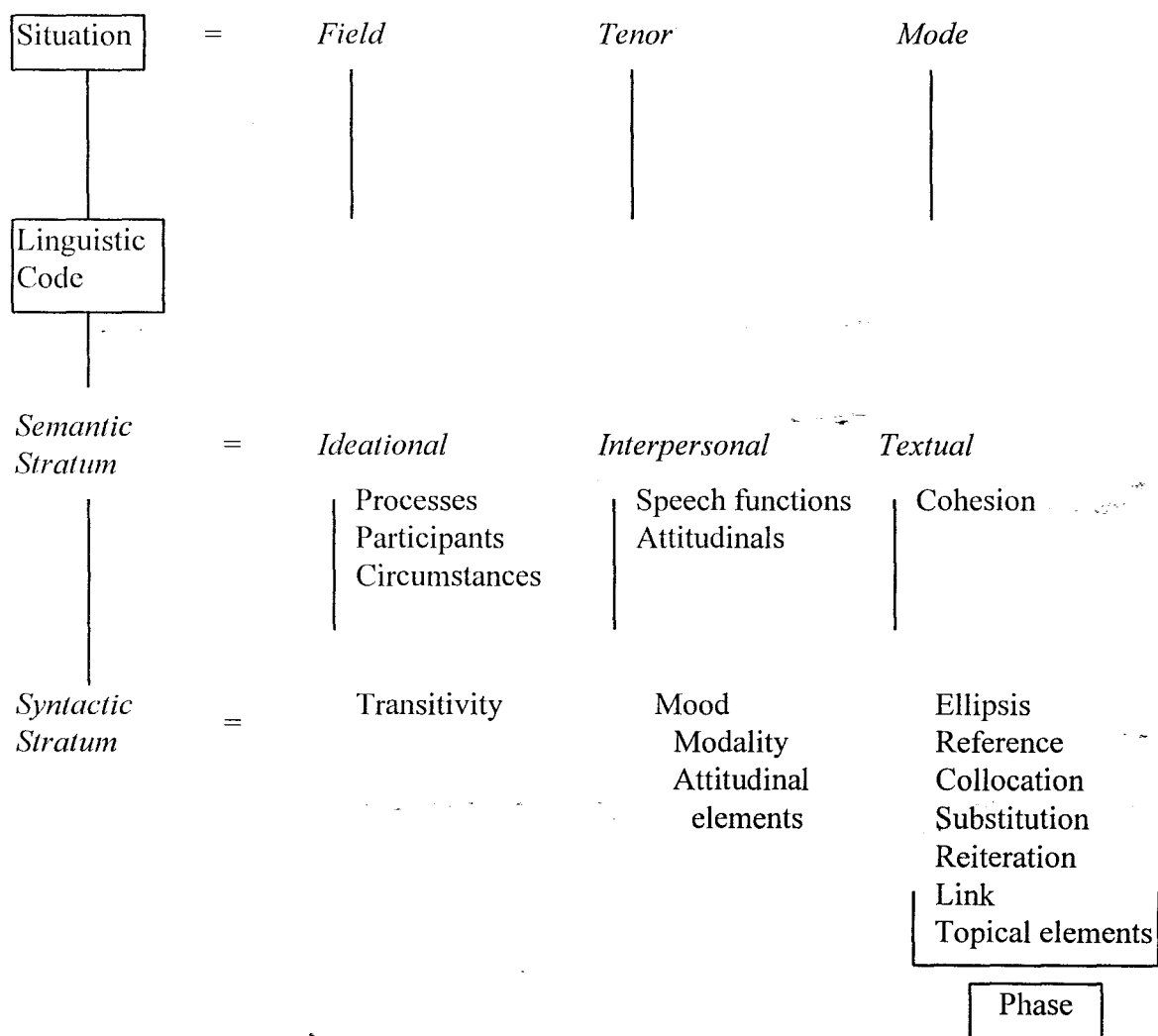
What follows is a brief sketch of this model of analysis. While I have included this explanation within this section on "lectures", I have also applied the Systemic Functional model to other texts and will consequently be referring back to it at later points (See Figure 2 for a diagram of the model, from Young, 1996, p. 175):

The upper left side of the diagram consists of a box labelled "**Situation**". Situations consist of three main constructs: The first is *field* which accounts for the activity in which speakers and listeners in a specific situation are engaged (Ibid., p. 161). In contexts in which the language activity constitutes the whole of the activity (for example, in lectures, sermons or news reports), field can be equated with subject matter. In the corpus being reported on here, consisting as it does of Psychology lectures, the fields are easy to identify: Motivation and Emotion, Brain and Behaviour and Developmental Psychology.

Another determining factor of language choices is the situational construct of *tenor*. This concerns the relationship between the speakers and listeners, or between writers and readers, a relationship that can be subdivided into two categories. The first is *personal tenor* which refers to the degree of formality between the participants in an instance of language (Ibid.). It accounts for the ways in which different relationships influence language choices. Equally evident is the influence of another aspect of this relationship which is covered by the concept of *functional tenor*; this relates to the purpose for which language is being used. That is to say that the language choices a speaker makes are also determined by the purpose of a person's speech, such as lecturing to an audience.

In addition to these factors, there is a third, *mode*, which refers to the channel of communication. A detailed description of this construct might seek to account for differences that arise between spoken monologues and dialogues.

**Figure 2 - Young's Model of Analysis Showing the Relationship  
between Situation and Linguistic Code**



Each of these factors influences not only what we say but how we say things in different situations. Having maintained such an influence, Young goes on to indicate explicitly the nature of the connection between a situation and the language that results from and responds to that context. From Figure 2 we see that situational factors influence the **linguistic code** (the lexis and the syntactic choices we select) with each of the constructs of the situation generating different types of language choices that we make (as indicated in the middle of the diagram) (Ibid., p. 162).

The linguistic code consists of two levels, the semantic and the syntactic strata; the former is seen as generating the latter. The semantic stratum is composed of three different general functions for which we use language, referred to in the literature as metafunctions. The *ideational* function is the component that accounts for the experience we are communicating, that is, it expresses the content of our ideas. This metafunction generates specific structures at the syntactic level: the nominal group realising subjects and objects; and the verbal groups realising transitive or intransitive verbs.

The metafunctional component that accounts for an addresser's assessments, choice of speech functions, etc., is the *interpersonal* one. The interpersonal metafunction generates mood choices, the use of modals and other attitudinal elements which are distinct from the features which realise ideational choices (Ibid.:163).

The last metafunction that language serves is the *textual* one, which accounts for cohesive features such as ellipsis, reference, collocation etc. Cohesive features show how we connect our ideas to each other through, for example, reference, where a pronoun refers back to a previous object or event in the discourse.

The language code, then, is composed of the semantic stratum which generates particular structures and lexis at the syntactic level.

Young (Ibid.) notes that when looking at language in terms of metafunctional choices one also comes to realise that they form definite patterns in different discourse types. During any

language event, in other words, there are different activities going on - in lectures, there are explanations, exemplifications, metadiscoursal strands such as summarising, evaluating and announcing of new directions - and each is identifiable in terms of the language choices made by an addresser. Young suggests the concept of *phase* as one way by which we can better see this.

Phases are strands of discourse that recur discontinuously throughout a particular language event and, taken together, structure that event. Phasal analysis is designed to reveal similarities in different strands of a particular discourse in terms of what is being selected ideationally, interpersonally and textually. Young argues that Phasal analysis reveals a more accurate configuration of the discourse structure of university lectures than alternatives which characterise lectures in terms of a beginning, or introduction, a middle and a conclusion (p. 164). Phasal analysis suggests that there are many beginnings, many middles and many ends.

In order to identify phases in a piece of discourse it is necessary to analyse each line of a particular corpus in terms of semantic and syntactic choices. This completed, one reviews the analysed lines to identify the distinct configurations of language choices which reveal the characteristics of each strand. Once these strands of phases have been identified, the analyst must then find a means of distinguishing each of them so that labels can be chosen to reveal the purpose that each phase serves in the discourse. In this case, I identified and colour-coded the various phases and used the labels selected by Young. These labels will be explained in the discussion of the phasal macro-structure of the Psychology 1 lectures.

### 3.1.3.2 STUDENT LECTURE NOTES AND ESSAYS

For purposes of reliable comparison I wished to analyse my informants' lecture notes from the same lectures. Unfortunately, there was only one lecture which all six informants had attended and written notes on. The analysed sample is therefore very small and this fact must be borne in mind when reading the results.

Following the work of Patricia Dunkel (1988:265), the students' notes were scored in the following manner, with my own lecture notes being used as "complete" notes:

1. The *total-number-of-words score* equalled the total number of words, symbols, abbreviations, and illustrations pertaining to the information presented by the lecturer.
2. The *information-units count* equalled the total number of information units contained in the students' notes. The "complete" notes contained 143 information units. An information unit is defined as equalling the smallest unit of knowledge that can stand as a separate assertion and that can be judged true or false.
3. The *completeness score* equalled the total number of all possible information units contained in the lecture (143), divided by the total number of all information units written in a student's notes.

Although I collected a sample of students' essays, time and space constraints prevented a comprehensive analysis of these texts, which could be argued to be beyond the scope of this study, the focus of which is the Department's practices and the effect they have on students' ability to become part of the disciplinary discourse community. What I did instead was examine briefly the type of writing tasks set for first-years (i.e. the modes of discourse), how the Essay Writing Handout that was given to students relates to these tasks, and also the nature of the feedback that was given to students. I will, however, in Chapter four, provide a brief summary of the findings of the student essay analysis conducted by the Academic Literacy Research Project team in 1995.

#### 3.1.4 METHODOLOGY

The final strand of Swales' approach is methodology which he sees as being configured in terms of language-learning tasks. He sees the place of task as central to the framework, arguing that "a task-driven methodology keeps an appropriate focus on rhetorical action and communicative effectiveness" (p. 72). The actual devising of suitable tasks is shown in

Figure 1 as being moderated on the one side by considerations of genre and on the other by what we know of the first or second language-learning process.

In this context it would have been inappropriate for me to follow this route since it would have been in conflict with a number of the central principles of ethnographic research. As I am not a member of the Psychology department staff, I was not in a position to design and implement language-learning tasks without altering or disrupting the social setting being studied. Also, designing tasks without any real knowledge of the needs would have nullified the discovery process and placed an artificial focus on the study.

### 3.2 CONCLUSION

The research approach used in this study is eclectic and predominantly qualitative relying, to a large extent, on Swales' genre-based approach. His model provides four possible access routes via which the researcher may approach the discourse community involved, namely, Ethnography, Evaluations and Validations, Discourse Analysis and Methodology. The focus of this study is on the practices of experienced community members (i.e. the staff of the Psychology Department) and how these affect the potential membership of neophytes. The investigation is essentially descriptive and thus concentrates on the routes of Ethnography and Discourse Analysis, allowing me to reveal the rituals of the academic discourse community, the roles played by the various key members in that culture and the implications of these practices for any future Language Across the Curriculum policy.



## CHAPTER 4 : FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.0 OVERVIEW

The findings are, once again, presented and discussed in line with Swales' model. While most of the interview data have been incorporated within the discussion of the ethnographic strand of the study, I have also used them in other sections where they seemed relevant.

Johns (1981, cited in Horowitz, 1986, p. 448), indicates that "the use of a questionnaire or interview leaves open the question of whether the data reflect what the respondents do, what they think they do, or what they want the researcher to think they do". There can therefore be no guarantee that the practices and priorities claimed by lecturers (or students) in their responses reflect actual performance. Both the data and their interpretation should therefore be read with caution, and be seen to reflect only one version of what selected community members think and do about academic literacy in their discipline.

### 4.1 ETHNOGRAPHY

The findings of the ethnographic strand (the questionnaires, interviews and journals) of this study are presented under thematic headings, including the various competencies that were identified by the Academic Literacy Research Project (ALRP) team as core constituents of academic literacy.

Staff and student responses are separated only for the discussion of membership of the discourse community. In all other sections they are discussed together in order to provide both perspectives on the various issues. The findings of the questionnaire analyses are also not presented separately as they are far more meaningful when included in the relevant discussions.

When quoting the students, the following code is used to identify them: M18L1. In this code M/F = male or female; 18 = student's age; and L1/L2 = speaks English as a first

language/second language. One of the L2 students was from the North West Province of South Africa (previously Bophutatswana) where her experience of high school was quite different from the average L2 speaker of English in the country. She is distinguished with an "N". Quotations from students' journals (and, to a large extent, their interviews) are given verbatim. I have avoided making any changes with regard to errors of usage as this seemed patronising of the students and condescending to the reader.

With regard to the staff members, they are simply numbered and are therefore identified, for example, as St1. Where relevant I mention during the discussion whether the lecturer in question is a junior or senior member of staff. Unfortunately, a more detailed description than this cannot be provided since it is imperative that staff members remain unidentifiable.

To facilitate the reading of this chapter, many of the excerpts from the student and staff interviews are included in an appendix (Appendix 2). Each quote is numbered and is referred to within the discussion to which it relates, for example, #6.

Before I begin I would like to state again the rationale behind the sort of description provided in this chapter. One of the staff members sums it up as follows:

St8: The thing that we ignore when looking at academic literacy is that there's a culture of doing things at university that people pick up on. And they either learn ways to cheat or to cope with the system or to answer questions in a critical way without really learning. And we mustn't underestimate that students are active in this process, so we pick up our cues from the way that they respond. So if they ... seem to have mastered the technique then we can become quite uncritical of how they actually got there. Often students speak out more because they've become super-confident in the culture than because they've learnt more. So there's a lot we have to learn about the environment in which academic literacy is acquired.

What follows is an attempt to draw together the attitudes and opinions of the various members of this discourse community, hopefully providing a useful description of the "environment in which academic literacy is acquired".

#### 4.1.1 THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY: STUDENTS AND STAFF

This section discusses the attitudes of staff and students towards the institution, the Department and towards each other. I was interested in examining staff and students' perceptions of their roles within the institution and what effect this has, if any, on students' ability to become part of the academic community.

##### 4.1.1.1 THE FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

I used the student journals and the key-informant interviews to explore what it is like to be an apprentice member of the academic discourse community. The general aim of the student interviews, grounded as they were in a descriptive theory of learning as a cultural system, was to reveal how a student - ESL or native speaker - is part of the culture: how s/he takes part in its rituals, adopts a suitable role, merges personal values into the general structure, and derives meaning from the whole (Flowerdew, 1994). Benson (1994) insists that the explanation show the patterns of structure and behaviour that dominate the culture of this learning.

It is significant to note that many of those interested in writing for me or talking to me were not traditionally "typical" first-year Rhodes students, i.e. not white, English-speaking 18-year-olds straight out of school. I say this in light of the fact that Rhodes is so intrinsically "English", as are many academic communities and hence their "cultures of learning". Rhodes is a "westernised" community and consequently harbours implicit assumptions about the nature of first-year students. The experiences of a number of the informants in this study were therefore those of students not traditionally catered for within the University system. I do not regard this as a drawback with regard to generalising the findings of the study since the University's student population will soon be majority "non-traditional" students.

With regard to the first few weeks at the University, I asked students why they chose Rhodes, and if they could describe their experiences during the first few weeks. Their overall feeling seems to have been one of confusion, which is understandable. This, however, is where the

similarities end. The following are excerpts from interviews with the English-speaking students:

M18L1: I chose Rhodes to get away from home - I also came to the schools' festival and really liked it. The beginning of term was really cool ... I really liked being away from home ...

M19L1: I came here because of Journ ... and I also wanted to get away from home. I loved it immediately ... the friendliest place I'd ever been.

F20L1: Because it's really English and I'm sick of the Free State! ... I like the town and the way the varsity is so isolated, but I'm having a hard time trying to find a niche for myself ... maybe going overseas makes you mature a bit or something. ... Things definitely get better though, you know where you're going and so you can start to lose a bit of the inhibition. You're a first year and you're scared, but it gets better. It's weird the way people have changed already from when I first met them ... their clothes, their hair, there's just this huge transformation going on ... but that's varsity - you come here and you grow as a person and suddenly you're open to all these things...

It seems for most of these English-speaking, first-year students, their choice of University had a great deal to do with what the institution could offer them in terms of personal growth. Their priorities are individualistic: to establish their independence and find a "niche" for themselves, and this requires their leaving home. While being a first-year may be "scary", the motivation to be out on their own - "to grow" - more than compensates for this.

A student, who described himself as "your mature pupil", kept a journal at the beginning of the year and described his experience as follows:

M56L1: **Confusion!!**...In many ways I felt quite out, but in many others I feel very comfortable being part of a big community. ... most of the problem, I think, is that we're all so determined not to make a spectacle of ourselves, or step out of line in any way. [but] I can't tell you how much I'm enjoying University life: starting at the bottom of the pile with a massive new challenge ahead; stimulating new opportunities; incredible facilities and interesting people at every turn ... Naturally one absorbs this new culture by a sort of process of osmosis.

This "process of osmosis" apparently occurs far more "naturally" if one has experience of English values and customs - to the extent that age or mother-tongue presents only a slight problem. For instance, the following student attended a mixed, or multi-racial, school in Mmabatho (in what is now the North West Province of South Africa), where the majority of

students spoke English as a second language, but where she studied English as a first language. She experienced no problems in adjusting to life at Rhodes:

F18L2N: I feel very at home here now. Like when I went home for the vac I really couldn't wait to get back here.

Few South African second-language speakers, however, have attended such mixed schools and move from a context in which the majority speaks their mother-tongue to one in which they are in the minority. De Klerk (1996) notes that because of the intrinsically English nature of Rhodes, it is possible that some students may experience culture "shock" initially. The resultant isolation can have a temporarily crippling effect on the learner (p. 125), a case illustrated in the following extract:

F18L2: First of all I can say everything is so confusing. I am living in a world of confusion. My high school experience was difficult as the result I think I am trying in sorting out my things here at University, but there are so many problems ... I made friends quickly but it was strange ... I felt like I was isolated from other kids ... I don't know why, maybe because I am missing my home.

Her isolation is further emphasised by the gratitude she regularly expressed with regard to the journal writing exercise and my interest in her:

F18L2: This journal at this point in time means a lot to me as I'm having an opportunity to express myself comfortably without the fear of being laughed at by other person. It is much easier now that I do have someone that I can talk to about me and someone who can take my problems seriously.

Hunt's (1996) recent research at Rhodes also shows that students generally view the culture at the University to be foreign to L2 students. Several of her interviewees pointed out that Rhodes is essentially a "white setting" and University culture a "white culture". One student she interviewed noted that "the whole university system is a kind of heritage from the white English side of history and ... unless you've had that kind of upbringing it must be quite a culture shock" (Ibid., p. 161).

An older L2 speaker admits that he had definite preconceived ideas about life at an English university:

M25L2: At the beginning I had mixed feelings ... Here I was, however much experience I had ... but because I was black - you see there's this mentality that is there in most African students that at Rhodes black students are not welcome. They feel that admin, the teaching staff and so on take a systematic approach towards them ... they are not really appreciated even though the University needs them. That is the kind of feeling I had - very cold ... the University felt very cold to me ... I had never been to a multi-racial school and here I was meeting white students for the first time - what will their reaction be? How are they going to take me? ... Those are the kinds of things and they are feelings that seriously affect one.

.... I think I must say that the admin staff, the tutors, all the people that have to assist you ... I think they are very very kind and very good. Because you have these feelings, you expect these people to demonstrate all the things you already have in mind about them - but then you find that you feel so welcomed by them.

The culture of Rhodes university is clearly still a very foreign one for many of the students who come here. If a student is English, or has experience of English values and customs, it is not difficult for him/her to adopt a suitable role and merge his/her personal values into the general structure. Thus Clarence (1992) suggests that one of the reasons that black students so often report feelings of alienation is that it is difficult to find a subject position from which to operate; it is difficult to make meaning or to contest dominant practice within the context of an institution that constructs itself in ways often inaccessible and alien to students.

#### 4.1.1.2 THE STAFF

Fischer et al. (1995) note that "it appears that the understanding of what their job entails and the relative priorities which staff members give to different aspects of their job, is an important determinant of attitudes towards Academic Development" (p. 57). This section attempts to determine the nature of this understanding and its implications for a future LAC model.

Most academic staff in the Psychology department have lecturing duties at all levels of teaching and are required to design and implement units in the practical course. As student numbers are large, staff are also involved in the administration and co-ordination of courses. They are, however, also employed to do research, as are all academics. For most this is,

understandably, a priority since, unlike teaching, it is the work that is most readily recognised and rewarded by the University.

Undergraduate teaching, and especially first-year teaching, is largely the responsibility of more junior members of staff, i.e. the least experienced members of staff. Undergraduate teaching, because of the lack of student contact and large quantities of marking, is seen as a less desirable teaching commitment. Fischer et al. (1995) note that whilst some staff members see this form of teaching as challenging, "there are few who are challenged by the problems to the extent of having developed strong professional interests in psychology education in the South African context" (p. 57).

Volbrecht (1994) poses the following question with regard to the role of academics in institutes of higher education: "If the accepted assumption is that every university academic is a teacher, it might be fair to ask why at present it is not deemed necessary for academics to have formal teaching qualifications" (p. 5).

An interesting aspect of this question is the reference to the "accepted assumption" that every academic is a teacher. In my experience, this assumption is far from accepted: All of the staff-members I spoke to referred to themselves as "lecturers", and many denied that they are "teachers" for the very reason that they lack formal teaching qualifications. The autonomous role of the lecturer is one entrenched in academia. This, according to some, is what differentiates "lecturers" and "teachers":

St1: Clearly the University lays down a minimum number of lectures per degree per course but doesn't say what that content should be, that's left to the Department. So it's unlike if you're a teacher and this comes back to the whole teacher mentality that a lot of people have. As academics we have no one telling us how we should teach. The lecturer is free to lecture in his/her own style and if it doesn't work out then you don't keep your job. But it's individual styles and I don't think it's appropriate for anyone to say that we should all do the following.

Besides student course-evaluation, there is no system in place at Rhodes to evaluate whether or not one's lecturing "works out". The ADP runs a four-day orientation course at the beginning of each year for new lecturers at the University, as well as "Professional

Development" seminars throughout the year. However, staff attendance at these seminars is notoriously poor, as noted by the newly-appointed ADP staff development officer:

It's all very well us designing a continuing programme throughout the year but we can't make people come ... and I don't really think compulsory attendance is the answer ... things need to be happening within departments.

Very little provision is made for the acknowledgement of "good" teaching within the University. However, the Vice Chancellor's "Distinguished Teaching" award - previously suffering from a lack of recognition by academics - has recently acquired increased status and part of the new AD policy within the Psychology Department includes an award for contributions made towards AD by members of the Department.

As mentioned, however, there is no practical evaluation of lecturers' "teaching", besides course evaluation forms filled out by students at regular intervals. The weight given to student evaluation is, however, up to the department concerned and, according to a senior member of staff (St13),

... the psych department is quite notorious for doing absolutely nothing about [student] feedback. The courses that get slammed [by students] year after year get taught year after year anyhow. Some academics are really slack. If you apply for a post as lecturer ... they just assume you can teach and that's a really bad assumption. We're not school teachers who've been trained to teach.

A number of junior staff members expressed dissatisfaction with this situation. Some felt that there should be more support from experienced members of staff; they are apprentice members of the community and, while they value their autonomy, they find it frustrating that they are never explicitly initiated into the accepted practices of the Department:

St8: I feel that older staff members with more experience don't take responsibility for how we become lecturers and that's problematic ... there's an accepted way of doing things in this department, like a standard, and people who deviate from that are seen in particular ways. And there's no training ... because you apply to be a lecturer, they assume you are one, that you know what it is. Maybe I'm naive in thinking that it shouldn't be assumed but it shouldn't. Teachers get taught to teach, we don't get taught to lecture. You can be good academically but not necessarily be able to teach.



The ADP staff development officer noted that "in universities overseas new staff are assigned mentors who initiate them into the system but here that is seen as extra work and few people are willing to try it".

There was also the view that the role of the lecturer in a South African tertiary institution is one that has degenerated (or soon will) into that of a teacher; an inevitable consequence of the education crisis in the country. There was strong resistance against "becoming teachers" since many equated this with a lowering of academic standards (see #1):

St1: We're employed to do research, we're employed to teach psychology at a university ... no one in this department has a teaching diploma. They've studied psychology and they've become lecturers because they're interested in research ... In the States and the UK the staff are lecturers, here we're teachers. A teacher has to do what we do: see our students every day, give them multiple choice tests, give them lectures, talk to them, put up overheads - please slow down I haven't got that last sentence down. At all other universities outside of this country they don't teach, they lecture. I'm really concerned that as a university we're becoming more and more like a high school and that's not a role. Our role is teach psychology, recognise students' weaknesses and those students who can't cope we refer out to specialists ... I'll teach you psychology ... come back when you can come to grips with it.

The staff members quoted above appear to be caught in the struggle to keep in place what Rose (1985) refers to as the "hard fought for, if historically and conceptually problematic and highly fluid, distinction between college and secondary work" (p. 349). Orr (1996) explains the thinking behind this reluctance to be labelled a "teacher" as follows: 'If maintaining the elitist status of universities requires assigning responsibility for "basic skills" elsewhere, then it follows that the teaching of such skills must belong in a domain of teaching at a level lower than "academic". Therefore "those teaching that kind of content must be a 'secondary', less elite class of academic - in effect, glorified school teachers, rather than scholars" (p. 38).

The 1995 ALRP team concluded that most staff members see themselves as only partially committed to teaching as a vocation. They also see themselves as researchers, practitioners and specialists in specific domains of knowledge. Fischer et al. (1995) conclude that

most staff members did not choose teaching as a career and feel that their primary commitment is to the field of interest. Their commitment to the problems

and challenges of teaching in the face of what is perceived to be an adverse educational environment must be understood in this context (p. 57).

To close, it is worth repeating the definitions of "teaching" and "lecturing" that were given by two senior members of staff. These excerpts illustrate the difficulties experienced by staff members when trying to define the role they play:

St13: There's a difference between teaching and lecturing, if you teach you allow participation, if you lecture you just lecture.

St1: A lecturer should not just walk in with a "shut up, keep quiet and write down what I have to say" attitude. That's not being a lecturer, that's being a teacher...We should rather go the other way...encouraging participation.

#### 4.1.2 THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT AS A COMMUNITY

Anthony Collins (1994), once a member of staff in the Rhodes Psychology department, makes the following comment about the state of Psychology in South Africa, a country

going through a massive transformation ... directed at alleviating the pain and suffering of millions of individuals and ushering in a more humane mode of existence. The theoretical contributions come from every possible social science: politics, history, economics, law, education, to name but a few. But not psychology. Psychology, the discipline that one might have naively believed was dedicated to the relief of human suffering and the promotion of well-being seems to have very little to offer (p.7):

There is currently a great deal of debate about the relevance of contemporary psychology to the majority of people in southern Africa. Many argue that what is needed is a completely new psychological discipline to meet the needs of South Africa. Historically, however, the roots of psychology in southern Africa lie in Europe and North America and psychology, as a discipline and a profession, will inevitably continue for a long time to be dominated by trends in these parts of the world (Louw & Edwards, 1993). Psychology in southern Africa is, however, in a process of continuous development and there is an ongoing debate regarding the future of the discipline in this context.

It is important to see the Psychology department at Rhodes in light of this debate because the pressure for "transformation" and "relevance" is clearly a priority that must inform, and have repercussions for, the teaching of the discipline:

St4: There is a rift in this department between those concerned with the clinical side of things and those concerned with community research. And the side that does clinical is actually more powerful and in a way it's that school of thought that decides the curriculum that is taught. The more community based, socially relevant side of things is not taught at all in first, second and third year and that's why people don't choose it when it comes to practical options. People come in first year and study Freud ... but there are other issues regarding what it means to practice Psychology in South Africa.

The Department's acknowledgement of the need to "South Africanise" itself (in light of the abovementioned debate) was apparent in the introductory first-year course, entitled "Psychology in Contemporary South Africa", in which a few of the issues facing the profession were discussed. This need is also evident in the beginning of the prescribed first-year textbook (Louw & Edwards, cited above). At a deeper level, however, the first-year course continues to emphasise the American and European roots of the discipline. As a result, topics such as the relationship between intelligence and race or gender, where South Africa is a prime example of how intelligence testing has been abused or manipulated, were glossed over as apparently too "sensitive".

Louw and Edwards (Ibid.) note that because of the popularity of the subject, most universities have large psychology departments. This is indeed the case at Rhodes, where Psychology is regarded as the largest Humanities/Social Science department on campus: enrolment figures for 1996 totalled 783, while the average first-year intake is about 350 students (357 in 1996). With regard to the staff, the Department consists of two Professors, one Associate Professor, two Senior Lecturers, seven Lecturers, four Junior Lecturers and several part-time temporary teaching staff-members.

In the context of a disciplinary community, Benson (1994) suggests an analysis in terms of three levels of administrative goals, those of the department, the course, and the teacher. The

overarching goal is obviously that of the department which, in the present case, describes its "teaching emphasis" as follows:

The Department offers a wide curriculum representing the major thrusts of contemporary psychology, which allows individual staff members to develop their own theoretical and teaching interests. The Department has a commitment to a human science perspective on psychology, an emphasis on experiential learning and a vision of research where qualitative methods are highly valued (Dept Pub, 1).

As a result of the Academic Literacy Research Project carried out in 1995, workshops were held throughout 1996 and the Department has now drawn up a document detailing its internal policy pertaining to Academic Development (see Appendix 3).

The Department publishes information booklets on all its postgraduate courses but there is no explicit policy for undergraduate teaching. From this, it is clear that postgraduate teaching is prioritised. However, within the last year, the Department has drawn up "academic development" goals for each of the three undergraduate years (see Appendix 4).

In the case of course level goals for Psychology 1, none were given in the "General Information" hand-out issued to students at the beginning of the year. What is notable here is that neither the departmental level goals nor the course level goals give the student much clear guidance. Goals are generally staff orientated, very few of which filter through to students at undergraduate level.

With regard to the specific goals of the various courses (the lecturer/teacher's goals), only five of the ten subjects making up Psychology 1 were accompanied by a "course outline" at the beginning of the lecture programme. Only two of these outlines listed "course objectives", and these were personal goals, that is, pertaining to the lecturer's expectations of him/herself, rather than what was expected from students. For example:

"Get class participating and having fun!"

"Objectives....are to introduce students to the concept of.."

The three other course outlines provided general information on the topics to be covered in lectures, recommended readings and how the sections would be evaluated.

#### 4.1.2.1 JOINING THE COMMUNITY

The question most relevant in this section is whether or not first-time students feel like novice/apprentice members of the disciplinary discourse communities. I asked students to think of the various departments on campus as small communities and to tell me where they felt most comfortable and why. In the last item on the questionnaire, 41 of the 125 respondents (33%) indicated that they felt welcome in the Psychology department. None of the students I interviewed, however, expressed any feeling of belonging to the Department (see #2, #3, #4):

M19L1: Mainly you only experience your tutors, sometimes your lecturers. I feel most comfortable in my politics tuts and in the department. I don't feel very comfortable in psycho...but then obviously you're going to be biased according to what you enjoy most, and I'm really enjoying politics.

F20L1: I think it's truly ironic that the most impersonal department I've had contact with is the psych department... every other department has at least made a little bit of an effort and mostly they seem genuinely concerned. Maybe if we got more involved...but because it seems to us that they're avoiding all personal involvement none of us care.

The constant reference to tutors and tutorials in these excerpts is striking and it seems that regular contact with the community members, particularly more experienced peer members (such as tutors), is clearly the determining factor in making students feel as if they "belong". This was clearly the case for student M25L2, who had the following to say about his tutor in the department where he felt most comfortable:

M25L2: ... the way the lady treats us and the way she is so considerate and caring makes me more acceptable, even I don't want to fail it because it will be as if I hurt her...that relationship between you and your tutor students who are positive. In psych, I'm not quite sure because we do not meet very constantly with our tutors, so up to now I just don't know, I just attend...no, psych is at the bottom.

Because of the nature of the Psychology 1 tutorial programme (discussed in 4.1.4 below), there is very little contact between first-year students and the staff or tutors in the Department. With regard to staff/student interaction, staff had the following to say (see #5, #6):

St7: It definitely needs to be encouraged more [because] we're the presenters of our profession and psychology is about people. Students dislike not being seen...but it's very difficult at first year level because our courses are too short and the students don't have that opportunity to connect.

St1: I have a policy of keeping my door open...I will see any student at any time of the day to help. But a student has got to want to be helped.

This issue is closely related to the workings of the tutorial programme and I will therefore continue this discussion in section 4.1.4.

#### 4.1.2.2 THE DISCIPLINE AND THE COURSE

Preconceived ideas about certain disciplines must impact on how students respond to the courses in those disciplines. I was interested in finding out what first-year students know about "Psychology" and where these ideas originated. Another question relevant to how students were responding to the course, was that of the attitude of the community towards "first-years" in particular.

The Psychology 1 course consists of ten sub-courses, covering most of the major fields of contemporary psychology. Each course lasted for two to three weeks (8 or 12 lectures) with two daily rotations of each lecture four times a week. Four of the courses contained a tutorial component which will be discussed in more detail in section 4.1.4. The courses offered were

1. Psychology in Contemporary South Africa
2. Motivation and Emotion
3. Brain and Behaviour
4. Developmental Psychology
5. Social Psychology
6. Intelligence, Language and Thought

7. Industrial Psychology
8. Learning and Memory
9. Abnormal Psychology
10. Personality

There's an assumption in the Psychology department that the discipline is an unknown phenomenon because it is not a subject that can be done at school. This apparently makes it difficult to link the first-year course to the following two years: "It's probably easier to link Geography 1,2 and 3 because people who take it know more or less what it's going to entail from school" (St1).

Psychology has, however, been popularised to the extent that students know enough to have expectations regarding the course. This is acknowledged by the Department, but these expectations are regarded as being founded on "myth". In a survey conducted previously by the Department, students gave the following reasons for choosing to study Psychology:

St1: "it's a subject that intrigues me, I haven't taken it before but it's in the movies so I need to know what it's about. Another response was that they believe it will help them to resolve their own problems. And many students therefore become disillusioned as the course progresses, wondering where all the information is on how to understand themselves and read other peoples' minds. So there's a myth that's not present when people take Geography ... they know what it's about."

More than half the questionnaire respondents (57%) said their ideas about what Psychology is had changed since beginning the course in February. During the interviews, I asked students why they had chosen to study Psychology and if they could tell me the origins of their knowledge of the subject (see #7, #8, #9):

M18L1: I didn't know very much...I knew you sort of analyse things about people and why they do things...I suppose I got the information I did have from books I'd read, where a character was a psychologist or something... From what my sister told me I was expecting it to be really difficult...but so far it hasn't been too bad.

All the L1 students, as well as the L2 student from Mmbatho, had either had experience of Psychology in practice, had read about the subject or the profession, or had an immediate family member who had studied Psychology. The two local ESL students, however, had

slightly more mystical ideas about psychology, seeing it as a discipline that empowers people, giving them an advantage in the sphere of human relationships (see #10):

M25L2: There is some kind of a stereotype around Psychology and how we view it. For instance, as students we used to think of psychologists as some kind of very intelligent people who can read situations, who can trick you and get away with things. If we said "Hey that person has psychology" it meant he's sharp, he's really good. Our principle was very intelligent and we used to say "he's got Psychology". But there were also the university students around who used to talk about it. And so we became aware that there was a subject that dealt with the way people think, the way they behave and that that subject can really give you an advantage with people.

What came through clearly in all the interviews was the feeling of "disillusionment" referred to by the staff member (St1) above. The frustration students were feeling was evident during the first few weeks of lectures when they attempted to engage with the lecturer, asking questions that required a deeper discussion of the subject matter. The response was often to the effect of "this is merely an introduction and you don't need to know much more for now".

A number of my journal entries over this period of time focused on this phenomenon:

27/02/96: Students seem to be frustrated with this broad overview approach. They want to get down to things.

01/03/96: There seems to be this assumption that University is going to be very intense and when students are eased into things they don't realise that it's just introductory information. They're getting really frustrated during lectures and their questions reveal a sense of "Am I missing something?"

A lecturer response (such as that indicated above) implying that students need not delve much further into the theory, is indicative of the attitude of staff towards first-year students and the first-year course. Many staff members tended towards blanket rejection and condemnation, assigning students with much despair, and some contempt, to the realms of the ignorant and uneducable (see #11, #12, #13, #14):

St8: I know there are many people in the Department who think... ag, shitty little first-years, they should just be ignored. And their whole attitude about everything to do with first-years is like that and I think that's bad because it doesn't help the situation, it makes it worse.



St11: ...but I'm just very cynical about students. I think there are students that come here and they're just not interested.

St4: First year is really just for introducing students to concepts and then letting them mull over things. It isn't necessarily imparting skills because they're invariably going to forget the stuff from first year by the time they get to third year anyway.

In their final report, the ALRP team (Fischer et al., 1995) noted this pervasive discourse of "student blaming": Students were described as "parrots", "not really interested in studying", "lazy", "not reading", "expecting to be spoon-fed", "not really interested in thinking critically" and other comments of this kind. It has been noted (Corson, 1993) that professionals in education commonly engage in rationalisation, distortion, and repression in their language activities. By "defining the status of their clients in education", teachers also define their own status in relation to those others and thereby justify the work that they do (Ibid., p. 8). Corson concludes that, in the hands of empowered professionals, the categories created by such terms and labels become tools of power that shape and repress other people's destinies and legitimise professional value systems (Ibid.).

The consequence of this attitude was that first-year students got the impression that they did not have to think:

M19L1: I spoke to someone doing Psychology masters and he said that where I had gone wrong was that first-year psych students aren't entitled to have an opinion.

M18L1: I got the impression from our tutor that we shouldn't put down our own opinions...I haven't heard anything about critical thinking or that they expect that from us.

M25L2: Sometimes I try to be so inventive because I think this is university standard...but the lecturer wants something [else]... [a] very simple, straightforward thing.

It took some time for this attitude to filter through to the students, but when it did (towards the middle of the first term) they stopped asking questions during lectures. What was clear

from the interviews, and my own observations, was that students quickly resigned themselves to the situation, accepting it as their fate as first-years.

It seems a great pity to be disillusioning people at the height of their idealism. Most students I spoke to were surprised to discover how little was really expected of them. It was not that they found the content too simple but rather, that they felt they were perceived as having nothing valuable to contribute (see #15, #16):

M25L2: Students have ideas, but apparently they are just to be filled in with the information...

F20L1: I really want to know what's happening to people, that's what makes psycho interesting, but it's just regurgitating the textbook! Everybody's just accepting it because first years are obviously just stupid or whatever it is...maybe it's even to scare us away because there are so many of us. But it's definitely not making us think at all, and you kind of think that's what varsity is all about...

Considering the general opinion of staff regarding first-year students, there is a certain irony in students getting so annoyed when they discover that they are apparently not supposed to think too hard, if at all. Perhaps these students are overestimating their abilities since it seems most lecturers assume that, at this stage, they are unable, or unwilling, really to think at all:

St12: I don't expect first years to be able to think as critically as second and third years.

St11: First years have so much to take in that we can't really expect critical insight from them.

St13: If a first year student can critically argue then I think we should promote them to third year because I've never seen it before.

Perhaps the problem is that novice and expert members of the community have a different idea of what "thinking" involves: Rose (1988) and others (Bizzell 1982, Mitchell & Taylor 1979) have unpacked what lies behind the "students can't think" lament. Mitchell and Taylor (1979, cited in Van Zyl 1993) comment as follows:

Teachers do not recognise and therefore condemn styles of thinking which are not the dominant academic style. Concentration on certain unchanging features of the written product tempts teachers to assume that the student's mental development is somehow retarded; the written product model does not suggest that the student is merely inexperienced in controlling and displaying his or her mental development through language (p 97).

One staff member remarked that faculty really have no right to complain about the lack of thought displayed by students since "the philosophy of encouraging critical thinking is at odds with a lot of departmental practice", such as evaluation via multiple-choice tests (St4).

Mitchell and Taylor (1979) imply (in the above quote) that it is from the *written product* that staff draw their conclusions about students' ability to think. I will therefore move on to a discussion of staff and students' attitudes towards Academic Writing.

#### 4.1.3 WRITING

Taylor et al. (1988) note that a common understanding of academic writing, or "academic literacy" is elusive because there are so many diverse meanings attached to the concept of literacy. Their definition of academic literacy involves the "students' capacity to use written language to perform those functions required by the culture in ways and at a level judged acceptable by the reader" (p. 8).

They argue that there is a fundamental notion of "judgement", an understanding of the rules surrounding academic discourse, which shapes the entire process of student writing. This understanding of the rules of academic discourse sets limits for the student as to what is "acceptable" and what is not. These rules, according to Taylor et al. (Ibid.), are the crux of the problems students experience with academic writing tasks because they are very seldom made explicit to students.

Recent research (1993) conducted by Margaret Van Zyl on staff attitudes to student writing at the University of South Africa (UNISA) provides an invaluable source of comparison within

the South African context. I will therefore make several references to her work during this discussion in an attempt to situate my findings within the broader context.

Writing in Psychology 1 took place within the context of the tutorial programme. The programme had three basic aims:

- a) to expose students to material and issues which go beyond the Psychology-1 courses,
- b) to stimulate interest in Psychology, and
- c) to develop essay-writing skills.

This section concentrates on (c), while the tutorial programme itself is discussed in section 4.1.4.

Students wrote four essays throughout the year and were required to pass two. The main tool of the essay writing programme was the use of videos, thus each of the four essays was based on a video and at least two tutorial discussions. The first block of tutorials provided the opportunity for students to submit a draft of their first essay to be marked by the tutor and then discussed in the following tutorial.

The only other writing tasks set were the June and November examinations, where students answered essay-type questions on each of the ten courses covered during the year.

#### 4.1.3.1 STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC WRITING

One of the questions Van Zyl (1993) asked in relation to student writing was, how have lecturers, in their mythologizing, contributed to the creation of problems by their attitudes, their definitions, the tasks they set and the writing tuition they offer?

This section attempts to look at all these aspects of staff perceptions in the Psychology department, i.e. the attitudes of lecturers towards student (particularly first-year) writing, their definitions of "good" writing, the sort of tasks they set and, where they think the responsibility lies for the development of writing skills.

As mentioned above, few writing tasks were set for the first-year course and those set all took the form of essays written for purposes of evaluation. "Large student numbers" and the ensuing quantity of marking was the reason given for not setting more tasks during the year. A senior staff member (St2) remarked on the departmental

mindset that writing is equated with assessment rather than writing being done for it's own sake in order to develop and practise a particular skill. And therefore we shy away from getting students to write, but we don't have to see writing as assessment!

Van Zyl (1993) found that student writing at UNISA was not read by anyone other than the lecturer marking the assignment. In the case of Psychology 1 at Rhodes, essays are marked by student tutors, with a sample being marked and moderated by the lecturer running the particular course. Implicit in this practice is the notion that tutors' assessment criteria are similar enough to those of the staff that they are adequately able to represent the community. Research (Currie, 1994) shows, however, that even with their partial enculturation into the community, "teaching assistants", responsible for coaching students in the community's conventions for reasoning and writing, are themselves not fully aware of those conventions. Staff members, in this study, agreed that this was a less than ideal situation but saw it, once again, as a consequence of high student numbers.

A further consequence of this situation is that student writers tend to be "deprived of a sense of an audience (a listening community) with whom meaning can be made and shared" (Ibid., p. 117). Few students are likely ever to read the writing of their peers, and thus are "deprived of the sense of incorporation into a discourse community which includes students as contributing members, and not merely as outsiders" (Ibid.).

The inability to think, as mentioned earlier, was most often identified as the problem underlying student writing: The ALRP team (1995) concluded that "a significant number of writing problems appear to lie at the level of metacognition", i.e. the students' tendency to think about thinking:

It seems that many fail to adequately monitor their writing, work to a plan, and distance themselves from the immediacy of the task to see their arguments in relation to other discourses. Some of this may be linked to language proficiency in that if one is struggling with the immediacy of finding the right word or meaning, it is difficult to provide the space to think about one's thinking (p. 72).

If writing problems are readily identifiable, the question to ask at this point is, how do members of the Department define good writing?

In this regard, a literature search conducted by Van Zyl (1993) indicated that almost no work has been done on definitions of "good writing". While staff in the Psychology department were never asked explicitly to define good writing, the criteria they use when marking students' essays sum up their expectations and hence what they believe constitutes good writing at this level. The following were the main criteria given by staff in the questionnaires: Evidence of overall understanding, relevance to the question, grasp of the topic, cogency of presentation, logic and organisation of argument, and relevant examples.

During the interviews, "structure", "clarity of ideas" and "style" came out as the criteria which lecturers viewed as most important. While very few lecturers mentioned "language use" as part of their marking criteria, most said that they were sensitive to this when marking and did not necessarily mark down for difficulties with language but did mark down for poor "style".

St5: Style comes in whenever you read anything. If someone expresses themselves fluently one is certainly inclined to view this as a better effort ... I particularly try to be more sensitive where the language is clearly the problem ... but the difficulty isn't always that. Some very creative mangling goes on in first-year essays.

St4: Unconsciously you give a mark on your first impression ... you have to be aware that you may be biased towards people who express themselves in a particular way ... just because we have a marking schedule we think our objectives are transparent but they're not.

Corson (1993) warns against giving educational recognition to school graduates solely on their language performance, or their ability to "wield high-status" vocabulary. By doing this "we reinforce the influence in the culture of conventionally dominant groups ...[and] in the

process, alternative forms of linguistic and cultural capital ... go unrecognised and remain without influence" (p. 14).

The "marking schedule", referred to above, is the First Year Assignment Assessment and Feedback Form which indicates the "objective" criteria according to which essays are marked. The ALRP report noted that many staff members, especially junior members, felt that, despite the marking schedule, they lacked guidelines for marking essays in cases where students have difficulties in expressing themselves in English. "More experienced staff members do not have the same difficulties, and seem to have implicit guidelines which they follow without necessarily being able to spell these out" (Fischer et al., 1995, p. 64).

The marking guide given to tutors and staff consists of a list of 12 criteria along with a rating scale of 5 (excellent) to 1 (needs much more work) which they fill in for each essay and return to the students (See Appendix 5). Seven of these criteria relate to written structure and style, one to content, one to logical argument and three to the sources used and the style of referencing these sources.

These findings support Van Zyl's (1993) work which indicated that, at UNISA, "by far the most dominant characteristic of good writing emerged as 'clarity'. The next most frequent theme was that of logical, systematic or reasoned writing" (p. 110). She notes that such responses echo the concerns identified in other surveys of non-English department attitudes to students' written prose. Rose's (1979) findings, for example, also emphasise the importance of clarity: "despite complaints about grammar or 'illiteracy', our true befuddlements [as readers of student writing] arise from the vague thesis, the sloppy argument, the missing evidence" (p. 274).

Van Zyl (1993) argues that such definitions can be seen as a direct consequence of the approach to writing as an artefact, the ultimate student commodity. "Automatic and unselfconscious assumptions arising from this presupposition immediately narrow faculty's definitions" (p. 112). She concludes that

as a student commodity, therefore, writing becomes utilitarian, prosaic, preferably invisible, a window pane through which lecturers can do a quick smash-and-grab at the student's meaning (p. 114).

Finally, with regard to the type of tasks set, the only type of writing assigned for the first-year class in 1996 were essays, the first topic being "Compare and contrast the two eating disorders of anorexia and bulimia".

Once again, this supports Van Zyl's (1993) finding that faculty predominantly expect the most difficult type of writing task (the essay), in the most demanding modes (analysis, and compare and contrast). She therefore concludes that academic staff have helped to create the problem of unsatisfactory student writing:

They offer students an extremely narrow range of writing opportunities, and provide almost no commentary or feedback on individual writing problems, while supplying an audience almost entirely interested in what the writer has got wrong. They regard student writers as outsiders to the academic discourse community, saved from being pariahs only if their prose style is so innocuous as to be almost invisible (p. 121).

Academic Development and the teaching of reading and writing "skills" are regarded as synonymous by most staff members and it is therefore relevant at this point to discuss staff attitudes towards taking responsibility for such teaching.

#### 4.1.3.2 WHO SHOULD TEACH ACADEMIC WRITING?

There was a range of attitudes toward the question of responsibility for academic development. On the one hand there was a perception that, if the University accepts students who are academically disadvantaged it should also plan for, and make available, support services and development programmes which are appropriate for these students. There was a belief, from the perspective of this body of opinion, that while it is undeniable that certain students need academic assistance, there is relatively little that lecturers can do to alleviate the situation, given high student numbers. One of the beliefs that is aligned with this general body of opinion is that academic literacy is not subject-specific and since students study other



subjects where there are smaller student numbers, it is acceptable to expect that academic literacy development is likely to and should take place in other contexts.

This belief does not take into account that there may be forms of academic literacy which are subject-specific. The perception is also part of an attitude of resignation aggravated by the belief that the problems cannot be practically addressed. The attitude also assumes that the needs of students for AD are being addressed in other, smaller departments or in the University as a whole. This set of beliefs and assumptions is summed up by the following statement by a senior staff member:

St1: We give our third years multiple choice tests and there are both benefits and disadvantages. But those students also have another major in a smaller department where they give essays. So even if in Psychology the student doesn't have the critical thinking possibility - it could be argued because they don't have essays - then fair enough because they get that in other disciplines, in small departments. Thinking critically is not subject-specific, it's a universal ability. So what they don't get in Psychology they get elsewhere.

Another view was that the development of reading and writing skills should be part of the tutorial programme at first year level. In this regard, Fischer et al. (1995) conclude that there seems to be very little understanding on the part of staff members about the content and limits of the tutorial programme, which runs at first-year level only. This reflects a general attitude, justified in various ways, by virtue of which staff members in the majority feel that AD, or "skills" work, is ultimately someone else's responsibility.

There was a strongly represented body of opinion which held that there are specific and determinable standards which constitute acceptable levels of academic competence at university level. Although there was not always a clear discrimination of what this standard was, and how it differs across the years, there was a belief that the standard should not be compromised. Staff members strongly expressing this view tended to say that they have a teaching task to perform and there are certain expectations which they have of students, which students have the task of meeting, irrespective of the standards of literacy which they have. Fischer et al. (1995) note that, in effect, staff see the students' academic disadvantage as either the learner's problem (as opposed to theirs) or the problem of agencies other than the Psychology Department. A senior staff member sums up this attitude as follows:

St1: I'm not saying that there isn't a sympathy towards people who are struggling but I'm saying that as a university subject at a university there are certain fundamental criteria and if people are, for whatever reason, unable to meet those criteria then they shouldn't be at university ... a lot of the people we have in psycho 1 barely passed matric and just don't have, both white and black, the educational background or the intellectual prowess to be able to cope with a first degree. The University has a responsibility to the community and to the tax payer but that does not mean we are responsible for helping people who just don't have the educational background or the educational ability to get a university degree ... The university as a whole is looking at bridging programmes and they do this through ADP. So there's funding for ADP and they can run courses to make up the gap. I believe it's folly that an individual department, where we're employed to do research, we're employed to teach psychology at a university ... that we should also believe that it's our responsibility to teach people academic skills which aren't related to the discipline ... At a certain point we have to make a decision. At what point do we say let's forget about teaching psychology and let's try and upgrade people? But that's not our responsibility, it's ADP's responsibility ... So my sense is that our task is to be sensitive to the difficulties encountered by the weaker students and secondly, to acknowledge that that is not what we're employed to teach...we're employed to teach psycho. And that will also, directly or indirectly, coerce the University into finding more funding for ADP bridging programmes. Because if we take it on board then we will be unable to fulfil the roles that we're here to perform.

This attitude supports the findings of Van Zyl's (1993) survey conducted at UNISA where 76% of the staff respondents said it was "not their responsibility to teach students to write acceptable academic prose" (p. 118). Orr (1996) responds to an attitude such as this by pointing out that "teaching is devalued in the academy...['skills' teaching] is recognised, perhaps, as extremely worthy, and very necessary, and possibly - even - a noble calling. But 'academic?', 'scholarly?' - Nah. Don't be ridiculous" (p. 39). Citing Werchan (1995), she notes that "'skill' seems to connote ability to carry out an activity that is somehow less cerebral than other, supposedly more lofty academic activities" (Ibid., p. 40).

Another view represented is that the lack of homogeneity in academic literacy reflects the results of unequal schooling opportunities which it is the educator's responsibility to address. The attitude from this perspective was that inherent in good teaching is the demand that teaching be structured in such a way as to cater for and alleviate academic literacy problems:

St2: We can't work if they can't do what we expect them to. People are coming out of a bad education system and we can either try to change that system or we can accept its products and try to work with them. It's definitely Psychology's job to teach them what we want them to do.

Staff members adopting this perspective tended to believe that it is necessary and possible to address AD needs within the context of the teaching-learning situation in spite of high numbers. People with this view believe that high educational goals should be set, but that these can only be achieved in the context of careful AD planning.

Fischer et al. (1995) point out that not all staff members who adopt this perspective actively follow their own convictions:

The failure to follow their convictions seems to be mediated by the perception that taking responsibility for AD within the context of teaching involves time that is not available and a general perception that their teaching, administrative duties and research involvement already demand so much from them that they are unable to devote the necessary time to developing their own teaching practices (p. 56).

There was also a tendency within this perspective to justify their lack of commitment to AD by saying that the University does not promote or recognise in any other way, contributions in this field.

In summary, there was a range of opinions about where AD, or skills teaching, belongs. There was divergence of opinion about whether AD is the student's responsibility, the responsibility of the ADP, the responsibility of non-specified agencies within the University who are responsible for admitting educationally disadvantaged students, the responsibility of the Psychology department as a whole, the responsibility of a committee within the Department, or the individual responsibility of each staff member. The ALRP team conclude that there appears to have been little sustained thought given to the question of whether AD should be an "add-on" or specific programme run for educationally disadvantaged students, or an intrinsic feature of the educator's challenge which it is incumbent on each lecturer to meet as an individual, with or without support.

Questions about AD needs are also intertwined with perceptions of the need for a bridging programme where students are made ready for university. There was a general perception that the Psychology Department, even if it were to adopt a fairly comprehensive AD policy,

could not cope with developing academic literacy in fundamental areas such as note-taking, writing and other general academic skills. Even those who did not feel there should be a strong boundary between subject teaching and AD, felt that there are limits on the type of AD that might occur within the Department.

#### 4.1.3.3 STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC WRITING

A large section of the student questionnaire was devoted to Essay Writing and the findings will therefore be presented within this discussion.

The majority of the 125 respondents (76%) said they thought Psychology had a language of it's own. Of those answering "yes" to the previous questions, 66% thought this "special language" affected their understanding of the subject; 70% said it makes it more difficult, 30% said it makes it easier. 22% felt that the language had no effect on their understanding. A Supplemental Instruction tutor had the following to say about "the language" of Psychology and the types of problems students experience in coming to grips with it:

[The terms] aren't hard but getting the sense of them in the psychological context is sometimes difficult. A major problem with psychological terms is that they've gained a meaning out there that is all wrong. Like, for instance, most people know the word "complex"... she's got a complex about her hair or whatever...then when they start learning psychology they have to forget the popular meanings of these words and relearn them in the way that psychology uses them. "Schizophrenia" is one of the most obvious ones.

Most of the respondents (78%) said they were coping with essay writing in Psychology. Of those that answered "yes" to this question, 95% said they were also coping with essay writing in their other courses. Of those who said they were not coping with Psychology essays, 79% said they were coping with writing in their other courses, indicating that a number of students perceived essay writing in Psychology as more difficult than writing in other disciplines.

It is interesting to note, at this point, that the research conducted by the ALRP team (Fischer et al., 1995) into student writing showed that a significant proportion of students (40% across all the years) were uncertain about whether or not they required assistance with writing skills

(p. 31). Just over 30% of first-year students said they would like assistance with this, indicating that only 30% expressed the confidence in their writing implied by the above questionnaire results.

These findings tend to support the observations by other researchers (such as Van Zyl, 1993) that students generally assess their own abilities unrealistically. Beach (1976 in Van Zyl 1993), for example, comments on students' "inability to effectively evaluate their own writing" (p. 130), and on the tendency for unskilled writers often to be "unwilling to criticise themselves". An important consequence of students' over-optimistic assessment of their own abilities would be a resultant absence of motivation for any writing program perceived as "remedial". "If one rates one's own abilities as fair to good, one obviously has no need for assistance or extra tuition" (Van Zyl, 1993, p. 132).

64% of respondents said that writing an essay for Psychology is not the same as writing for other courses. The most common distinguishing features of writing for Psychology listed by the respondents were

- very different method of referencing
- difficult jargon/terminology
- allows space for your own input/opinion
- much more structured/difficult structure
- relevant to everyday life
- demands a scientific style

There were a number of comments on the lack of guidance given by the Department with regard to the writing required. A few students said that they did not know what was expected of them when writing an essay. Others commented as follows:

Other courses have set-out guidelines and formats for their essays. The Psychology department just says "write".

Those who did not see a difference between writing for Psychology and writing for their other courses noted that the research and interpretation process is similar across the board,

that the basic structure of a comparison of different viewpoints is the same and that referencing is important in all the writing they do. They generally felt that writing is writing, no matter which department one writes for:

I write, you mark.

You tell them what you gonna tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them. Easy!

One student noted that Psychology essays were similar to her other Science course essays but dissimilar to her Arts course essays. This is an interesting point and highlights a shortcoming of the questionnaire used: I neglected to ask students to list their other courses and so am unable to make any firm comparison between the faculties they are registered under and their views of writing for Psychology. However, comments made during the student interviews support the notion that students with a background in writing for the humanities are likely to experience the most difficulty with the style expected in psychology essays:

M19L1: I normally achieve really well and essays are my strong point - I got an A for English and an A for History, and I've done well so far in politics essays and things. And then I got 47% for this essay and I was really bitter ... they might have had a clearer instruction in the beginning as to what they really expect.

As mentioned, Psychology 1 students are evaluated via multiple-choice tests and essays. Essays are marked by student tutors and returned with a completed feedback form. 67% of the student respondents said they understood why they got the mark they did for their first essay and 66% agreed that the feedback they were given helped them understand what they had done wrong and what they should change in their future writing. The 30% who disagreed felt that there were discrepancies between the feedback criteria and the way their essays had been marked. They also failed to understand the emphasis placed on the method of referencing used.

During the interviews, students were asked what they thought the Department was trying to achieve by setting essays (see #17, #18):

F20L1: I think it's supposed to give you insight into the topic. Maybe it's just to put you off, or to get you into the swing of varsity, give you a taste of what's coming in the next three years...I don't know.

F18L2: They want to improve our writing skills and the language...like to know what to write in an essay...but when I got my essay back I see that I didn't answer the question but I thought I knew what they wanted.

F18L2N: I guess they just want to see how much we know. I don't know...it's not like they've ever told us why they want us to write essays instead of just doing tests.

It was evident that none of these students had previously given much thought to why they are asked to write essays, nor had any Department given them reasons that they could repeat in order to answer this question. Their answers focused on what they thought the Department wanted from them, rather than what they might be learning from the essay-writing process itself. This is understandable in light of the feeling that

you have to have writing skills...but I always have to write to satisfy you, more than satisfying the way I feel, which is actually a problem ... we tend to write what our tutors expect us to (M25L2).

In general, students felt that the Department's expectations were not made clear to them, resulting in a serious disjunction between expectations and goals. Van Zyl (1993) notes that this is not an uncommon feature of interaction across the instructor-student divide. Students' expectations at tertiary level are partly determined by the nature of their secondary education, which is often an inadequate and misleading preparation for the type of thinking and writing expected at university (p. 139).

#### 4.1.4 SMALL GROUP TEACHING (THE TUTORIAL PROGRAMME AND SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION)

As mentioned in 4.1.3, the Psychology 1 tutorial programme had three basic aims:

- a) to expose students to material and issues which go beyond the Psychology 1 courses,
- b) to stimulate interest in Psychology, and
- c) to develop essay writing skills.

The Department also had a Supplemental Instruction (SI) programme which was co-ordinated by the ADP and facilitated by three Psychology students (two third-year students and an Honours student). It ran independently of the Tutorial Programme but paralleled the Department Programme and attendance was voluntary. SI is generally designed to support "historically difficult courses", i.e. courses where many students fail, drop out, or get low marks. The SI sessions were informal discussions aimed at helping students master course content while developing and integrating effective learning and study strategies.

This section looks at the attitudes of staff and students towards both programmes and attempts to comment on the extent to which each achieved its aims.

The main tool in the Tutorial programme was the use of videos. Attendance at the *Video Tutorials* was compulsory as this was where students received the information necessary for writing the essays. At each of these sessions, the lecturer concerned would introduce the essay topic and students would then watch a video related to the course being lectured at the time.

The aim of the *Discussion Tutorials*, according to the Tutorial Programme handout, was to provide an opportunity to learn about writing essays, to discuss the essay questions and to develop ideas from the video.

Finally, there were *Essays under Exam conditions Tutorials* which were to provide the opportunity for students to become accustomed to writing under exam conditions. The Tutorial Handout notes that "Your exams rely heavily on your ability to formulate your thoughts in essay-type paragraphs. This Tutorial Programme focuses on developing this skill" (Psychology 1 Tutorial Programme Handout, 1996, p. 1).

There were sixteen tutorial sessions throughout the year (four or five per term), six of these being discussion tutorials. The discussion groups consisted of 10 to 12 students, and were run by student tutors drawn from the third-year, honours and masters classes.



While tutors were prepared by lecturers for each course, what ultimately occurred during the tutorial was left to their own discretion. As a result, it is difficult to generalise from my own experience of tutorials because I was aware that not everyone's experience was the same. However, talking to other students, and using the interview data, I believe I have been able to compile an accurate description of the tutorial programme.

One of the open-ended items on the questionnaire asked students, "What do you think is the aim of the Psychology Tutorial Programme?" 109 students responded to this question, and the following are the most common responses received. The figure after each comment indicates the number of each response:

- To help us with our problems/things we don't understand (29)
- Give a better/deeper understanding of lecture material (26)
- A chance to discuss/share/explore/debate information (26)
- Don't know/not helpful/disappointing/pointless (21)
- To teach essay-writing skills (18)
- Exam/test preparation (7)
- Provide one-on-one interaction/staff-student interface (3)

It was difficult to tell from these responses whether students thought that these were what the aims should be or, if these were things they were actually experiencing. I have to conclude that it is the former since the aims most commonly given by students reflect those of the SI programme rather than the tutorials. For instance, one student (F18L1) responded that tutorials are for "personal help with problems - a communication system between students and lecturers". However, it was evident that the tutorial programme was primarily a forum for practising essay-writing. Many students were unhappy with, or indifferent towards, the Programme and this confusion between the aims of SI and the tutorials may explain their dissatisfaction:

F18L2: The tutorials are not helping me, they are confusing me. Sometimes they don't give us the solution if you have a problem, they just talk, talk, talk. And I am trying to talk ...but maybe I am afraid of something, I don't know. I thought about this quietness so I came with an answer maybe it is because I am the only

black in my group ...I just feel uncomfortable ... maybe because I don't know the people.

Corson (1993) proposes that the readiness of "minority" language speakers or non-standard speakers to stigmatise their own language means that they often condemn themselves to silence in public settings for fear of offending norms that they themselves sanction (p. 10). A recent study conducted by Hunt (1996), on interaction in small teaching groups at Rhodes, supports this suggestion and, in light of F18L1's last comment regarding her race, I would like to mention some of Hunt's findings.

Her research showed, amongst other things, that there is an extraordinary sensitivity amongst students to the composition of groups in terms of gender and culture. Her interviewees frequently mentioned that one or other category (male, female, L1, L2 etc.) may interact more if they are in the majority.

Similarly, many of the students' comments showed an awareness of their own membership of the categories and an alignment with those who shared these categories. Hunt (Ibid.) notes that such membership is shown with comments like "I am the only black in my group" (F18L2 above), or "they speak for themselves and we can't understand":

M25L2: When I came here I had a serious problem. Coming together with whites, I couldn't, in tuts, really understand what people were saying, I had to look back at their mouths and you tend to talk to yourselves! I thought this was frustrating because you don't cater for us, they speak for themselves and we can't understand. I have [another] problem and my friends have the same problem ... we can't express ourselves. I don't think African students are confident about themselves ... that's the feeling I get ... Nobody threatened me because I spoke but I just feel so inferior as not to speak ...

Both L2 students quoted above mention the difficulties they have in expressing themselves in tutorials. In this regard, Hunt (1996) refers to the importance of cultural differences regarding the display of knowledge: While white students may feel it's "basic manners" to show one's superior (the tutor) that one has knowledge and that one has done the work, black students indicated that this is not appropriate behaviour in the presence of an authority figure: A

second language speaker interviewed by Hunt gave the following explanation for why white students speak more than black students in tutorials:

We are from different cultures, OK, one culture may regard speaking frequently as not good while in other cultures there's no problem in that, so it's like all blacks from DET especially from rural areas, they are not used to speaking in public... it's not that they don't know that at Rhodes it's impossible you can't say too much in a tut but because they are used to that thing it's not easy for them to speak like that (p. 154-155).

Other factors which may have contributed to the difficulties experienced by students in the psychology discussion tutorials include the irregularity of these meetings, the fact that they often lasted twenty minutes or less, and the lack of clear objectives or well-defined tasks (see #19, #20):

F18L2N: We have very few tuts and those we have had were really not very interesting. We don't really do much...so I really don't find them that useful. And they really don't make it explicit what they want from you.

M18L1: You mean the *two* tuts we've actually had?! I expected more from psych based on what the other [departments] seem to do. But they're nice, I've got a nice group and we enjoy talking.

Hunt's (1996) study showed that students believe that unfamiliarity with the other participants will decrease interaction, although a familiar tutor could lessen this shyness with other members. This is supported by one L2 student (M25L2) in this study who said that tutorials are very important but that "it would be nice if those groups could be introduced sometimes. What's the [point] of [going] with you to the tuts but I've never talked with you ... it makes me very uncomfortable ... for instance ... I'm the only African there so I don't feel that I can talk in that group".

Thus tutorials where the tutor, or the other participants, are unfamiliar or which are held "infrequently, every fortnight or every month for example, were cited ... as largely unsuccessful in terms of interaction because the group did not get a chance to get to know one another" (Hunt 1996, p. 159).

This situation is acknowledged by staff as problematic but it was explained by a senior member of staff that a lack of funding and a shortage of staff are the reasons for running the tutorial programme in this way.

Most staff members expressed the need to develop the first-year tutorial system in light of the suggestion that it is the best possible site for AD or skills work. They felt that, since it is the only place where there is direct contact between students and the Department, it is the place where effective learning is most likely to occur. Most lecturers agreed, however, that the importance of the tutor's role is not really recognised and that they are not adequately trained or controlled in terms of their ability to teach or give useful feedback to students. A number of lecturers expressed concern that while tutors are the primary interface between "teachers" and "students" in the Department, there is no way of evaluating whether the advice they pass on is sound.

As it stands, the tutorial programme is clearly undermining itself at every turn. The infrequency of the group discussions prevents real continuity as well as any opportunity for building the relationship between tutor and students that creates the relaxed atmosphere that is conducive to interaction. All these factors will inhibit student participation in tutorials thus preventing them from providing the interactive learning context that is viewed as so valuable. Hunt (1996) concludes that "if students do not participate in tutorials, they cannot benefit from verbalising their ideas, nor can they receive feedback in order to develop their understanding" (p. 2).

In my view the Programme failed to achieve the first two of its three aims. Whether or not it succeeded in teaching essay-writing skills is difficult to gauge since some tutors seem to have been more helpful in this respect than others. For instance, the Department places great emphasis on the American Psychological Association (APA) format of referencing and any students who referenced their first essay incorrectly failed. While these marks did not "count" towards the final year mark, the exercise was ostensibly a practice-run for the "real thing". My own experience was that neither the tutor, nor the staff member introducing the essay, emphasised the importance of the APA Style Manual to the extent that it should have been.

Thus, on the whole, what was learnt from this practice-run was that "incorrect referencing is marked very strictly in Psychology" while very little assistance was given in how to "formulate your thoughts in essay-type paragraphs" (Tutorial Handout, p. 1).

In response to the open-ended question of changes students would make to the tutorial programme, the following were the most common responses:

- Have more of them. (22)
- Nothing. (18)
- More structured/organised/definite purpose. (15)
- Better informed/prepared tutors. (11)

One student (F18L1) noted on the questionnaire that tutorials are "to aid students who are afraid to ask questions in lectures. But we hardly have any Psych tuts and therefore there's no consistency or link between tutor and student". I believe this sums up the impression first-year students had of the Programme in general.

To comment briefly on the SI Programme, many students felt that while they would like to have attended these groups, their timetables were already too full and many resented the fact that they did not receive this type of help during their tutorials:

M19L1: I would love to go to SI when there are things I don't understand, but who has the time? Maybe they should try to incorporate an SI mechanism within the tuts ... maybe if the tutor actually had the function of helping you as much as they do in SI, because I find the tutors to be totally useless in Psych.

The SI tutor with whom I had regular contact supported the fact that attendance at her SI sessions was poor. However, she emphasised that this might have been a result of the fact that almost all the students who did attend were L2 speakers of English and therefore preferred attending groups run by the black tutor:

I ... think that because there were a lot of language problems and Ntombikaya is black, students saw her as easier to talk to. Us two whities had a much lower attendance than she did and I think I saw about three white students throughout the year.

What was interesting was that this tutor was vehement that SI was not a place for providing students with the answers. She pointed out that "SI is not remedial ... you don't so much answer questions as facilitate discussion around those questions ... but a lot of the questions come from language and you've got to actually help them understand it in a language they know, that is, the language of their peers".

She found it extremely frustrating that students constantly arrived at the sessions expecting "to catch the class pearls". She noted that they often came to her "as a source of authority. They're looking for answers that you can't give them and that's not what SI is for. [They] don't realise that discussion is one of the main sources of learning".

With regard to the incorporation of SI into the Tutorial Programme, she supported the students' suggestion that "tutorials start being conducted in more of an 'SI' fashion". She was doubtful, however, that this would ever happen because she believed that the very foundation of the SI course was the fact that attendance was not compulsory and "people come when they need it". She concluded, however, that there are "definitely a lot more people [who] need it than actually attend ... [so] I think maybe there should be a certain amount of compulsory SI".

#### 4.1.5 LECTURES

The predominant mode of undergraduate teaching is the presentation of lectures in large lecture theatres. As the only real point of contact between staff and first-year students, I have focused quite a bit on lectures and have discussed them in detail in section 4.3.1 below. This section will therefore be quite brief, concentrating on the issue of interaction in lectures: Since this mode of instruction is not about to be ousted in favour of small-group teaching at any point in the near future, it will remain the only real opportunity for the staff of the Psychology department to engage with their students. I was therefore interested in finding out the extent to which the lecture can actually be viewed as a time for staff and students to interact.

Staff responses to the question of learning objectives for first-year lectures/tuts/pracs were as follows:

- To try to go beyond the text and give appetite whetting additional information...sometimes unsuccessfully.
- To convey prescribed material, hopefully in a way that's not too boring.
- An introduction to the basic concepts. I envision this as laying the foundation for more critical discussion/dialogue in second year.
- Understanding and increasing interest by giving examples relevant to students' lives - let them ask questions.
- Content learning, thinking about subject matter and their own motives and emotions.
- Understanding of concepts and ideas, introduction to the discipline, a broad overview.

Most staff members believed that they achieved these objectives, acquiring this knowledge mostly from informal student feedback and the results of tests and exams. This is probably a reliable indicator at this level as most objectives concerned the efficient presentation of content.

While none of the lecturers mentioned encouraging interaction or participation during first-year lectures as an objective, many staff members felt that this was an important feature of a "good" lecture. What was interesting was that staff responses to this questionnaire item covered the entire spectrum from "absolutely essential" to "not necessary in the strict sense". A number of lecturers felt that while participation is desirable, and "it is wonderful if one can encourage them to take the risk", most of the time "there is too much information to cover". This supports a suggestion by Lynch (1994) that one of the reasons interaction is limited is because lecturers may fear dislocation of the lecture.

During the interviews this issue was discussed in more depth and, while most lecturers agreed that it is essential to engage with students in lectures, some had reservations as to their ability to do this successfully. Some felt that being able to regulate student participation in lectures is a skill that one either has or not, and it is therefore difficult to acquire. It was also felt by some that it is often difficult to reconcile the need to foster student engagement with the need

to cover a certain amount of content. The latter requires lecturers to concentrate on "getting through" the material, with relatively little reflection on education processes, and particularly on how the material is being engaged with on the part of students:

St7: I think half the time we don't know where our students are at, other than that they're wonderful parrots.

St4: I have no idea about any of the first years or where they're at in terms of their thinking or their participation. I just see this mass of faces every time I go and lecture.

With regard to students' impression of the aims of lectures, the majority (51%) of respondents said they are "to help us understand". About 30% of the students explained the aim of lectures in terms of the textbook, i.e., "to help us understand what we are reading in our textbook", "to give us a verbal account of the textbook". Another student noted, however, that lectures show "it's not just about reading a textbook, it's listening to an experienced person talk about Psychology".

Students used a wide variety of verbs when answering this question, for example, "to help", "to give us", "to explain", "to teach", "to provide", "to evaluate", "to introduce". What all these verbs seem to indicate is that students see their role, in relation to lectures, as primarily passive; they are on the receiving end of what is being "given", "provided" etc.

The majority of students who responded to the question of what changes they would make to lectures, indicated that they thought there was too much reliance on the textbook:

Less textbook, more examples and practical application.

I would like lecturers to offer more than just that which is in the textbook.

As with the staff, there was disagreement amongst the students interviewed as to whether a more interactive approach to lectures would be valuable. The present situation was summed up as follows:

F18L2N: I feel like the lecturers just go there to lecture ... they don't really care about how much we learn, it's just part of the job they have to do. There's no interaction in class, the lecturer just stands there and talks.



Another student (M25L2), very much in favour of increasing interaction in lectures, said that he

... realise[d] that this [was] probably the approach of the university but in most of the lectures ... well you'd expect sometimes that there would be student involvement. The only involvement we have is to take notes, listen and ask for clarity ... one would have assumed initially that people would discuss things ... help each other understand.

A third student (M18L1), however, was vehemently against student interaction in lectures:

No, I have a problem with that ... often when people start discussing stuff you can spend twenty minutes arguing about one stupid point that no one else is interested in ... and Psych is a huge class ... if you do that there'll be utter chaos and it will really waste a lot of the time you need to take down notes.

This attitude supports the observation of M56L1 (cited in section 4.1.1.1) that most of the problem is that, more often than not, first-year students are "all so determined not to make a spectacle of [them]selves, or step out of line in any way". One of Hunt's (1996) LI informants also noted that talking in lectures was "not cool" (p. 248).

Interestingly, it was the two ESL students who were in favour of more interaction in lectures, a phenomenon that contradicts contemporary theory: Referring to institutions in the United States, both Flowerdew (1994) and Lynch (1994) point out that any move towards greater informality in lectures could cause problems for ESL students. Lynch notes that ESL students, in particular, may be reluctant to ask questions; language difficulties aside, they may apply the home culture belief that "questioning" implies a slight on the teacher's authority (p. 284).

The particular characteristics of these two ESL students may explain this contradiction. As mentioned earlier, F18L2N's highschool experience was unlike that of the majority of black students in South Africa and could be compared to the "private school" system in this country. M25L2, on the other hand, was much older than most first-year students and had studied previously at a Technikon which would have influenced his ideas on the norms and conventions of lectures.

## 4.2 EVALUATIONS AND VALIDATIONS

As mentioned in Chapter three, practical constraints, as well as my limited knowledge of Psychology as a discipline, precluded the comprehensive review of available instructional materials suggested by this strand. One text I did examine, however, was the Psychology 1 "General Information" handout, since Swales notes that such texts provide information about the perceived rationales and properties of the genres. They also lead us towards an awareness that official statements about communicative procedures within discourse communities may not always accord with actual practice.

Van Zyl (1993, p. 197) notes that UNISA hand-out material offers general, all-purpose, ubiquitous rules which shy away from examining the underlying ethos and expectations of the academic discourse community, the role of students, the nature of the academic audience, and the genre and function of texts within this community.

I found this to be a fitting description of the material provided by the Psychology department. The Department does not publish an undergraduate guidebook of any sort. First-year students receive a course hand-out at the beginning of the year containing general information about the syllabus, the textbooks, assessment procedures and various student "do's and don'ts", for example, the consequences of plagiarism in written work:

Plagiarism, e.g. copying sentences, paragraphs or pages from the textbook or from other students' work without proper referencing, is a serious offence in the academic world. Students caught plagiarizing could well be asked to leave the University since the Psychology department will report the incident to a higher authority. Furthermore, a Departmental disciplinary committee may refuse a student his/her DP.

The academic ethos is never directly addressed. Plagiarism (pre-eminently an issue determined by ethos) is regarded as a serious offence, yet there is no attempt to explain **why** it is censured, or why it is regarded as an academic "crime". There is no explanation of the effect it has on the reader, on the image it presents of the writer, or on how it is dysfunctional in the ethos and purpose of academic discourse.

In the same vein, there is a note in small print on the back page informing students that

from now on [they] will be expected to use the approved system of referencing in essays. Students who make no attempt to follow the guidelines set out below will be penalised ... In Psychology we use the referencing guidelines established by the South African Journal of Psychology, which are in turn taken from the universal standard, the guidelines of the American Psychological Association.

Again, there is no explanation of what the APA is or why this format of referencing (one that is by no means "universal") has been chosen.

Finally, under the section on "Textbooks", the handout notes that the "following book is strongly recommended : Wade, C & Tavris, C (1993) Critical and Creative Thinking: the case of love and war. New York: Harper Collins". There is no further discussion of why the book might be interesting and no reason is given for why it is so strongly recommended, a fact that surprised me considering how enthusiastic the course co-ordinator was about this book when I interviewed her in 1995:

There's very little time to run around reading stuff that would be more interesting ... what I do want to do is - there's a book on critical thinking called "A Case of Love and War" which explores what critical thinking is and the tolerance required and then looks at attraction and the assumptions we make. And I'd like to have that as a prescribed book.

It is unfortunate that this little book did not feature in any of the tutorials as I believe it would have been invaluable in helping students finally understand what is meant by "critical thinking" and it would have provided accessible, contentious material for the debates that students were expecting during their Psychology tutorials.

To sum up, the dominating tone of this course handout, as in much of the material published by the University, tends to be elitist. It emphasises the importance of conformity, deference, and respect, without explaining the dynamic of the role of an apprentice within an established knowledge community, or how and why the rules evolved, and how they are functional in ways other than mere form or custom (Van Zyl, 1993, p. 197).

### 4.3. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

#### 4.3.1 THE LECTURES

Benson (1994) argues that even a sketchy analysis of a segment of lecture monologue reinforces the idea that "a lecture (or series of lectures) is a culturally organised form of discourse aimed at the production of culturally constituted meaning" (p. 195). The lecture is one of many learning channels available to students but tends to be the central ritual of the academic discourse community. It has achieved "paradigmatic stature" (Ibid. p. 182) as the teaching-learning activity of higher education.

Because academic lectures are seldom memorised and then delivered, or published and read, they contain features that have been labelled by Tannen (1982) as *oral* features: these include the pauses, hesitations, misspeaks, and disfluencies that reflect the spontaneity, fast pace and temporary nature of spoken discourse.

Benson (1994) lists the "compulsory" nature of lectures as another significant feature of this discourse. This feature is regularly questioned by both lecturers and students since it appears that the same body of knowledge could far more easily be given to students in the form of a reading assignment:

St5: We just stand up and deliver...we might as well hand out readings because the lecture has been obsolete since the invention of the printing press.

So if lectures are apparently mere repetitions of the textbook, what is the real reason for attendance being compulsory?

A possible answer is that the lecturer, by his or her performance, is proof that the problems confronting the class are solvable, that the ideas are graspable (Ibid. p. 184). In sum, Benson contends that what the ethnographer sees is "a performance where the main goal is to establish contact with students who are being initiated into a world in which problems are solvable, and where relations can be established with a person who has 'been there'" (Ibid.).

The three lectures analysed in this study were taken from three different Psychology 1 courses, each taught by a different staff member. Both the "Motivation and Emotion" (ME) and the "Brain and Behaviour" (BB) courses were taught by junior lectures, while the course on "Developmental Psychology" (DP) was taught by a lecturer<sup>3</sup>. The abbreviations ME, BB and DP will be used to indicate from which lecture the various extracts are taken.

Young (1994) suggests that six strands or phases are apparent in all lectures, three of which are metadiscoursal, that is, strands which comment on the discourse itself. All three lectures in this study were analysed in terms of these six phases and, as mentioned in the methodology section, I used the same labels for the phases that Young uses. Each of the metadiscoursal phases is discussed in some detail, indicating the frequency with which each occurred and giving examples from the lectures. A discussion of Young's other three phases follows and I conclude by looking at the pedagogical implications of phasal analysis.

Of the three metadiscoursal phases that occur, the first is the *Discourse Structuring* phase in which lecturers indicate the direction that they will take in the lecture. This is an announcing phase and therefore recurs with great frequency throughout the lecture as the speaker indicates to listeners what will come next in the discourse. Here the speakers identify topics that are about to be covered to facilitate processing by the students. In predicting content, the speaker eases the burden of comprehension.

The rate of occurrence of this phase in the data is as follows:

ME: 56

BB: 42

DP: 59

The following lines from the lectures illustrate the types of features that characterise this phase:

---

<sup>3</sup> These terms are not strictly defined and are based loosely on qualifications and years of experience. At Rhodes University the academic teaching staff are ranked in the following order: junior lecturers, lecturers, senior lecturers and professors.

ME: I'll give you an example to illustrate this now...

ME: I'm not going to go into a lot of detail...

ME: I'm just going to give you the name of the theory, who were the main theorists and then one sentence about ...

BB: For example, ummmm.....if one thinks of...

BB: I'm gonna go through the structural components....

BB: Don't worry about...this diagram....I'm just using it to illustrate....

DP: Two things today. First of all I want to go through...

DP: For instance, if you have been sent....

What is particularly noteworthy here, in terms of ideational choices, are two types of selections. First, lecturers consistently use very similar verbal groups such as "give an example" and "go through"; all forms of verbalisation, a type of mental process, followed by nominal groups that tell the listener what will follow. That is to say that, over and over again, lecturers explicitly indicate, with such choices, what they intend to focus on so that students are alerted to the nature of the ensuing material.

Second, evident to some extent in the above examples and in many others in the data, are particular choices of pronouns selected to involve the audience in the lecture: Young (1994 p. 169) notes that first person plural and second person pronouns are designed to engage the students in the unfolding lectures. Speakers continually switch from "I", to "you", to "we", in order to include the audience in the activity going on here. Hansen and Jensen (1994) contend that this is especially true when the lecturer is compensating for lack of interaction between speaker and audience: the pronouns "we" and "you" are used to develop and enhance the audience's awareness of a shared context (p. 246). In all the lectures analysed, these two pronouns occurred with the highest frequency (see Figure 3 below).

Another interesting point is that lecturers seldom use third person singular pronouns. In this data, however, one of the lecturers used "he", "she", "his" and "her" quite often and struggled with politically correct usage, stating so during the lecture: "I hate getting into this him or her mode, it gets very complicated after a while..."

As a result, she gave up and used only "he" from then on. The rate of occurrence of various pronouns in the data is as follows:

Pn	ME	BB	DP
I	42	15	38
you	114	30	108
your	30	28	24
we	42	13	45
our	20	20	5
she/her	0	0	14
he/him/his	2	5	45
the/their	48	12	48

*Figure 3 - Rate of Occurrence of Pronouns in the Lectures*

A final point, with regard to pronouns, is the very interesting use of the third person plural apparent in both the ME and DP lectures. If one considers that the lecturer generally constitutes the deictic centre in the monologic discourse of lectures, then the first person pronoun (both singular and plural) would refer to the centre, "you" would refer to the audience and constitute movement away from the centre, and "they" would be the most distant, referring to absent "participants". Levinson (1983) notes that deictic expressions are often used in ways that shift the deictic centre to include other participants, a derivative usage referred to as deictic projection (p. 64).

In both the ME and DP lectures where theories, rather than facts, were being presented, and the subject matter was fairly contentious, the speakers regularly used "they" in a way that distanced them and their audience from the source of certain information. This was not necessary in the BB lecture because the material being presented was fact.

For example, the lecturer in ME used "they" to assign information to unidentified "experts":

ME: They would say that this is an emotion that helps us to survive.

She also switched from "you" to the third person when giving examples of potentially hurtful situations and often used the plural to avoid the difficulties "s/he" presents in spoken discourse:

ME: *You're* in a group of people and ... *you're* the object of a joke ... now if *they* understand that *they're* the object of a joke ... *they* will obviously feel hurt, offended ... but if *they* don't understand that *they're* being laughed at, it's not going to effect *them* at all. So *you* can see how important it is that *we* actually understand ...

In the DP lecture "they" was used slightly differently, this time when referring to criticisms of the theorists under discussion:

DP: They say his theory is not universal

DP: They come down on Erickson...they say he is too much bound up in middle class.....

In places where the lecturer could appropriately use "we" (i.e. we psychologists), the use of "they" potentially has the following effect: By reducing the apparent expert status of the lecturer (in terms of his/her knowledge) it lessens the distance between the him/her and the student audience, thereby increasing solidarity. This increased solidarity between lecturer and student may create the impression that lecturers regard students as "insiders", i.e., members (or potential members) of their own disciplinary community.

In terms of mood, Young (Ibid.) notes that there is significant variation during the Discourse Structuring phase, with the use of *wh* interrogatives alternating with imperatives and declarative statements. She points out that almost all the realisations of the interrogative are rhetorical questions posed and answered by the addressers. There were very few examples of this construction in the data analysed, understandable simply in terms of the different lecturing styles of the three staff members concerned. Only the lecturer teaching the DP course used this sort of construction:

DP: Some people would say, well *why* the environment before birth?

In the very next sentence the lecturer answers the question:



DP: Well, the reason is there is an environment of course....

Commands also serve the purpose of alerting students about what is to come:

ME: I'd *recommend* that you do read on from page...

BB: *Let's look* at the measurement of sensations.

DP: Now, *notice* to the first one...

DP: *Remember* [this] is the phallic stage...

DP: *Now listen* to this and you'll understand why people...

This focusing strategy is reinforced in choices of modality where the majority of modals indicate intention and prediction:

ME: So that's what we'll be doing today...

ME: We're *gonna* look at three things...

BB: We'll be starting now with the....

DP: We're *going to* go through environmental...

Some of the discourse structuring evident in this data was much less explicit than the examples given above and this can be accounted for by the extensive use of overhead projectors. Thus, instead of announcing clearly what s/he would be covering next, the lecturer would put up a new overhead, uncover the heading and say:

ME: Ok, components of emotion...

BB: Ok, the recognition threshold...

DP: Shame and Doubt...ummm

DP: Adolescence....adolescence seems to have been quite...

What is evident then in this phase are several discourse markers, that is, explicit indications by lecturers of what they are about to talk about through various moves, and these feature consistently throughout the text.

The second, and equally important, metadiscoursal phase is one labelled *Conclusion*, where lecturers summarise points that have been made throughout the discourse. Young (Ibid.) notes that the frequency with which this and the Discourse Structuring phase occur is, to a large extent, determined by the number of new points made in any particular discourse. In this phase a different pattern is evident in terms of processes, participant chains and in interpersonal choices of mood and modality. Here there is significant evidence of another type of process, that of *relations*, in which lecturers identify and classify what has already been discussed to ensure that the information is grasped by the students. In other words, the focus here is on relations between elements already raised in the Content strands. What we see here is a repetition of key aspects forming a chain of elements (Ibid., p. 170).

The rate of occurrence of this phase in the data is as follows:

ME: 26

BB: 15

DP: 11

The following examples illustrate the focus in this phase:

ME: So this is the component of emotion that involves the expression of the felt emotion to others.

ME: That's the first component of emotion.

ME: So this non-verbal expression of emotion is often actually a truer reflection of the way we may be feeling.

Young (Ibid.) notes that here we find a predominance of relational processes as signalled by the verbal group "is", with participant roles filled by terms such as "emotion".

Another marker of this phase, which clearly distinguishes it from the Discourse Structuring one, is the interpersonal choices. As is evident in the above example, there is no mood variation, with almost all of the utterances being realised by the indicative declarative mood.

In terms of modals, there are none that play a particularly important role here. This is a neutral phase, one in which lecturers do not offer evaluative commentary on the material; it is a "factual" strand focusing on key aspects of the lecture. The most recognisable features then are in the type of process and the participant chain formed by the repetition of terms.

The third phase that serves metadiscoursal purposes is the *Evaluation* phase, which, Young (Ibid.) notes, is not always as frequent as the two former phases, but is still significant (p. 167). Here the lecturer reinforces each of the other strands by evaluating information which is about to be, or has already been transmitted. Lecturers do so by indicating to the audience how to weigh such information by giving their personal endorsement of or disagreement with various aspects of the content, which represents a further structuring of the substance of the lecture.

The rate of occurrence of this phase in the data is as follows:

ME: 9

BB: 3

DP: 31

Young (Ibid.) asserts that lecturers evaluate material not by attitudinal elements such as modals or other interpersonal choices, but through the selection of one type of predominating process, that of attributive relations (p. 171).

The following examples illustrate not only the nature and purpose of this phase, but also the way in which it reinforces points already covered by repeating or evaluating key terms or theories:

ME: Ok, obviously you must read the body language in the context of the situation..

ME: So you can see how important it is that we actually understand the situation and that this will effect our response.

BB: And obviously because recognition requires prior knowledge or a previous experience of a stimulus...the recognition threshold also involves...previous knowledge of that stimulus.

DP: Of course, environmental factors are more important, I think, than things....

DP: They come down on Erikson, who's really worth reading because he writes so extremely well...

DP: You have to be careful of generalising too much because you must remember that a number of countries have....

This phase is similar to the Conclusion phase in its lack of mood variation and marked modality. Evident here, however, are explicit judgements reflected in selections such as "more important", "obviously", "really worth reading", "be careful", and "must remember". In other words, lecturers are revisiting the same points touched on in the Conclusion phase and evaluating them so that students will know how to weigh each of them and, by implication, know which are less satisfactory approaches to issues raised in the lecture.

The significant difference in the rate of occurrence of this phase in the BB lecture, as opposed to the DP lecture, can be explained by the nature of the content of these lectures. The BB lecture was extremely physiological and therefore made up of mostly indisputable facts. As a result, there was very little evaluation of the material by the lecturer. The DP lecture, on the other hand, was discussing one of many theories of development and there was therefore scope for evaluation of the information. What is interesting to note in the case of the BB lecture is that the lecturer used "Evaluation" sequences to *introduce* new topics six times during the lecture, for example:

BB: Ok, and obviously our interaction with our environment is largely based on our sensations and perceptions so let's start by defining.....

This inappropriate positioning of Evaluation phases reinforced the fact that all the information contained in the lecture was fact and had been pre-evaluated as "obvious". The lecturer's comment at the end of the period explicitly indicates his attitude towards the course and explains this phenomenon:

BB: You know...I must admit I apologise for having to give you all this physiology but it's the only time you look at it in your entire career as a psychologist which is why it's included in these courses. I know it's fairly boring but just bear with me.

A final point I would like to add is that the clues provided in the Evaluation phase not only help students to weigh information correctly but are also often interpreted by students as a guide to how the lecturer is thinking, and therefore how they should think too. For example, during the DP lecture, the lecturer indicated quite clearly that she favoured Erickson's Theory of development (see above example) regardless of how much it had been criticised. On checking my lecture notes in light of this analysis, I noticed that I had marked this as a possible exam "spot", and it did indeed appear as an essay topic in the mid-year exam.

Young (Ibid.) notes that these three metadiscoursal phases seem to be the direct result of the influence of the situational factor of tenor, in the sense that, because of the relationship between lecturers and students, the former explicitly structure their discourse to facilitate the processing of information by the students (p. 167). Her research shows that these phases occur across disciplines and levels, indicating that the relationship between addressers and addressees in this situation fashions a particularly consistent macro-structure.

Three other phases mark university lectures. The first one, *Interaction*, is identified by Young (Ibid.) as an important feature of this registerial variety, indicating the extent to which lecturers maintain contact with their audience in order both to reduce the distance between themselves and their listeners and to ensure that what has been taught is in fact understood. This phase is absent from the data analysed in this study. In their survey of university classes, Hansen and Jensen (1994) found that the number of students in the class, and the format of the class, directly influences the amount of listener-speaker interaction: only in small (20 students maximum), discussion-type classes, are students encouraged to interact with the lecturer and material in an active manner (p. 246). In very large classes (more than 100 students) lecturers field questions before and after the lecture, but they rarely include a question period during their presentation (Ibid.).

This was clearly the case in the Psychology lectures where, in both of the lectures given each day, there would be at least 100 students present. Those with questions invariably approached the lecturer at the end of the period. (Please see section 4.1.5 of the ethnography result for a more detailed discussion of the lack of interaction in lectures and its implications for student comprehension).

The last two phases constitute the actual content of the lectures. The first may be alternatively labelled *Theory* or *Content*, to reflect the lecturer's purpose, which is to transmit theoretical information. It is in this phase that theories, models, and definitions are presented to students and it can be seen as forming the matrix in which the other phases occur. Thus the theory phases are interspersed with the metadiscoursal ones as well as with strands of the last phase that structures lectures, that of *Examples*. It is in this last, and very significant phase, that the lecturers illustrate theoretical concepts through concrete examples familiar to students in the audience (Young, *Ibid.*, p. 168).

The rate of occurrence of this phase in the data is as follows:

ME: 21

BB: 9

DP: 25

Young notes that strands of this phase are often more numerous than the theoretical ones, suggesting how important the role of exemplification is in monologic discourse in universities.

Two features of this phase, present in the data analysed, are worth discussing. Firstly, there is a range of markers signalling the beginning of an example phase and many of them are very subtle. Thus, a lecturer may well give a very explicit marker such as the following:

ME: I'll give you an example to illustrate this now...

But s/he may also employ any of the following more subtle markers, which include "in other words", "for instance", switching to the second person pronoun, or a combination of these three:

ME: In other words, if you're in a situation you may be...

ME: Often, if you think about the situation of when...you're walking past...

BB: So, if you were to go to the supermarket and buy....

DP: You know if you have someone who sings the right notes but...

DP: In this particular respect the child, for instance, in its adventures, may do something that upsets....

DP: You see other children doing things, for instance, and you are into competitive mode...

The significance of the markers lies in their helping listeners distinguish between theory and applications of the theory. It is important to be able to do this in lectures like those on ME and DP where most of the examples were anecdotal and therefore did not need to be written down. However, the more subtle, or deeply embedded, the marker, the more difficult the task of recognising an example phase for what it is: a chance to hear the theory applied in concrete terms that you (the student) can relate to.

This leads on to the second feature of this phase: the "culture-bound" nature of a number of the anecdotal examples used. Lynch (1994) notes that in the EAP context, a number of writers have stressed the role of cultural background knowledge in enabling the audience to draw on shared facts and fictions, in order to recognise what is intended to be a helpful explanation or reformulation (p. 283). One of the lecturers interviewed mentioned that this is an area he "slips up on":

St2: In the lecture theatre, as I lecture, I'm conscious of trying to use examples that come out of different people's worlds and I try to define my terms, but to be sensitive to that issue you have to be more than sensitive to language... you have to know something about the problems people are experiencing.

When lecturers illustrate theory using examples such as the following, it indicates an assumption, on the part of the lecturer, that the class forms an homogenous audience sharing his/her schemas, or world view, and social norms:

DP: Reliability....For instance, if you have been sent overseas to learn music at the Juliard and you don't do any work then you're not a reliable person.

ME: I'm sure you're all familiar with the concept of personal space ok ... when you're talking to a stranger as opposed to ... your boyfriend or girlfriend ... there's going to be a difference ... we'll allow our partners to come closer to us than we'll allow a complete stranger. And that indicates how we feel about them.

ME: Now verbal expression of emotion is difficult ... If you think about the situation ... you're walking past an acquaintance in the street ... "Hi, how're you doing?" ... "No I'm fine" the person says ... ok, and on you go ... that person may not necessarily have been feeling fine, but if they're an acquaintance of yours they're unlikely to start pouring out their soul to you about how they feel. And that's just a social convention.

When these assumptions are clearly erroneous, an example like the last one becomes exclusive rather than drawing in the audience as it is supposed to. In this excerpt, for instance, the example assumes that people from all cultures engage in meaningless greeting rituals with acquaintances, rushing on rather than stopping to talk. This is not the case however: Duyvene De Wit and Ntuli, for example (1994, cited in Hunt, 1996 p. 49), stress the importance of openings and small talk in African culture, saying that it often focuses on where you come from and where you are going. This is supported by substantial anecdotal evidence collected personally during discussions on cross-cultural miscommunication.

The use of culturally-bound examples is therefore problematic. Those students from other cultural backgrounds, where the "social conventions" differ from those of the lecturer, are likely to feel excluded from the example and therefore deprived of the opportunity to hear the theory explained in terms they can relate to. As Benson (1994) puts it, "even when the [culturally constituted] meaning is essentially structuralist itself, it is only retrievable through listeners being aware of the cultural implications of certain words and phrases" (p. 195).

Lynch (1994) argues that lecturers should therefore be "sensitised to the need to avoid unwarranted assumptions of shared knowledge and to the risk that the use of cultural 'insider information' will exclude non-native speaking students" (p. 283). This does not imply that lecturers should avoid using examples or analogies, but that they have to exercise care in choosing those that are likely to be accessible. "Lecturers should be prepared - in two senses, i.e., *trained* and *willing* - to think through the background knowledge that their illustrations require" (Ibid.).



Finally, the VocabProfile analysis revealed the following with regard to the type of vocabulary used in Psychology 1 lectures (please refer back to Chapter 3, section 1.3 for an explanation of this programme):

Word list	ME	BB	DP
One	77.9%	70.7%	84.3%
Two	5.1%	6.7%	4.8%
Three	8.8%	9.3%	4.3%
Not in Lists	8.2%	9.3%	6.6%

**Figure 4 - Results of VocabProfile Analysis: The Lectures**

These results indicate a fairly high percentage of academic and "special" words (i.e. word list three and those "not in the lists"). Much of the vocabulary not in the lists consisted of names (Freud etc.) and topic-specific terms that one might argue constitute the foundation lexicon of each course and are therefore being introduced and explained in these lectures.

Flowerdew (1994) notes that only a few studies have been published on the lexis of academic lectures. Kelly, however (1991, paraphrased in Flowerdew, 1994 p. 19) has argued that lexical ignorance is the main obstacle to listening comprehension with advanced learners. Rost (1994) also singles out lexis as a key problem shared by the ESL subjects involved in the lecture comprehension experiment he reports. He found that much of the lexical misunderstanding was cued by an inaccurate perception of the form and meaning of a particular word (p. 104). Thus several of the words in the lecture, that were identified as crucial to the lecture (and were therefore written on the board), were misspelled by his informants, indicating that they were apparently unfamiliar to the subjects.

None of the above-mentioned research discusses *how much* lexis a listener should know in order to understand a lecture. Research conducted on reading comprehension, however (See Deville, 1985 and Laufer, 1989 cited in Laufer, 1992, p. 126) reports that comprehension at an academic level requires the knowledge of 95 percent of word tokens in a given text. One

would think that a higher lexical coverage would be necessary to comprehend spoken text. However, taking 95 percent as a prerequisite, it would seem that all the above lectures (containing between 10.9 and 18.6 percent academic words and jargon) could be considered potentially "incomprehensible", especially to ESL students.

Young (1994) concludes that a phasal analysis results in a reconfiguration of the macro-structure of university lectures: phases reveal the schema of lectures in terms far more accurate than the generally suggested beginning, middle and end configuration (p. 173). She argues that it is extremely important to acquaint ESL (or ELAP) teachers in post-secondary institutions with an accurate macro-structure so that they can present students with a schema that fully reflects what is going on in this generic situation. "Students need such a schema for expository spoken discourse; without it they cannot accurately predict, which hampers their ability to understand" (Ibid., p. 173-4).

#### 4.3.2 THE LECTURE NOTES

Taking lecture notes is widely accepted as a useful strategy for augmenting student attention and retention of academic discourse (Dunkel, 1988). Many authors have therefore attempted to fashion better note-takers out of L1 and L2 learners. However, the empirical relations between the quantitative and qualitative aspects of students' lecture notes and the comprehension and retention of lecture information are not well known (Ibid.).

Dunkel notes that it is primarily L1 researchers who have taken up the investigation of the relationship between notes and test performance. However, both L2 and L1 researchers alike are unclear as to (a) what actually constitutes "good notes" and (b) whether certain aspects of the notes engender or indicate successful information processing (Ibid. p. 260). Are there identifiable, essential elements that comprise quality notes for all those who transcribe spoken academic discourse into note form?

Dunkel argues that until we probe the relationship between the content of L2 students' notes and lecture-information, learning and recall, we will be unable to pinpoint the functional

skills that comprise effective note-taking in order to devise effective curricula to teach those skills to L2 learners (p. 261).

Examining this relationship was beyond the scope of this study. However, a number of the Psychology 1 lecturers indicated that all essential information would be covered in their lectures and that "for purposes of exams and tests what I'm giving you is sufficient". Implying that students can rely on their lecture notes and pass the course assumes that they will all recognise and write down the "essential" information.

However, as Hunt (1996) reminds us, every representation of knowledge is subjective and is intertwined with how the author or speaker views a particular issue. Each person has a particular set of associations and interpretations which s/he will attach to a particular unit of knowledge. "It cannot be assumed that because two people have heard the same lecture that they 'know' the same information" (p. 6). As one student notes:

M25L2: You listen to what [the lecturer] says and then you take down the main content. But then you're depending on your own view of what's important, it's very subjective - you may think something's important but other people won't write it down.

Even when lecturers provide visual aids, such as the use of overhead projectors, they cannot assume that all students will understand the convention implied, i.e., that the information provided is important and should be taken down:

M25L2: The overhead is useful in allowing you to take notes that are objective, so that you know this person has given you notes because he knows that they mean something, it's useful in that respect.

F18L2: I don't use the notes on the overhead because I don't like them - it seems like they are in telegraph form so I'm not using those...

Thus, what two students "know" may be similar in some ways, and both may share aspects with the mental image the lecturer was trying to convey. But throughout our lifetimes we, as individuals, accumulate a network of assumptions which filter how we interpret our environment, as well as how we learn (Hunt, 1996, p. 6-7). Thus it seemed essential to attempt

an examination of the students' (L1 and L2) lecture notes and their attitudes towards taking notes.

Owing to the dearth of research concerning cross-cultural differences in students' notes, and the increased pedagogical focus placed on training L2 students to develop listening and note-taking skills in English, Dunkel (1988) conducted a study to determine whether cross-cultural differences are evident in the notes taken by L1 and L2 students. She also attempted to identify indices which would predict achievement on a post-lecture quiz and looked at the differences in the results achieved by L1 and L2 note-takers.

Following this work, the lecture notes of the six student informants were analysed in terms of three indices for the content of the notes: (a) the total number of words and notations, (b) the number of information units, and (c) the completeness of the notes (see 3.1.3.3 for an explanation of this scoring). Their scores were compared with the score of a "complete" model (my lecture notes) and used to comment on the efficiency of note-taking by first-year students. As mentioned in Chapter three, using my own notes as a model may appear inherently subjective. However, I was aware that at some point I would need a set of lecture notes that was as comprehensive as possible, and I could not rely on another student to provide these notes. I therefore made a concerted effort to take "complete" notes, bearing in mind that no lecture notes (not even those of the lecturer) can ever really be considered "complete". These notes are not "ideal" and simply provided the means for a comparison of the notes of first-year students with those of an "experienced" student.

Dunkel (*Ibid.*, p. 273) notes that investigators need to be cognisant of the kind of information recorded in notes, not just the amount of information recorded. I therefore also looked at the use of symbols and abbreviations, the reliance on "structure" words (articles, prepositions, conjunctions) and the layout of the notes (the structure of the information).

	omplete	L1A	L1B	L1C	L2A	L2B	L2C
Total Words	654	226	145	0	400	285	322
Symbols/Abbrvs	45	17	2	0	27	22	15
Info. Units	143	103	63	0	122	84	109
Completeness	1	1.4	2.3	0	1.2	1.7	1.3

*Figure 5 - Results of Lecture-Note Analysis*

The above table shows the scores achieved on the three indices as well as the rate of occurrence of symbols and abbreviations in the students' notes. Student L1C did not, at this stage of the year, take his own notes in lectures; he preferred to highlight information in his textbook. Hence the zero score for this student.

With regard to the total number of words, the scores show that students recorded, on average, 35% of the total number of words, symbols and abbreviations that appeared in the complete notes. While past researchers (Hartley and Marshall, 1974 and Kiewra and Fletcher, 1984, cited in Dunkel, 1988) have found that note-taking "quantity" equalled note-taking "quality" in terms of test performance, Dunkel's (1988) study suggests that the tactic of "writing down as much as possible" during a lecture may not result in effective encoding of the lecture for either L1 or L2 note-takers (p. 269). The students interviewed in this study believed that this was not only an impossible task but that it also detracted from their ability to listen and comprehend:

M18L1: If things are written on the board and the overhead projector then I take those down as fast as I can, but I try to listen as much as I can...If the lecturer repeats something or says something slowly then you think uh-huh! and you're gonna take that one down... But I don't try to write down furiously because then you don't really learn anything....you pick more up from hearing it.

M25L2: I don't think it's important to take all those notes - it's not possible, there's no way you can take down every word.

F18L2: ...another problem is note-taking. I can't just write while I'm listening because I will not get all the information from the lecture.

F20L1: I used to take a lot of notes. But lately it's coming straight from the book and to try to copy down their summaries makes you miss what they're saying...

Dunkel (1988) showed that test achievement was not directly related to the quantity of notes taken but rather to (a) terseness of notations (embodied in the information units) and (b) inclusion of potential test information for all the L1/L2 note takers as a group (p. 270). The effective L1 and L2 note takers, in her study, were therefore those who compacted large amounts of spoken discourse into propositional-type information units; transcribed content words (e.g., names, dates, statistics) using abbreviations, symbols and a limited number of structure words; and detected and wrote down information that subsequently appeared on the postlecture quiz (p. 270).

In this study, 56% of the possible information units were recorded, on average. On the whole, students used very few symbols or abbreviations and those that were used were mostly symbols for structure words like "and" and "because".

With regard to structure words, Dunkel found that those L2 note takers who did not perform as well on the quiz wrote down numerous structure words (e.g., articles and prepositions) so that their notes contained fewer information units overall but a larger quantity of words or notations (p. 270). In this study, there was no significant difference between the percentage of structure words contained in the complete notes and the students' notes:

	Complete	L1A	L1B	L1C	L2A	L2B	L2C
% Structure Words	1.0	2.0	2.0	0	1.0	2.0	2.0

It is important to note, however, that more than half of this lecture was delivered directly off overhead notes and therefore this section of all the students' notes looked quite similar. In the second part of the lecture, covering the historical background of Psychology, there were no overhead notes and students had to rely on their own note-taking ability. In this section, all the students' notes contained a higher percentage of structure words than the complete notes:

	Complete	L1A	L1B	L1C	L2A	L2B	L2C
% Structure Words	0.9	1.1	2.4	0	1.0	3.2	1.2

What is interesting to note here is that L2B, the student with the highest percentage of structure words, is also the student (quoted above as F18L2) who dismissed the overhead notes because they were "in telegraph form". She failed the test in which the information in this particular lecture was covered. Dunkel suggests that some students need practice in detecting and recording the information-carrying words while simultaneously ignoring (for the purpose of note-taking) structure words and other syntactic elements (e.g., past tense markers) that do not add to the informational load but increase the total number of notations in the notes (p. 270).

As far as the overall layout is concerned, all the students' notes I looked at were legible. As mentioned, the first half of the lecture (using overhead notes) was comprehensively recorded and all the students copied the tabular format used by the lecturer to present the information. In the second half, however, most of the notes lacked any structure to speak of. For example, a comparison of "rationalism" and "empiricism" that was recorded in a table in the complete notes was written down as a number of linear points by all the students, thus obscuring the contrastive nature of the information.

The greatest difference - with regard to the type of information recorded - between the complete notes and those of the students was the lack of metadiscoursal comment in the students' notes; i.e., none of the students highlighted important information for themselves. The complete notes contained "NB" in several places, key words were underlined or written in capitals and there were notes in the margin such as "know the difference between these two!". The absence of such tags in students' notes shows an inability, on their part, to use the "evaluation" phases of the lecture effectively. Thus, in their effort to copy down information and understand it, students are missing the guidance given by lecturers as to how they should process this content.

Dunkel (1988, p. 270) suggests that lecturers could assist in this process by providing students with advance organisers or "skeleton notes" containing the main points of information in the lecture. These notes should highlight those critical pieces of information that should be recorded in the notes and should free students from the need to scribble frantically to record the material on paper. This is generally done in Psychology lectures via the use of overhead projectors. However, as mentioned earlier, it cannot be assumed that all students will understand the convention implied in this practice. Lecturers therefore need to make the metadiscoursal phases of their lectures much more explicit and explain the purpose served by the skeleton notes they provide.

With regard to the students' attitudes towards note-taking, research shows that note-taking practices vary according to the lecturer, the perceived relevance of the subject matter and the "mood" of the student (Dunkel, 1988, p. 275). A perceived lack of content and task meaningfulness will obviously impact on note taking:

F20L1:...lately it's coming straight from the book. I notice that they don't elaborate on the facts much anyway so there's very little point [in taking notes] really...I went to a lecture yesterday and I did poetry in it.

M18L1:...for the section on brain and behaviour I laughed off most of those lectures and got it from the text book.

F18L2N: Sometimes I sit there and take notes just to stay awake. Other times I take a novel with me to class just to pass the time...I mostly rely on the textbook.

Staff are aware of this reliance on the textbook by both students and their colleagues:

St7: [The textbook] is a problem if all lecturers do is read and copy straight out of the book...I mean, I noticed last year that some students just sit there and underline what the lecturers say...I find that problematic because it's encouraging bad habits.

The notion that there is a single, unitary (or universal) note-taking method that is effective for all groups of students does not find support in Dunkel's research. It is therefore unlikely that any single note-taking program can address the note-taking needs of students from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds. It may also be of questionable instructional value to present all



L2 students (or L1 students for that matter) with a general and single "model" of effective notes to emulate (p. 271).

#### 4.3.3 THE STUDENTS' ESSAYS

As noted in the methodology section, time and space constraints prevented a comprehensive analysis of these essays. However, it could be argued that such an analysis is beyond the scope of a study which focuses more on the Department practices and the effect they have on students' ability to become part of the disciplinary discourse community.

What I have done instead is examine the type of writing tasks set for first-years (i.e. specifically, the first essay of the year), how the Essay Writing Handout that was given to students relates to these tasks, and also the type of feedback that was given to students. I will begin by discussing, very briefly, some of the findings of the student essay analysis conducted by the ALRP team in 1995.

As mentioned earlier, few tasks are set at first-year level that allow for any real evaluation of reading and writing skills. The predominant writing task required of all Arts students at Rhodes (in exams and during the course of the year) are essays, predominantly for purposes of assessment. In the Psychology department, first-year students were evaluated during the year by means of four multiple-choice tests and four essays. Two of the four essays set were for non-evaluative purposes; the other two were written under "exam conditions" and ostensibly served the purpose of preparing students for the "real thing", that is, the exam:

[These] Tutorials provide you with the opportunity to become accustomed to writing under exam conditions. Your exams rely heavily on your ability to formulate your thoughts in essay-type paragraphs. This ... programme focuses on developing this skill (The Psychology 1 Tutorial Programme Handout).

##### 4.3.3.1 THE ALRP EVALUATION OF STUDENT WRITING

The ALRP conducted an evaluation of student writing tasks in order to identify key components of academic literacy and to ascertain the extent of the presence of these

components in writing tasks across the three of years of undergraduate psychology training. The three components identified were metacognition, knowledge of the discipline and presentation.

With regard to metacognition, the ALRP team found that first-year students, in general, could state their views, but many were not able to provide reasons for their arguments. They were also unable to relate their own viewpoints to those of others (Fischer et al., 1995, p. 118).

The vast majority of first-year students were found to have no knowledge of psychological ideas, and consequently most of them (79%), while being able to present the concepts adequately, could not elaborate on them in a satisfactory way or relate their essays to a broader social context (Ibid., p. 119).

With regard to presentation, first-year students were found to be particularly weak at integrating different ideas into one piece of writing and structuring these ideas generally: 35% of introductions were poor and 11% were absent. 38% of essays had a poor body and 43% had a poor conclusion (Ibid.). Finally, an analysis of grammar, punctuation and spelling indicated that the grammar usage of a high proportion of students (across all years) was poor. Spelling and punctuation was, on the whole, regarded as satisfactory or good (Ibid., p. 120-1).

As far as writing problems from the students' perspective were concerned, the ALRP found that Rhodes undergraduate Psychology students identified "evaluating the assumptions underlying the argument", "providing critical insight", "the application of knowledge to different contexts", and "using examples" as the four most often encountered problems in their writing tasks. This corresponds with the findings of the analysis of essays, in which the metacognitive task of identifying what is assumed, presupposed and taken for granted in their own arguments was a weakness across all years.

The ALRP research showed, overall, that students are uncertain about what is expected of them in their writing tasks. They are generally less familiar with expectations of writing tasks under exam conditions than they are in the case of essays and practical reports. Overall, students think that staff do not make the tasks explicit.

#### 4.3.3.2 THE WRITING TASKS AND THE WRITING GUIDE

Van Zyl (1993) found that, at UNISA, the most common modes of discourse expected in essays are Synthesis, Comparison and Contrast and Analysis (p. 219). Rose (1983, in Van Zyl, *Ibid.*, p. 89) notes that modes of discourse are important in that using them requires a repertoire of discourse structures or schemata. The different modes make different cognitive demands on student writers and involve the use of different global syntactic and semantic structures. They can, to a certain extent, be ranked in a hierarchy of difficulty. Narration and description are considered the least demanding, while compare and contrast, and analysis, are regarded as being considerably more difficult.

Both the genre and the discourse modes required by the assignments set in Psychology 1 were the most demanding types to produce: The first essay topic given to students in 1996 was "Compare and Contrast the two eating disorders of anorexia nervosa and bulimia. Make specific reference to key similarities and differences in sufferers, causes, symptoms (physiological and psychological) and treatment of the two eating disorders".

Van Zyl (1993) argues that the dominance by the more complex modes of discourse is typical of writing at tertiary level and lecturers conceivably do not realise the implications of expecting sophisticated discourse structures from poorly prepared students and may not be aware that the textual surface features of student writing about which they complain often have as their source inadequate experience in the mode required (p. 91).

Evidence of this "inadequate experience" is the tendency of first-year students to write in a style generally considered "unacademic". The ALRP analysis of first-year essays found that students use a variety of styles in their essays. The style appearing with the greatest frequency in these texts (just over 70%) was labelled "conversational", followed by "3rd person" (65%) and "colloquial" (40%). As mentioned in section 4.1.3.1 above, staff members suggested that "style" is the one implicit criterion against which all essays are assessed. Thus the frequency of unacceptable styles, such as the above, would result in a generally unfavourable impression of first-year essays. The SI tutor described the first essays of the year as follows:

When I saw the kinds of essays they had produced...and knowing what I do about English...I took one look at them and they made me shudder. So the first thing I'd do is get the grammar out the way. Then I would talk about structure. Often the content was really good, but it was almost like copying out. They understood what they'd read but then they'd put it down as they'd read it ... I don't know if they just dive in, or maybe can't follow their own structure. There was the formal structure of paragraphing, so they were structured in that sense, and they had the idea that they were supposed to put in an introduction and conclusion, but very often there was the sense of "ok, I'm in now and....now it's over!" And the paragraphs were also really jumbled ... there'd just be a bunch of facts lumped together in each paragraph but no real structure within the paragraph. It was like an essay in each paragraph, just lists of facts. That was the problem, the structure was a big problem and I don't know if that's got to do with English thinking or what. I don't know because I'm English. As I said the students were all Xhosa or Shona...

The two-page essay-writing guide, compiled by the ADP, advises students to start by examining the question: "Decide what the question is asking you to do. Is it asking only for facts or is it asking you to be critical of those facts?" However, as the SI tutor noted, many students have great difficulty deciding "what the question is asking them to do":

Like I'd say "they'll probably ask you to critically discuss something.." and then they'd say "what the hell are they actually asking me", so then we'd talk about that.

Once students have established the meaning of the question, they are advised to find relevant texts and make notes from them "in their own words" to "prevent plagiarism". The advice on writing the draft essay suggests that paragraphs should be short, encompassing one central idea per paragraph. It notes that an essay is "directed towards answering a particular question as concisely as possible in such a way that the reader is able to follow a particular argument or train of thought". The constant reference to "answering a question" and "building an argument" is confusing, and misleading, advice in view of the "compare and contrast" nature of the essay question.

The guide to the final draft reminds students of the importance of the introduction and conclusion and includes suggestions as to what should be included in both these paragraphs.

Finally, the handout emphasises the importance of citing references at the end of the essay and ends by noting that

Learning to write a good essay takes time. Do not become despondent if your first essay is not as good as you would have hoped it to be. Remember, you are acquiring a number of skills when you write an essay, including, improved reading skills, summarising skills and an improved ability to express yourself in writing.

The fact that students' essays were so "badly structured" is evidence that a writing guide concentrating on surface features, or structure, is largely ineffectual. It is often argued that focusing on the features and characteristics of a successful written product merely provides students with a standard by which to measure the success or failure of their own completed essay; it does not teach them how to arrive at a better product (Van Zyl, 1993, p. 211). This sentiment was supported by the SI tutor who noted that "[students] learn not by saying directly 'we have to do it like that' but rather [by] thinking about what they're doing and why and in that way hopefully it comes a bit more naturally".

Van Zyl notes too, however, that teaching the writing process as a rigid, prescribed sequence of stages also misrepresents the realities of composing for most students, and therefore "may truncate, rather than liberate or enhance their writing behaviours resulting in a less successful written product than could otherwise be achieved" (Ibid.).

During the interviews I asked students to talk me through the essay-writing process (see #21, #22, #23, #24). While most of them tried to give an apparently organised description of what they had done, the indication was that the process was a confused, chaotic, very tedious affair and "the mistakes" they had made tended to be the focal points of their descriptions. This observation supports the finding that, what was apparent in most of the UNISA students' responses was an apprehension and confusion about the function of academic writing; "an absence of guidelines or a sure sense of priorities in the act of writing; and a preoccupation with errors and surface correctness" (Van Zyl, 1993, p. 147).

#### 4.3.3.3 THE FEEDBACK

In addition to the standard assessment and feedback form, tutors also received a guideline for marking from the staff member who set the first essay topic. This guide concentrated almost entirely on referencing. For example, students who did not reference within the text or included a reference list failed the essay. Where the essay was under-referenced, or the referencing was not according to APA format, the maximum mark allowed was 62%. As mentioned earlier, the extreme importance of referencing in accordance with the APA style manual was not emphasised to students to the degree that it was in the marking guide.

Almost all the feedback given to the six students whose essays I analysed focused on the structure of their essays. Besides the referencing problems that were apparent in all the texts, two points that featured consistently on the feedback forms were the lack of subheadings and the lack of direct comparison of the two eating disorders within paragraphs: "You must show both disorders in the same paragraph! That was what the essay asked you to do!"

As I mentioned before, it is difficult for me to generalise the information received from the tutors with regard to essay writing. However, my own experience was that at no point was it suggested that we use subheadings (a common feature of psychological writing), nor was it made explicit in the essay question, or anywhere else, that direct comparisons should be made in the same paragraph. Applying both these features would have gone a long way in assisting students with the structuring of a "compare and contrast" essay.

#### 4.4. CONCLUSION

There is no ascent to truth without a descent to cases (Geertz, 1973, cited in Smith, 1996, p. 6)

Suffice to say that the information presented in this chapter is the result of an holistic, culturally contextualised analysis which expressly admits the subjective experiences and

interpretation of the both the investigator and the participants. Smith (1996) notes that the issue of representativeness is as much a concern for the ethnographer as it is for any social scientist. The problem is approached differently, however, by seeking to locate the particular case under study among other cases. The question therefore is not "Is this case representative?" but rather, "What is this case representative of?" (Margaret Mead, 1972, cited in Smith, 1996, p. 3).

## Chapter 5: CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

### 5.0 OVERVIEW

It was the concern of this study to conduct research which would assist in designing staff development programmes for academics teaching in English-medium tertiary institutions, like Rhodes University, where more than half the intake of first-year students already speak English as a second, or other, language.

Founded on the social constructionist view of knowledge, the aim of the study was to identify the needs of academic staff as well as the possible obstacles to the implementation of a "Language Across the Curriculum" policy. In an attempt to determine the nature of Psychology's discourse, a genre-centred approach was used to access the discipline's discourse community. The task was then to describe the sociolinguistic context as well as the nature of the tasks first-year students are expected to perform.

An analysis such as this, examining the contexts in which students learn - that is, what they learn, how that knowledge is transmitted, who is present in the learning activity, and which goals and motives drive the learning event and the larger curriculum - suggests that the acquisition of academic discourse is a socially mediated process. Such an analysis requires us to challenge the deficit-model-explanations of student underachievement, which have led to "quick-fix" intervention programmes (Gutierrez, 1995). Understanding how knowledge is socially constructed, as well as the relationship between context and development, also helps us challenge current educational practices. It allows us to see that language skills learned in courses like ELAP are not necessarily transferable to other courses. It also provides the basis for suggesting that "initiation into the ways of knowing and doing of a discipline requires the active participation of accomplished members of the community" (Starfield, 1994, p. 18).

Nevertheless, the findings of this study support the contention that there are a number of obstacles - not least in current educational processes - in the way of realising the vision of integrating educational support into the mainstream. Many researchers in the field of LAC,



for instance, have emphasised the fact that the challenge of designing an academic literacy program is not limited to its content in terms of theoretical and methodological approach. Russel (1987) observes that LAC programmes

disturb the convenient institutional arrangement which places research and specialised professional training above undergraduate teaching ... This arrangement, and the attitudes it fosters, lie behind the difficulties [such] programmes experience: the turf battles, the large classes, the lack of time and incentives for writing instruction (p. 191).

This study has analysed a learning context - a disciplinary discourse community - and highlighted the possible hurdles proponents of LAC can expect to face in a tertiary institution in South Africa. In so doing, it has identified a number of potential "development" areas which could form the focus of professional development programmes.

The remainder of this chapter draws together and presents the salient features of the practices and genres of the Psychology department in the light of their implications for implementing a LAC programme. In section 5.1 these features are discussed under various headings according to whether they occur at the level of institution, department or communicative event.

Section 5.2 identifies possible points of focus for staff development programmes and makes practical suggestions for how the Psychology department can make its discourse more accessible by effecting a different approach to teaching.

## 5.1 OBSTACLES TO ACCESS: CAN TEACHING THE DISCOURSE BE INCORPORATED INTO THE CURRICULUM OF THE DISCIPLINE?

### 5.1.2 THE UNIVERSITY

While it is Graff's (1994) observation that students of different classes, races and ethnicities share a common alienation from intellectual discourse, that alienation is experienced very differently for different groups and carries very different social penalties. Rhodes University

is still essentially a "white" setting and the University culture is a "white" culture. Thus while all students entering the University for the first time experience certain socio-cultural problems, the feelings of dislocation will, understandably, be more acute for ESL students, particularly those unfamiliar with English values and customs. Ballard (1984, in Lynch, 1994) refers to the "double cultural shift" that the incoming ESL student faces: the transition from high school to university and also the move into an alien culture, with different norms of authority, relevance, criticism etc. Hofmeyer and Spence (1989) argue that, in order to incorporate and affirm black students, universities will have to develop a new non-racial culture and ground their curricula and research in the South African context. "Above all else, universities will have to give primacy to teaching" (p. 47).

Universities will therefore be required to provide opportunities and incentives for academic staff to enhance their skills as professional educators. There are, however, a number of problems in realising the aims of staff development programmes of the kind envisaged: firstly, as Scott (1994) notes, staff development is regarded by many experienced academic staff as signifying unwelcome, simplistic and even insulting intrusion into their academic expertise.

This is supported by the findings of this study, in which the staff of the Psychology department were clearly reluctant to regard themselves as "teachers" and pointed to the fact that work in academic development is not rewarded by the University. Lecturers in Psychology regard themselves as, first and foremost, researchers, practitioners and specialists in their field, activities traditionally valued by the University. "Skills" teaching is perceived as being "lower level work" requiring "additional" time for lecturers who are already feeling stretched to their limits. This work is also perceived as unattractive because it is of a less specialised nature and is not likely to lead to deep-level engagement with the subject matter of Psychology (Fischer et al., 1995).

Secondly, it was evident that conventional staff development activities (such as orientation workshops and seminars on teaching methods and related educational topics) are by no means a sufficient response to the broader issues addressed by academic development. The findings

of this study support the view that, in the absence of sufficient incentives, participation in such activities is very limited (Scott, 1994).

It is essential for departments to rise to the challenge and review their curricula in order to become more user-friendly to their students. However, the findings of this study support the contention of others (Fischer et al., 1995, Scott, 1994, Hofmeyer & Spence, 1989) that the real key to the problem may well lie in the provision of incentives by the University: such as improving the status of teaching by giving it substantial weighting in appointment and promotion criteria, and/or by introducing accountability for teaching quality as a central element of a general quality assurance system.

### 5.1.3 THE IMAGE OF THE DEPARTMENT AND ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

None of the key-student-informants in this study felt that they "belonged" in the Psychology department and many described the Department as alienating, uncaring and impersonal. These feelings were attributed to the limited contact between staff members and first-year students and the infrequent, disorganised nature of the "discussion" tutorials. The only context in which faculty had the opportunity to interact with students was during lectures. The phasal analysis of the lectures indicated, however, that no interaction took place during this time.

The questionnaires and interviews revealed that staff regard first-year teaching as their least desirable teaching commitment because of the lack of student contact and large quantities of marking. Thus while staff perceive the lack of contact as problematic, the high number of first-year students is the factor precluding any improvement in this area.

This situation is exacerbated by the attitude of staff towards first-year students on the whole. Many tend to write them off as "unthinking", "illiterate" and, on the whole, "uneducable". Induction into the University is still regarded by many as a trial by fire that few can, or should, survive; first-year is seen as the time when students must realise that they are no longer at high school. This attitude is irreconcilable with the need to improve articulation

between secondary and tertiary education and reinforces the tendency to view the ESL student as a "problem" or "at risk".

In this regard, ESL students continue to be perceived as extraordinary university entrants requiring remediation in order to function effectively within the University system. Thus bridging programmes are regarded as sites where students are "made university-ready", while fundamental change to either course content or teaching methods is still equated with risking the high standards of University education. Even those staff members who did not feel that there should be a strong boundary between subject teaching and AD, believed that the Department could not cope with developing academic literacy in fundamental areas such as writing (cf. Fischer et al., 1995, p. 58).

#### 5.1.4 APPROACHES TO TEACHING IN PSYCHOLOGY 1

In view of the Department's content-centred teaching objectives, as well as the passive role in which students perceive themselves, it is reasonable to argue that teaching in Psychology 1 at Rhodes is characterised by the traditional foundational conventions familiar to anyone who has attended a university. Foundational education assumes that knowledge is something "given" to people (Bruffee, 1993). Teachers help students "assimilate", "absorb" or "synthesise" knowledge. They ask students to perform in a way that the teacher has determined ahead of time and to arrive at predetermined answers - answers that the disciplinary community to which the teacher belongs has decided are correct (Ibid., p. 223).

##### 5.1.4.1 LECTURES

The main convention of such traditional teaching is the lecture, where lecturers talk and perform while students listen and watch. I mentioned, in Chapter 4, Benson's (1994) contention that what the ethnographer sees in a lecture is "a performance where the main goal is to establish contact with students who are being initiated into a world in which problems are solvable, and where relations can be established with a person who has 'been there'" (p. 184). What I observed in Psychology 1 lectures, however, was closer to Bruffee's (1993)

description of the normal goals of this convention: "to provide answers, promote the authority of those answers, and enhance the authority of the lecturer providing them" (p. 67).

Most lecturers involved in first-year teaching listed "presentation of content" as their primary goal in a lecture. As a result there was little or no interaction between lecturer and students, or between students, during lectures. Few students perceived lectures as having any purpose other than the presentation of content and the majority saw themselves as passive recipients of the lecturer's knowledge. There were many, however, who were disappointed that so much of the content covered in lectures was the same as that contained in their textbook, thereby acknowledging that, ideally, lectures should be more than a repetition of a textbook. Finally, it was evident from many of the examples used in lectures that a number of lecturers still assume that the class forms an homogenous audience sharing his/her schemas and "English" world view.

#### 5.1.4.2 TUTORIALS

Due to a lack of funding and a shortage of staff, the tutorial programme plays a very small part in the overall teaching of the first-year course. With only six small-group discussion tutorials throughout the year, there is little opportunity for building the relationship between tutor and students that creates the relaxed atmosphere that is conducive to interaction. This is particularly problematic for L2 students, who also had to contend with being in a "cultural minority" in the tutorials. In light of recent research conducted on the Rhodes campus (Hunt, 1996), it is evident that the present structure of this programme prevents it from realising any of the potential benefits of small group teaching, i.e. encouraging individual participation in a non-threatening setting, thereby facilitating co-operative learning (Ibid., p. 1).

While by no means absolving staff of their responsibility to review their own teaching practices, the tutorial system, with "knowledgeable peers" as facilitators, provides an ideal site for the initial incorporation of "skills" teaching into the curriculum. However, the development of this programme depends, at present, on obtaining funding. Thus while there

is clearly scope for change, the programme, as it stands, cannot provide the focal point for a LAC policy.

#### 5.1.5 WRITING

As mentioned by a senior member of staff (St2) the Department appears to equate writing "with assessment rather than writing being done for its own sake in order to develop and practice a particular skill". This approach to writing has, according to Van Zyl (1993), potentially unhappy consequences. First, students are likely to start seeing academic writing as a trap, rather than a way of saying something to someone. Second, this use of writing can severely limit the potentialities and range of writing behaviour open to students (p. 89).

The ALRP analysis found that first-year students are particularly weak at integrating different ideas into one piece of writing and structuring these ideas generally. However, the range of writing tasks offered to first-years was limited to the most difficult type (essays) in the most demanding modes (analysis, compare and contrast). The essay-writing guide given to students was a general, fixed-stage, compulsory-procedure model concentrating on structure and referencing conventions. The marking guide, as well as the tutors' feedback, reinforced this focus on "structural" problems and students who referenced their first essays incorrectly failed. Staff, too, defined good writing in terms of "structure", "clarity of ideas" and "style".

This approach to writing supports Horowitz's (1986) contention that the main thrust of the average university writing task is "to emphasise recognition and reorganisation of data and to de-emphasise invention and personal discovery ... The academic (student) writer's task is not to create personal meaning, but to find, organise, and present data according to fairly explicit instructions" (p. 455).

#### 5.1.6 THE "GENRE" OF PSYCHOLOGY - THE DISCIPLINE'S PERSPECTIVE ON LANGUAGE

Psychology, as a discipline, has its own well-developed writing genre based on the APA style manual. While ostensibly a guide for professional writing, and hence not exerting direct

influence on the style of undergraduate work, APA style also "encapsulates the core values and epistemology of the discipline ... [and is a] rich reflection of psychology's intellectual milieu" (Madigan et al., 1995, p. 429).

This study did not include an analysis of the surface features of APA style because these features are already well-documented and very explicit. However, "agreement about trivial details can carry with it agreement about more fundamental matters" (Ibid.). I will therefore refer to an analysis conducted by others (Madigan et al., 1995) to the extent that they support features of the genre identified in my findings.

Both the student and staff informants in this study, either directly or indirectly, bore testimony to the fact that "psychology's language aligns it with the sciences and distances it from the humanities" (Ibid.). The majority of students (204) studying Psychology 1 in 1996 were registered in the faculties of Arts (165) and Social Science (39). This may explain why a significant number of the questionnaire respondents indicated that Psychology had "a language of its own", that this language affected their understanding of the subject and, that writing an essay for Psychology was "not the same as writing for other courses". Respondents indicated that the most characteristic feature of this writing was a "very different method of referencing", the only feature of APA style that was stressed at this stage.

While many staff members mentioned "style" as part of their marking criteria, many said that they do not necessarily mark down for difficulties with language - that at first- and second-year level they try to mark according to "what [students] are meaning to say rather than what has been said" (St2). Many other empirical disciplines share this utilitarian view of language in which words are implicitly assumed to function as simple transmitters of information from the writer to the reader. Madigan et al. (1995) note that, in APA style, language takes on the function of a somewhat unimportant container for information and is not allowed to call attention to itself (p. 433).

While undergraduate students are not necessarily expected to subscribe to this "rhetoric of objectivity" (Ibid.), it is significant in that it is a discourse in which the practices of the

discipline's experts are deeply embedded. And it is at these experts that a LAC policy is aimed - a policy deriving out of a discourse community which places language at the centre of knowledge creation. Thus any suggestion of LAC for Psychology implies the overlapping of discourse communities with different world views, a situation with the potential for conflict (Bizzell, 1992).

Farris (1993) warns that LAC will forever be caught in the following paradox: LAC recognises that each disciplinary community has developed its own specialised discourse and therefore aims to replace the universal transparent model with one that responds to the needs of these differing and incommensurate discourses. But in emphasising the necessity of language instruction in the various disciplines, LAC advocates inevitably work from a presupposition that tends to obscure the difference it claims to uphold:

[In the view that] we are merely helping disciplines incorporate in their teaching what they already know ... are we not ... perhaps idealizing these other disciplines, and overestimating the extent to which faculty who are NOT LIKE US are willing to make their students "aware that the discipline is constituted through its discourse"? (Ibid., p. 5)

So how do English-trained LAC advocates (or discourse technologists), subscribing to theories of situated discourse, implement a LAC programme that does not privilege English or one of its interdisciplinary frontier sites like Applied Linguistics? (Ibid., p. 4) In other words, what can be done to avert the potential conflict and bring about what Bartholomae (1985) calls a "rhetoric of combination"?

A possible solution is to cease seeing the various disciplines as totally separate communities with distinct genres. This does not amount to a claim that "writing is writing" or that the humanities and social sciences are now blending into undifferentiated genres. It is, rather, a suggestion that academic writing be conceived of as occurring on a continuum with a number of sub-ranges for different aspects of discourse.

MacDonald (1989) proposes that conceptualising what might lie at the extremes of the continuum helps one see how different academic fields might tend to have different central



tendencies, and yet the continuum allows us to see that there can be a great deal of overlap in the majority of academic prose. This is an attractive concept in that it appeals to what many people intuitively believe about academic writing. At the same time, however, it by no means perpetuates the myth of one, unified academic discourse. Rather, it allows us to recognise that each discipline has its own specialised discourse without seeing these discourses as mutually exclusive.

I would like to discuss MacDonald's conceptualisation of academic writing in some detail and will do so in the next section. Before that, however, it is important that I mention some of the changes that have already been made in the Psychology department as a result of the ALRP which began early in 1995. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the most important factor contributing to the success of this project was the fact that it was internally motivated. As a result, it was backed by the head of department, conducted almost entirely by members of the department, and was, on the whole, well-received by faculty members involved. Since the completion of the study, the Department has drawn up an internal AD policy recognising, firstly, the need to "own" and integrate AD into the mainstream curriculum and, secondly, that staff development is critical to the success of the academic development of students (See Appendix 3). This policy provided the impetus for a comprehensive AD Curriculum (Appendix.4) in which the Department has identified the level of academic, professional and vocational literacy it expects of students within each year of study. Finally, the Department has acknowledged the value of AD work by instituting an award for internal contributions in this area.

One of the most positive side-effects of this research was that it encouraged staff members to reflect on their own teaching practices and discuss issues related to academic literacy. Considering that the University has not as yet formulated any clear policy with regard to the integration of "skills" teaching into the mainstream curriculum, the Department must be commended for its constructive implementation of a number of the suggestions of the ALRP team.

## 5.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER INNOVATIONS

Having challenged traditional disciplinary assumptions ... how can communities of ... university teachers ... induct new members - their students - into those communities? ... the key element [is] interdependence among peers (Bruffee, 1993, p. 175-6)

As mentioned in Chapter 2, work in situated learning has particular congruence with work on genre studies since both place great emphasis on context, as well as activity and action - knowing and learning through doing, rather than transmission (Freedman, 1995, p. 77). Collaborative learning (Bruffee, 1992, 1993), based on a social constructionist view of knowledge, shares the central notions of situated learning (performance, participation, collaboration), and provides the foundation for most of the suggestions that follow.

One of the main goals of collaborative learning is to provide a context in which students can practice and master the "normal discourse" exercised in established knowledge communities in the academic world (Ibid., 1992, p. 28). Bruffee argues that normal discourse occurs in a community of "knowledgeable peers" and that collaborative learning provides this kind of community.

There is wide variability in collaborative learning activities, but most centre on the students' exploration or application of the course material, not simply the teacher's presentation or explication of it (Smith & MacGregor, 1992). However practised, collaborative learning represents a significant shift away from the typical lecture-centred milieu in universities. While acknowledging that the lecturing/ listening/note-taking process may never disappear entirely, this approach insists that it exist alongside other processes that are based in students' discussion and active work with the course material (Ibid.).

### 5.2.1 LECTURER TRAINING

It is only relatively recently in the United Kingdom that it has come to be thought necessary to train lecturers to teach their subject, and, as in South Africa, there is no British equivalent of the North American programmes for international teaching assistants (Lynch, 1994). The

notion that the change from successful doctoral researcher (or Masters student as is often the case in South Africa) to university teacher might require instruction and guidance is based on what has been tactfully described as the "common experience that scholarly ability (or achievement) and ability to teach are imperfectly related" (Startup 1979, cited in Lynch, 1994, p. 281).

Lynch notes that while there is an extensive range of published lecture-comprehension courses for ESL students, there seems to have been no work published on training programmes specifically designed to cater for L1 lecturing staff faced for the first time with classes where a sizeable minority, or even majority, are ESL students (Ibid.). While I did not conduct a comprehensive review of the guides available in South Africa, those that I was able to find were all standard lecture methodology texts with no advice for L1 lecturers in this predicament. The following are points that might be highlighted were one to run such a training programme:

#### 5.2.1.1 REFRAMING THE ROLES

Most lecturers and students conceive of the heart of education as a two-person relationship. Classes are simply an economic or pragmatic necessity in which one person - the teacher - simultaneously engages in 10-300 two-person relationships with separate individuals. This model keeps teachers in the middle of their classes, carrying all the burden and responsibility of the course on their own shoulders. Finkel & Monk (1992) refer to this as an "Atlas complex" (p. 50), held in place by conventional beliefs about the teacher's role. A collaborative approach shifts the responsibility, slowly dissolving this complex. This implies that both lecturers and students need to reframe the roles they traditionally play.

##### (a) Reframing the Teacher Role

Teachers who use collaborative learning approaches tend to think of themselves less as expert transmitters of knowledge to students and more as expert designers of intellectual experiences for students - as coaches ... of a more emergent learning process (Smith & MacGregor, 1992, p. 10)

Any change from the monologic pedagogy of the lecture to a participative mode implies a change in power relations. A number of staff informants in this study indicated they were reluctant to allow more interaction in their lectures because it often resulted in a "loss of control" over the proceedings.

MacGregor (1992) points out that authority, expertise, power and control are highly intertwined matters for any teacher, and all come up for redefinition in a collaborative classroom. Evans (1995, p. 13) suggests that such reluctance to move into participative modes may well stem from a reluctance to accept a change in power relations and from a belief that a change in power relations implies a loss of authority.

He notes, however, that this is not so. Lecturer/student power relations, as they exist in the context of a lecture, develop compliance rather than independent activity or autonomous judgement (p. 82). Abandoning one's authority to facilitate learning is not the solution; what is required is a reduction in the exercise of power which tends to inhibit students by preventing the free expression of opinion and encouraging compliance (p. 81).

Thus, rather than losing control, lecturers will be required to reshape it, as well as learn new methods of maintaining it, particularly in the sense of controlling themselves once in the presence of the imprecise, loosely connected, unintegrated comprehension that students have of their subjects.

#### (b) Reframing the Student Role

MacGregor (1992) warns that it is not unusual to encounter student resistance to group work. She notes that many students have difficulty accepting that collaborative learning with peers is real learning, so acculturated are they to "teacher-is-source-of-knowledge" environments. The type of shifts students have to grapple with are:

- from listener, observer and note-taker to active problem solver, contributor and discussant;

- from a private presence in the class (with few or no risks) to a public one, with many risks;
- from low or moderate expectations of preparation for class to high ones;
- from seeing teachers and texts as the sole sources of authority and knowledge, to seeing peers, oneself, and the thinking of the community as additional and important sources of authority and knowledge (Ibid., p. 39)

With this in mind, faculty need to pay attention to setting the context and provide explicit norms for collaborative work so that students can understand and reflect on both its rationale, value and immediate goals. Suggested norms (Fiechtner & Davis, 1992) include:

- always establishing groups of between four and six students
- never allowing students to form their own groups
- never deliberately creating homogenous groups
- allowing for peer evaluation in the assessment policy
- never limiting group work's influence to less than 20% of the total mark.

#### 5.2.1.2 FINDING OUT ABOUT THE STUDENTS

An important step in any staff development programme would be to help lecturers appreciate the socio-cultural problems faced by students entering the University. The ALRP report (1995) mentions the difficulty lecturers experience in coming up with personally meaningful examples, "given the diversity of student backgrounds and the fact that staff do not know the backgrounds of the students" (p. 66). Suggesting collaboration between the African Languages department and the ADP in developing some sort of "cross-cultural" training programme for "white" academics is a blinkered, short-term option which ignores that dynamic nature of "culture". Lecturers have always had to contend, to varying degrees, with a "generation gap". They usually do this by staying in touch with their students, talking to them, observing them and generally getting to know them. Existing "cultural gaps" can surely be approached in a similar fashion, supported by a more emergent learning process i.e., one that allows students to find their own way of relating the disciplines to their norms, values and world views.

Psychology, being concerned as it is with human behaviour, offers students an ideal opportunity to reflect on their own experiences in relation to the various issues raised throughout the course. For instance, instead of setting an initial assignment that results in 350 badly structured, vague, "objective" essays on Anorexia and Bulimia, lecturers could use the opportunity to find out more about their students by doing the following: divide students into mixed groups, give them some broad background reading on the characteristics of the disorders so they have a knowledge base from which to work, then ask them to decide, as a group, why research has found that anorexia, for instance, is most common among white women.

A joint assignment could follow in which groups would try to describe the various dimensions of the disorders from the point of view of the respective communities in which their members grew up. Approaching the task in this way would provide all students with a legitimate subject position from which to approach a topic quite foreign to many of them. It would also result in a wealth of information about the class, lighten the marking load and save lecturers the arduous task of reading the same information 350 times.

#### 5.2.1.3 LECTURE PRESENTATION

Collaborative learning does not exclude lecturing. It only changes the social context and the authority structure in which a lecture is delivered. Bruffee (1993) acknowledges that, in the same way peer tutoring has been adopted by universities over the past twenty years, other forms of collaborative learning will be educationally persuasive and effective only to the degree to which they are grafted on to existing practice (p. 10).

Young (1994) contends that it is extremely important to acquaint both teachers and students in post-secondary institutions with an accurate macro-structure of lectures. Rather than assuming that all students will understand the significance of the various stages of a lecture, they should be provided with a schema which will enable them to predict accurately, thus increasing their ability to understand.

The macro-structure provided by the phasal analysis would also be very useful in training lecturers. Lynch (1994) warns that, as useful as it is, adopting common-sense advice such as speaking more slowly and clearly, using simpler language and building in more repetition runs the risk of being perceived by ESL listeners as patronising. Acquainting lecturers, especially junior lecturers, with this schema would provide them with many, more subtle, options for increasing the comprehensibility of their lectures. For example, this analysis showed that lecturers often used vague discourse "signposts", an area of lecture presentation with great potential for assisting ESL listeners (Lynch, 1994). By working with the macro-structure, lecturers could easily isolate these markers in their own discourse and find ways of clarifying them.

Lynch (1994) suggests that another important contribution lecturers can make is to give an explicit and public statement of the "ground rules" for their particular lectures. This would include, along with an outline of the content to be covered, discussing norms for collaboration between students, explaining the convention of overhead-projector notes, drawing attention to the types of discourse markers used (particularly in relation to example and evaluation phases) etc. On a broader scale, it would be useful if all the lecturers involved in the course introduced themselves and their courses in the first lecture of the year. This would give students a broader perspective of the course, and the Department, as well as providing them with faces to attach to the courses they see planned for the year.

Unfortunately, the traditional design of a lecture theatre does not lend itself well to collaborative learning. However, incorporating forms of collaborative learning into the lecture could begin with little more than asking students to turn to a neighbour to formulate responses, draw connections to other material, raise questions, or solve problems.

### 5.2.2 WRITING

Writing is not ancillary to teaching with collaborative learning, as it is to traditional teaching. It is central (Bruffee, 1993, p. 53).

Many students studying psychology are exposed to the discourse of both the humanities and the social sciences. As mentioned in section 5.1.6, Madigan et al. contend that psychology's "language" aligns it with the sciences rather than the humanities. However, it is more useful to view all these discourses as existing along a continuum rather than as the property of distinct communities. In view of the fact that many students are expected to acquire both, and write in both, it is useful to look at the central tendencies of these discourses and suggest an approach to writing that draws on both.

#### 5.2.2.1 THE DISCIPLINARY DISCOURSE CONTINUUM

MacDonald (1989) characterises the enterprise of writing about literature as data-driven, while social science discourse is characterised as conceptually driven (p. 413). Data-driven academic enterprises are defined as those that begin with something that is given (primary sources, raw material) and move upward toward higher levels of abstraction (p. 415). The term "text-driven" might be just as useful as data-driven for describing the central tendencies of undergraduate writing in literature and most history courses.

At the opposite end of the continuum is a model of social science writing that operates differently and, in its use of abstractions, provides almost a reverse image of literary discourse. Conceptually driven discourse begins with a hypothesis or a set of alternative concepts defined communally in the profession (p. 421).

MacDonald argues that the difficulty undergraduates experience in comprehending and composing conceptually driven discourse arises from its higher degree of abstraction than data-driven discourse and/or from students not understanding how its demands upon them differ from those in data-driven discourse (p. 424). The difficulty may have several causes: It may result from confusion about shifting expectations in different discourse communities, from lack of control over abstractions students have played no part in generating, or from a developmental component in which moving from predefined concepts to data is more difficult than moving from concrete data to unconstrained categorisation (Ibid.).



Social science writing is likely to be conceptually driven even for social scientists of varying schools of thought because, characteristically, they bring predefined concepts to their data or raise conceptual questions before looking toward relevant data (p. 427). This is not to imply that the social sciences are either more or less subjective and/or empirical than the humanities, merely that the terminology is likely to be regularised and the starting point to be different, with a number of consequences resulting. Of particular concern is the fact that students at University are likely to register for courses in both the humanities and the social sciences and therefore to experience the disjunction between the two kinds of discourse.

MacDonald (p. 429) notes that, while both processes have their strengths and weaknesses, the uniformity of terms and the impressively high level of abstraction typical of the lexicon of conceptually driven fields often has unfortunate effects on students. They see such terms as something over which they have no power or control, something decided upon by lecturers far above them in status or wisdom. As a result, students often try rather desperately to fling the terms around without really understanding what they mean, how they were developed, or that the meanings of the terms are still negotiable within the academic community. Furthermore, since the abstractions have already been worked through by a community of academics, social science teachers usually see no point in students' repeating that work by beginning with data-driven analysis. It appears to them to be a waste of time for students to develop abstractions for themselves through data-driven work that could enrich their understanding of terms and concepts, since well-developed abstractions already exist. Without more data-driven work, however, many students are likely to produce the kind of writing that adopts their lecturers' language without having understood their concepts.

Faced with confused student writing, academics are often tempted to blame the students for their deficiencies. MacDonald notes, however, that academics need to recognise how their forms of discourse (in conjunction with social factors) have disabling effects upon students: "She [the student] had probably never heard the terms before or never heard them used in this context. She had not worked in any data-driven manner to construct these classifications for herself, so it is little wonder that she cannot use them coherently" (p. 429).

In undergraduate social science classes, very little data is presented unless there is first a concept that assigns importance to that data. Undergraduates, and particularly first-year students, are presented with a neat description of various opposing theories. From lectures and textbooks students passively receive an argument that is the end result of the scholar's arduous intellectual endeavour, but without having engaged in that endeavour the student is likely to see only a static set of oppositions, presented as if no alternative terms were possible (Ibid., p. 431). The student is locked into the given terms and deprived of the beneficial work of having to construct the abstractions from the data. Too often, the result is a garbled, pseudo-academic argument devoid of true understanding or analysis.

Both data-driven and conceptually-driven enterprises have complementary strengths and weaknesses. MacDonald therefore suggests that undergraduate writing assignments should attempt to alternate between the two kinds of thinking - and to clarify for students what such assignments demand. Perhaps Geertz's assertion (1983) that we are now seeing "blurred genres" really means that we are seeing more two-phase academic work - with both data-driven and conceptually-driven work contributing to the richness of the final product.

#### 5.2.2.2 TEACHING WRITING IN PSYCHOLOGY I

##### (a) Creating the Infrastructure

The tutorial programme is by far the best site for developing writing skills in Psychology. Ideally there should be "discussion" tutorials at least once a week. However, even as it stands, the programme could be utilised far more effectively and could incorporate a range of possible modifications:

The first step would be to modify the tutor training programme, sensitising senior students to cross-cultural differences in terms of norms of interaction, as well as cross-gender differences in the relevant cultures (Hunt, 1996). Tutors could be encouraged to regard themselves as "knowledgeable peers" rather than pseudo-teachers - and to see their task as being not to transmit knowledge but to provide a "safe" space for students to interact.

Sensitivity is required when dividing students into tutorial groups. Even if it results in a few "whites-only" groups, care should be taken not to spread out ESL students to the extent that there is only one "black" student in a tutorial group of twelve (Hunt, 1996).

Tutors should introduce the APA style manual as soon as possible, explaining its significance in the discipline. It should be made explicit to first-year students that psychology is an empirical discipline and, in terms of its writing, aligns itself with the sciences rather than the humanities. As such, the APA manual serves as a guide to the kind of writing expected by the discipline and will offer students in Arts and Social Science the opportunity to acquire another discourse. Isolating a few of the conventions, such as the referencing techniques, and explaining the rationale behind them would prevent students from perceiving the writing requirements in Psychology as obstructiveness on the part of the department.

Finally, it is essential that tutors be provided with explicit tasks and clear, attainable, objectives for each tutorial. Bruffee (1993) suggests that there are two basic types of tasks that can be used in collaborative learning. One asks a question to which there is no clear and ready answer, the other asks a question and does provide an answer to it - an answer accepted by the prevailing consensus in the disciplinary community that the teacher (or tutor) represents. The task suggested in 5.2.1.2 (above) is an example of the second type of task, the purpose of which is to generate talk about what the small group would have to do to reach the consensus reached by the larger community.

The purpose of both kinds of open-ended tasks is to help students, organised collaboratively, to work without further help from the tutor toward membership in the discourse community that the tutor represents (Bruffee, 1993). The process draws students into an untidy, conversational, constructive process in which they do not know the "old vocabularies" and must therefore create new ones adapting the languages they already know (Ibid.).

#### (b) The Writing Tasks

It would be worthwhile for the Department to reconsider the type and range of tasks and modes requested at first-year level, especially in view of the "data-driven" / "conceptually driven" continuum discussed above. There is a vast range of writing tasks other than the essay (such as summaries, reading reports, journal entries, lists, mindmaps, dialogues and so on) which students might find more accessible, more engaging and more useful in helping them come to grips with the subject matter. Van Zyl (1993) notes that such writing tasks are commonly found to be more successful in achieving student integration of the content to be mastered.

In addition to assigning a range of tasks, cognitively less demanding discourse modes could be utilised in work preparatory to the more complex modes. The ALRP found that first-year students are particularly weak at integrating different ideas into one piece of writing and structuring these ideas. This finding, as well as the ubiquitous "conversational" style, are perhaps significant indicators of students' need to work in narrative and descriptive modes before progressing to synthesis and analysis.

Neither of these suggestions is aimed at reducing expectations of students, or at lowering standards. The rationale is rather one of incremental, or scaffolded, instruction which aims at enhancing and expanding the interaction of students with their material. If the primary goal of Psychology 1 is to provide students with a broad content base, then they should be provided with as many opportunities as possible for working with this content. Furthermore, if the three years of undergraduate study are seen to build on each other then there is no need for first-years to be able to produce academic essays by the end of the first semester. Besides, involving students in producing a variety of genres and modes can only enhance their range, flexibility and fluency as scholars, thinkers and writers (Van Zyl, 1993).

### (c) Writing as Conversation

Thinking of writing as social, collaborative, and constructive implies that no university teachers (or textbook writers) can *tell* students how to write. Instead, because writing is itself

a displaced form of conversation, teachers have to find ways for students to learn to engage in constructive conversation with one another about writing (Bruffee, 1993).

A group approach to writing, or "peer writing", helps students see writing as an emergent, social practice. As Elbow (1973) puts it, "control, coherence and knowing your mind are not what you start out with but what you end up with. Think of writing then not as a way to transmit a message but as a way to grow and cook a message" (cited in Smith & MacGregor, 1992, p. 16).

The first goal of teaching writing is therefore to give students opportunities to talk with their peers about what they are writing. Bruffee (1993) notes that while conversations with teachers are of value, "talking with ... teachers is talking with members of another community" (p. 58). Peer writing involves students working in small groups at every stage of the writing process. This shared composing challenges students to think through their ideas out loud, to hear what they "sound like", so they will know "what to say" in writing (Smith & MacGregor, 1992).

One of the hardest things about doing this is keeping students from talking exclusively about the issue they are writing about and the opinions they have about it. Bruffee points out that while controversy is emotionally engaging and fun, talking about issues does not by itself make students better writers. They also need to learn to talk about how they make writing judgements and arrive at writing decisions. The long-term goal is to help students internalise conversation about writing and carry it away with them so that they continue to be good writers on their own (Ibid.).

Implicit in this approach is peer review. Getting and giving feedback helps students understand that writing is a social process and the mutual support of the group attempts to make the process of composing and drafting less alienating. This approach also gives student-writers an audience and helps them understand the idea of audience. If students are uncomfortable with this system they could leave their names off their drafts until they trust the other members enough to let them know whose work it is they are reading.

### 5.2.3 THE ROLE OF ADP AND ELAP

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a LAC approach by no means nullifies the need for courses like ELAP. Johns (1990) suggests that it is the task of EAP teachers to devote their courses to assisting students to recognise the conventions of academic disciplines and to understand the idiosyncrasies of individual faculty with whom they come into contact. One of the most effective methods for providing assistance is to train students in the principles of ethnography.

Despite a profusion of task analyses completed by researchers, students continue to be faced with obstacles in an academic culture that are often neither articulated nor predictable.

Guthrie (1985) has suggested that some principles of ethnography, especially those that require researchers to be participants and observers simultaneously, are effective in developing students' objectivity about academic reading and writing and in developing their understanding of what it means to be pragmatically competent within the academic culture (in Johns, 1990).

Furthermore, in the South African context, we must beware of reducing the Second Language factor to irrelevance in our attempts to understand the cognitive and epistemic demands of academic literacy (Bond, 1993).

With regard to the ADP, the ALRP report indicates that this agency has an essential role to play in offering support, research and a consultative service to staff. "It is not possible for individual staff to be experts on all aspects of academic development. They need to be able and encouraged to call upon such expertise which the ADP does and must continue to provide" (Fischer et al., 1995, p. 73-4).

Hofmeyer & Spence (1989) contend that ADPs are bridges to the future only if they:

- help faculties to design new curricula with aims, content, teaching/learning strategies and evaluation procedures more relevant to the non-racial South African context;

- assist departmental staff to "bridge" and "support" underprepared students into fulfilling academic experiences and careers;
- change attitudes by alerting institutions to the position of the disadvantaged student and the realities and challenges of a post-apartheid future.

### 5.3 CONCLUSION

Regular departmental course design at tertiary level is usually concerned mainly with matters of content, with the result that insufficient attention is given to the conscious application of effective teaching and learning principles and to how individual courses contribute to the desired learning outcomes of the curriculum as a whole.

By conducting research such as the ALRP, and agreeing to the analysis conducted during this study, the Psychology Department at Rhodes has cleared the way for the kind of staff development envisaged by the NCHE. By engaging in on-going evaluation, the Department has provided an example of how internal research can facilitate the process of developing programmes for staff throughout the university. It has taken the first step towards language and learning development into the broader curriculum by drafting AD principles and an "AD Curriculum". The Department therefore recognises its responsibility to teaching, is committed to the development of its staff and is calling for help in making the transition from current teaching practices to the new practice of including AD in teaching.

Developmental work at the level of specific courses is the arena in which the majority of AD staff can make their most significant contribution over the next five to ten years (Scott, 1994). This refers not only to the development of new courses but also to making existing courses more responsive to different educational and linguistic backgrounds. In other words, the task is to find ways to make the discourses of the disciplines more accessible to students from diverse backgrounds.

Russel (1987) lists three criteria for the long-term success and survival of LAC programmes:

- 1) LAC must be part of an institution-wide plan, with realistic goals and clear steps marked out toward them.
- 2) Programs require funding to purchase faculty time devoted exclusively to LAC.
- 3) Finally, these programmes require patience. Ten - or thirty - years may not be enough to change century-old university priorities and classroom practices. Programmes must have time (and therefore hard money) to bring about the gradual transformation in attitudes necessary to make LAC a tradition instead of a trend.

The South African higher education system is ripe for an innovative response to the challenges posed by the NCHE policy. An institution-wide plan has been drafted and it has been accepted that funding is essential. What is required now is patience, from both the institution and the faculty, and commitment to a degree-length educational development model. Bond (1993) concludes that the political conjuncture in which we find ourselves means that it is more essential than ever before that we retain a critical perspective on all attempts to transform education. Adopting frameworks based on acculturation, for example, is decidedly unrevolutionary and amounts to no more than a case of progressives making room for the excluded in the established culture (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). In this country, at this time, university teachers are in the position to "teach to transgress" (Hooks, 1994), that is, to give consideration to the potentially disruptive notion of excitement in higher education.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adamson, H D (1993) Academic Competence Longman, New York

Agar, M (1994) Language Shock - understanding the culture of conversation William Morrow and Co, Inc, New York

Agar D, Hofmeyer J and Moulder J (1991) Bridging Education in the 1990's: Learning From Experience Edusource, Johannesburg

ANC Education Department (1995) A Policy Framework for Education and Training Macmillan Boleswa Publishers, Swaziland

Angelil-Carter, S and Paxton, M (1993) Overview of a Developing Theoretical Framework for Language Work in Academic Development at the University of Capetown in Angelil-Carter, S (Ed) *Language in Academic Development at UCT*, UCT

Apple, M W (1982) Education and Power Ark Paperbacks, Boston

Apple, M W (1993) Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age Routledge, New York

Aronowitz, S and Giroux, A (1991) Postmodern Education University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota

Barkhuizen, G P (1993) Introducing Language Across the Curriculum into the English Multilingual Setting in *Journal for Language Teaching*, Vol 27 No 4

Bartholomae, D (1985) Inventing the University in Rose, M (Ed) *When a Writer Can't Write: Studies in Writer's Block and Other Composing Process Problems* Guilford, New York

Bartholomae, D (1988) Inventing the University in Rose M, Kroll, B M and Kintgen, E R (Eds) *Perspectives on Literacy* South Illinois University Press, Carbondale

Baynham, M (1995) Literacy Practices - Investigating Literacy in Social Contexts Longman, London

Bazerman, C (1992) The Interpretation of Disciplinary Writing in Brown, R H (Ed) *Writing the Social Text* de Gruyter, Amsterdam

Becher, T (1989) Academic Tribes and Territories: intellectual enquiry and the cultures of disciplines The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, Buckingham

Benesch, S (1988) (Ed) Ending Remediation: Linking ESL and Content in Higher Education *TESOL Quarterly*, Washington

Benesch, S (1992) Sharing Responsibilities: An Alternative to the Adjunct Model in *College ESL*, Vol.2 No. 1 May 1992:1-12

Benson, M J (1994) Lecture Listening in an Ethnographic Perspective in Flowerdew, J. (Ed) *Academic Listening - research perspectives* CUP, Cambridge

Berkenkotter, C and Huckin, T N (1995) Genre Knowledge in Disciplinary Communication: Cognition/Culture/Power Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc, New Jersey

Berthoff, A E (1981) The Making of Meaning Boynton/Cook, Upper Montclair, NJ

Bhatia, V K (1993) Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings Longman Group UK Ltd, London

Bizzell, P (1978) The Ethos of Academic Discourse in *College Composition and Communication* 29:351-355

Bizzell, P (1982) College Composition: Initiation in to Academic Discourse Community in *Curriculum Inquiry*, 12(2):191-207

Bizzell, P (1992) Academic Discourse and Critical Consciousness University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh

Bond, D (1993) "Literacy By Degrees": Exploring the Links between Language and Learning in the Tertiary context in *SAALA 1993 Conference Proceedings*, 28-30 June:19-32

Bond, D and Gamble, J (1993) AIM: Towards an integrated curriculum in Angelil-Carter, S (Ed) *Language in academic development at UCT*, UCT

Boughey, C (1994) New Meanings for Old Words: Defining and Developing Academic Literacy at South African Universities in *Challenging Educational Policies and Practices* SAAD 1994 Conference Proceedings Vol II

Bourdieu, P, Passeron, J and de Saint Martin, M (1994) Academic Discourse: Linguistic Misunderstanding and Professional Power Polity Press, Cambridge

Brinton, D M, Snow, M A and Wesche, M B (1989) Content Based Second Language Instruction Newbury House, New York

Bruffee, K A (1986) Social Construction, Language and the Authority of Knowledge: A Bibliographical Essay in *College English*, 48(4):773-790

Bruffee, K A (1992) Collaborative Learning and the "Conversation of Mankind" in Goodsell, A, Maher, M and Tinto, V (Eds) *Collaborative Learning: A Sourcebook for Higher Education* National Centre on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Pennsylvania

Bruffee, K A (1993) Collaborative Learning: Higher Education, Interdependence, and the Authority of Knowledge The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore

Christie, F (No Date) Genres as Choice in Reid, I (Ed) *The Place of Genre in Learning: Current Debates* Centre for Studies in Literary Education, Deakin University, Australia

Christison, M A and Krahne K J, (1986) Student Perceptions of Academic Language Study in *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol 20, No 1, March 1986:61-81

Clarence, J (1992) Language, Power and Voices of a University: The Role of Critical Linguistics in Curriculum Development in *Journal of Literary Studies* 8:3/4

Clark, R (1992) Principles and Practice of CLA in the Classroom in Fairclough, N (Ed) *Critical Language Awareness* Longmans, London

Coe, M (1994) Teaching Genres as Process in Freedman, A and Medway, P (Eds) *Learning and Teaching Genre* Boynton/Cook Publishers, Portsmouth

Collins A (1994) Disturbing the Neighbours: An Investigation into the Relationships between Psychopathology and Social Formations Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University

Cope, B and Kalantzis, M (1990) Literacy in the Social Sciences in Christie, F (Ed) *Literacy for a Changing World* The Australian Council for Educational research ltd, Victoria

Corson, D (1993) Language, Minority Education and Gender: Linking Social Justice and Power Multilingual Matters Ltd, Clevedon

Cummins, J and Swain, M (1986) Bilingualism in Education Longman, London

Currie, P (1994) What Counts as Good Writing? Enculturation and Writing Assessment in Freedman, A and Medway, P (Eds) *Learning and Teaching Genre* Boynton/Cook Publishers, Portsmouth

D'Angelo, F J (1981) The Search for Intelligible Structure in the Teaching of Composition in Tate, G and Corbett, E P J (Eds) *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook* OUP, New York

Darder, A (1991) Culture and Power in the Classroom: A Critical Foundation for Bicultural Education OISE Press, Ontario

De Klerk, V (1996) Use of and Attitudes to English in a Multilingual University in *English World-Wide* 17:1 111-127, John Benjamins B.V., Amsterdam

Dias, P (1994) Initiating Students into the Genres of Discipline-Based Reading and Writing in Freedman, A and Medway, P (Eds) *Learning and Teaching Genre* Boynton/Cook Publishers, Portsmouth

Dison, I (1994) Creating an Environment to facilitate students' development of academic literacy: Beyond English for Academic Purposes Unpublished report presented to the English for Academic Purposes Committee, Rhodes University 7 November 1994

Drewett, M D (1993) The Integration of Academic Skills/Support Programmes into University Department Structures: A Case Study in the Sociology of Education Unpublished MA Dissertation, Sociology Department, Rhodes University, Grahamstown

Dixon, J (No Date) The Question of Genres in Reid, I (Ed) *The Place of Genre in Learning: Current Debates* Centre for Studies in Literary Education, Deakin University, Australia

Dunkel, P (1988) The Content of L1 and L2 Students' Lecture Notes and Its Relation to Test Performance in *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol.22, No.2, June 1988:259-281

Elbow, P (1991) Reflections on Academic Discourse: How it relates to Freshmen and Colleagues in *College English*, Vol 53, No 2 February 1991:135-155

Ellis, R (1986) Understanding Second Language Acquisition OUP, Oxford

Evans, C (1995) (Ed) Developing University English Teaching: an Interdisciplinary Approach to Humanities Teaching at University Level The Edwin Mellen Press, Ontario

Fairclough, N (1989) Language and Power Longman, New York

Fairclough, N (1992) Discourse and Social Change Polity Press, Cambridge.

Fairclough, N (1993) Critical Discourse Analysis and the Marketization of Public Discourse: The Universities *Discourse & Society*, Sage, London, vol, 4 (2):133-168

Fairclough, N (1996) Technologisation of Discourse in Caldas-Coulthard, C R and Coulthard, M (Eds) *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis* Routledge, London

Farris, C (1993) Disciplining the Disciplines: The Paradox of Writing across the Curriculum Claims Paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the Conference in College Composition and Communication* (44th, San Diego, CA, March 31-April 3, 1993) *Eric Document* 358 468

Fiechtner, S B and Davis, E A (1992) Why Some Groups Fail: A Survey of Students' Experiences with Learning Groups in Goodsell, A, Maher, M and Tinto, V (Eds) *Collaborative Learning: A Sourcebook for Higher Education* National Centre on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Pennsylvania

Finkel, D L and Monk, G S (1992) Teachers and Learning Groups: Dissolution of the Atlas Complex in Goodsell, A, Maher, M and Tinto, V (Eds) *Collaborative Learning: A Sourcebook for Higher Education* National Centre on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Pennsylvania

Fiore, K and Elsasser, N (1988) "Strangers no more" A Liberatory Literacy Curriculum in Rose, M, Kroll, B M and Kintgen, E R (Eds) *Perspectives on Literacy* Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale

Fischer, S, Gilbert, A, Kelly, K and Van Der Riet, M (1995) Academic Development: In Pursuit of Academic, Vocational and Professional Literacy A Report to the Academic Development Programme, Rhodes University

Flower, L S (1990) Negotiating Academic Discourse in Flower L S, Stein V, Ackerman J, Kantz, M J, McCormick K and Peck, W, *Reading-To-Write: Exploring a Cognitive and Social Process* OUP, New York

Flowerdew, J. (1994) (Ed) Research of relevance to second language lecture comprehension - an overview in *Academic Listening - research perspectives* CUP, Cambridge

Foley, J (1991) Vygotsky, Bernstein and Halliday: Towards a Unified Theory of L1 and L2 Learning in *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 4(1) 1991:17-42

Fowler, R, Hodge, B, Kress, G, and Trew, T (1979) Language and Control Routledge and Kegan Paul, London

Fowler, R (1996) On Critical Linguistics in Caldas-Coulthard, C R and Coulthard, M (Eds) *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis* Routledge, London

Freed, R C and Broadhead, G J (1987) Discourse Communities, Sacred Texts and Institutional Norms in *College Composition and Communication*, Vol.38, No 2, May 1987:154-165

Freedman, A (1993) Show and Tell? The Role of Explicit Teaching in the Learning of New Genres in *Research in the Teaching of English*, Vol.27 No.3 October 1993:222-251

Freedman, A (1995) Triangulations: Converging insights from studies of "genre", "situated learning", and second-language acquisition in James, E A et al. (Eds) *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics*, 1995, Georgetown University Press

Freedman, A and Medway, P (1994) Learning and Teaching Genre Boynton/Cook Publishers, Portsmouth

Frow, J (1989) Discourse and Power in Gane, M (Ed) *Ideological Representation and Power in Social Relations* Routledge, London

Fulwiler, T and Young, A (Eds) (1990) Programs That Work: Models and Methods for Writing Across the Curriculum Boynton/Cook, Portsmouth NH

Gane, M (Ed) (1989) Ideological Representation and Power in Social Relations Routledge, London

Gee, J (1990) Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses The Falmer Press, Bristol

Geertz, C (1983) Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology Basic Books, New York

Giddens, A (1984) The Consitution of Society Polity Press, Cambridge.

Gilbert, A and van der Riet, M (1995) A Proposal to the Academic Development Programme to Assess and Improve Academic Development in the Psychology Department Unpublished proposal presented to the Academic Development Programme, Rhodes University 6 March 1995



Giltrow, J and Valiquette M, (1994) Genres and Knowledge: Students writing in the Disciplines in Freedman, A and Medway, P (Eds) *Learning and Teaching Genre* Boynton/Cook Publishers, Portsmouth

Goetz, J P and LeCompte, M D (1984) Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research Academic Press, Orlando Florida

Graff, G (1994) Kept in the Dark in the *Times Literary Supplement*, July 15 1994:9

Grayson, D (1995) A Holistic Approach to Preparing Disadvantaged Students to succeed in Tertiary Science Studies in *International Journal of Science Education*, Jan 1995

Gregory, M and Carroll, S (1978) Language and Situation: Language Varieties and their Social Contexts Routledge and Kegan Paul, London

Gutierrez, K D (1995) Unpackaging Academic Discourse in *Discourse Processes* 19:21-37

Hamilton, D (1976) Curriculum Evaluation Open Books, London

Hansen, C and Jensen, C (1994) Evaluating Lecture Comprehension in Flowerdew, J. (Ed) *Academic Listening - research perspectives* CUP, Cambridge

Hashemi, M R (1992) Analysis of Academic Discourse: Insights for Teaching Grammar Paper presented at the Conference on FLTI (1st, Tabriz-Baku, Iran 1992) *Eric Document* 354 782

Heath, S B (1982) Ethnography in Education: Defining the Essentials in Gilmore, P and Glatthorn, A A (Eds) *Children In and Out of School* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc and the Centre for Applied Linguistics, Pennsylvania

Hofmeyer J and Spence, R (1989) Bridges to the Future in *Optima* 37:1 March 37-48

Hooks, B (1994) Teaching to Transgress Routledge, New York

Horowitz, D M (1986) What Professors Actually Require: Academic Tasks for the ESL Classroom in *TESOL Quarterly*, 20(3):445-462

Hunt, S (1996) An Investigation into Patterns of Interaction in Small Teaching Groups at Rhodes University, with Particular Emphasis on the Effect of Gender, Mother-Tongue and Educational Background Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown

Hyland, K (1992) Genre Analysis: Just Another Fad? in *English Teaching Forum*, 30 (2): 14-17

Isaac, S and Michael, W B (1982) Handbook in Research and Evaluation (2nd edition) EDITS, San Diego, California

Jamieson, M and Pocklington, K (1977) Concentrating on the Audience in Parlett, M and Dearden, G (Eds) *Introduction to Illuminative Evaluation: Studies in Higher Education* Pacific Soundings Press, California

Johns, A M (1990) Coherence as a Cultural Phenomenon: Employing Ethnographic Principles in the Academic Milieu in Connor, U and Johns A M (Eds) *Coherence in Writing: Research and Pedagogical Perspectives* TESOL Inc, Virginia

Johnson, D M (1992) Approaches to Research in Second Language Learning Longman, New York

Kress, G (1985) Linguistic Processes in Sociocultural Practice Deakin University Press, Victoria

Kress, G (No Date) Genre in a Social Theory of Language: A Reply to John Dixon in Reid, I (Ed) *The Place of Genre in Learning: Current Debates* Centre for Studies in Literary Education, Deakin University, Victoria

Kutz, E (1986) Between Students' Language and Academic Discourse: Interlanguage as Middle Ground in *College English*, Vol 48 No. 4 April 1986:385-396

Laufer, B (1992) How Much Lexis is Necessary for Reading Comprehension? in Arnaud, P J L and Bejoint, H (Eds) *Vocabulary and Applied Linguistics*, Macmillan, London

Levinson, S C (1983) Pragmatics CUP, Cambridge

Louw, D A and Edwards, D J A (1993) Psychology: An Introduction for students in southern Africa Lexicon Publishers, Johannesburg

Lynch, T (1994) Training Lecturers for International Audiences in Flowerdew, J (Ed) *Academic Listening - research perspectives* CUP, Cambridge

Macdonald, C (1990) English Language Evaluation Skills - A final report of the Threshold Project HSRC, Pretoria

MacDonald, S P (1989) Data-Driven and Conceptually Driven Academic Discourse in *Written Communication*, Vol. 6 No. 4 October 1989:411-435

MacGregor, J T (1992) Collaborative Learning: Reframing the Classroom in Goodsell, A, Maher, M and Tinto, V (Eds) *Collaborative Learning: A Sourcebook for Higher Education* National Centre on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Pennsylvania

Madigan, R, Johnson S and Linton P (1995) The Language of Psychology in *American Psychologist*, June 1995:428-436

Miller, C R (1984) Genre as Social Action in *Quarterly Journal Of Speech*, 70:151-67

Moed M (1995) Discipline-Specific Skills: A Suggested Approach to Instruction in *Discourse* 6,3 October 1995:11-19

Moll, I and Slonimsky, L (1989) Towards an Understanding of Cognition and Learning in the Academic Support Context in *South African Journal of Higher Education*, vol 3(1) 1989:160-166

Moore, R (1993) New rules for new roles: the challenge of change in Academic Development work in Angelil-Carter, S (Ed) *Language in academic development at UCT*, UCT.

Nelson, R (1994) The Challenge for ADP of meaningful course and lecture evaluation at Rhodes in *Challenging Educational Policies and Practice* SAAD 1994 Conference Proceedings Vol II

Olivier-Shaw, A E (1996) Lecturer and Student Perceptions of an Academic Writing Task Unpublished MEd thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown

Orr, M (1996) 'It's a dirty job but someone's got to do it' - Skills Teaching in Departments of English in *Scrutiny 2 - Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa* Vol 1 no 1/2

Ortuno, M M (1991) Cross-Cultural Awareness in the Foreign Language class: The Kluckhohn Model in *The Modern Language Journal*, 75, iv (1991):449-457

Parlett, M and Hamilton, D (1977) Evaluation as Illumination in Parlett, M. and Dearden, G. (Eds) *Introduction to Illuminative Evaluation: Studies in Higher Education*, Pacific Soundings Press, California

Peim, N (1993) Critical Theory and the English Teacher: Transforming the subject Routledge, London

Peirce, B N (1989) Towards a Pedagogy of Possibility in the Teaching of English Internationally in *TESOL Quarterly* 23:401-420

Philips, S U (1982) The Language Socialisation of Lawyers: Acquiring the "Cant" in Spindler, G (Ed) *Doing the Ethnography of Schooling: Educational Anthropology in Action* Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York

Prinsloo, M, Millar, C and Morphet, T (1993) Reading the world of reading and writing: University-based literacy theory and practice in South Africa Paper presented at *SAALA 12th Annual Conference*, 28-30 June 1993, University of Port Elizabeth

Reddy, J (1996) One System Needed to Embrace all Institutions in *The Sunday Independent Higher Education Review* April 28 1996:8-9

Roderick, R (1986) Habermas and the Foundations of Critical Theory Macmillan, London

Rose, M (1979) When Faculty Talk About Writing in *College English*, 41(3):272-279

Rose, M (1985) The Language of Exclusion: Writing Instruction at the University in *College English* 47(4):341-359

Rose, M (1988) Narrowing the Mind and Page: Remedial Writers and Cognitive Reductionism in *College Composition and Communication*, 39(3):267-302

Rosenburg, S (1994) Where does EAP stand? : Relationships and EAP report presented to English for Academic Purposes Committee, Rhodes University 7 November 1994

Rosenberg, S (1995) PERSCOM unpublished working paper

Rosenburg, S and Dison, A (1995) Creating an Environment to Facilitate Students' Development of Academic Literacy: Reflections on language and student learning at Rhodes in *Discourse* 6,3 October 1995

Rost, M (1994) On-line summaries as representations of lecture understanding in Flowerdew, J. (Ed) *Academic Listening - research perspectives* CUP, Cambridge

Rudolph, D E (1994) Constructing an apprenticeship with discourse strategies: Professor - graduate student interactions in *Language in Society* 23 (2):199-230

Russel, D R (1987) Writing Across the Curriculum and the Communications Movement: Some Lessons from the Past in *College Composition and Communication* 38(2):184-194

Santos, T (1988) Professors' Reactions to the Academic Writing of Nonnative-Speaking Students in *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 1, March 1988:69-87

Saville-Troike, M (1982) The Ethnography of Communication - An Introduction Basil Blackwell, Oxford

Scollon, R and Scollon, S W (1995) Intercultural Communication Blackwell, Cambridge

Scott I (1994) The Role of Academic Development Programmes in the Reconstruction and Development of Higher Education A draft position paper produced for the IDT-sponsored investigation into future funding mechanisms for Academic Development programmes. For discussion at the SAAAD Regional Policy Forums.

Simons, J (1995) Foucault and the political Routledge, London

Slevin, J, Fort, K and O'Connor, P E (1990) Georgetown University in Fulwiler, T and Young A (Eds) *Programs That Work: Models and Methods for Writing Across the Curriculum* Boynton/Cook, Portsmouth NH

Smith, C (1996) Ethnographic Research Unpublished notes produced for Master of Education course (March 1996), Rhodes University Education Department

Smith, B L and MacGregor, J T (1992) What is Collaborative Learning? in Goodsell, A, Maher, M and Tinto, V (Eds) *Collaborative Learning: A Sourcebook for Higher Education* National Centre on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Pennsylvania

Spack, R (1988) Initiating ESL students into the Academic Discourse Community: How far should we go? in *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol 22 No1 March 1988

Spindler, G (Ed) (1987) Education and Cultural Process: Anthropological Approaches (2nd edition) Waveland Press, Illinois

Spivey, N N, Mathison, M A, Goggin, M D and Greene, S (1992) Writing from Academic Sources. Study 1: Acquiring Discourse Knowledge for Writing and Learning Final report, Carnegie Mellon University *Eric Document* 366 971

Starfield, S (1992) Language and Academic Achievement: Academic Support at the University of the Witwatersrand in *SAVTO* 26:1 April:1-6

Starfield, S (1994) Cummins, EAP and Academic Literacy in *TESOL Quarterly*, vol 28(1) 1994:177-179

Starfield, S (1994) Multicultural classrooms in Higher Education in *English Quarterly*, vol 26, no 3 Spring 1994

Strauss, A L and Corbin, J (1990) Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques California Sage Productions, Newbury Park

Swales, J (1990) Genre Analysis CUP, Cambridge

Swanson-Owens, D (1986) Identifying Natural Sources of Resistance: A Case Study of Implementing Writing Across the Curriculum in *Research in the Teaching of English*, 20(1):69-97

Tannen, D (1982) (Ed) The Oral Literate Continuum in Discourse in *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy* Ablex, Norwood, N.J.

Taylor, G, Ballard B, Beasley V, Bock H K, Clanchy J and Nightingale P (1988) Literacy by Degrees Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, Milton Keynes, Philadelphia

Tollefson, J W (Ed) (1995) Power and Inequality in Language Education CUP, Cambridge

Van Dijk, T A (1996) Discourse, Power and Access, in Caldas-Coulthard, C R and Coulthard, M (Eds) *Texts and Practices: Readings in Critical Discourse Analysis* Routledge, London

Van Zyl, M (1993) Writing Across the Curriculum: An Integrated Approach Unpublished Phd Thesis, English Department, University of South Africa

Vincent, G (1994) University Students and their Attitudes to Academic Staff and Teaching Practice in Bourdieu P, Passeron, J and de Saint Martin (Eds) *Academic Discourse - Linguistic Misunderstanding and Professorial Power* Polity Press, Cambridge

Volbrecht T (1994) Talking about a Revolution: Language and Academic Development in South African Higher Education in *AD Issues* July Vol 2 no 1 ADC UWC July 1994:3-9

Vygotsky, L (1986) Thought and Language The MIT Press, Cambridge

Weissberg, R C (1984) Given and New: Paragraph Development Models from Scientific English in *TESOL Quarterly* Vol 18 No 3 Sept 1984

Welsch, K A (1992) Interrogating the Value of Student Voices Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (Cincinnati, March 1992) *Eric Document* 343 157

Wilcox, K (1982) Ethnography as a Methodology and Its Application to the Study of Schooling: A Review in Spindler, G (Ed) *Doing the Ethnography of Schooling: Educational Anthropology in Action* Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York

Williams, J D and Capizzi Snipper, G (1990) Literacy and Bilingualism Longman, New York



Wodak, R (1989) Language, Power and Ideology: Studies in Political Discourse John Benjamin, Amsterdam

Wrong, D (1979) Power: It's Forms, Bases and Uses Blackwell, Oxford

Young, L (1994) University lectures - macro-structure and micro-features in Flowerdew, J (Ed) *Academic Listening - research perspectives* CUP, Cambridge

Young, R (1992) Critical Theory and Classroom Talk Multilingual Matters, Clevedon

## **Appendix 1 - Staff Questionnaire**

COMPETENCY	YEAR: PSYCHOLOGY ...	YEAR: PSYCHOLOGY ...
	COURSE: .....	COURSE: .....
<b>READING</b> What types of reading material do you set (eg books, reports, articles), is it voluntary or prescribed?  Why did you choose these materials?  What tasks do you set in relation to the reading material?  Do you evaluate the reading tasks or the student's reading skills? If so how?		
<b>WRITING</b> What writing tasks do you set (excluding June and November examinations)?  Why do you set these particular tasks?  How do you prepare students for the demands of the task?  What feedback do you give and how?		

COMPETENCY	YEAR: PSYCHOLOGY ...	YEAR: PSYCHOLOGY ...
	COURSE: .....	COURSE: .....
<b>ATTENDING/PARTICIPATING IN LECTURES/TUTS/PRACS</b> What learning objectives do you aim to achieve in lectures/tuts/pracs?		
Do you achieve these? How do you know whether or not you do?		
Do you make the structure of individual lectures/practicals and the course as a whole explicit to students?		
Do you think student participation in lectures is necessary?		
How do you develop and encourage participation in lectures/tuts/pracs?		
How do you evaluate students performance in practicals (the form of the evaluation and the criteria for assessment)?		
Do your tutorials and practicals link to each other and to the course lectures?		

COMPETENCY	YEAR: PSYCHOLOGY ...	YEAR: PSYCHOLOGY ...
	COURSE: .....	COURSE: .....
<b>WRITING EXAMS</b> What format do you use for exams? eg essay, multiple choice, case-studies, short questions   Do you prepare or train students to deal with the format and type of question?   What criteria do you use in marking?		
<b>ACCESSING RESOURCES (LIBRARY, COMPUTERS &amp; EXPERTS/PEERS)</b> What do you do to promote the use of the library?   Do you assess the student's ability to access and use various texts?(eg journals, books) How do you do this?   Do you promote the use of computer resources? If yes, how? If no, why not?   Do you encourage students to interact with you and other staff outside lectures? How?   Do you encourage students to view their peers as a learning resource? If so, how?		

COMPETENCY	YEAR: PSYCHOLOGY ...	YEAR: PSYCHOLOGY ...
	COURSE: .....	COURSE: .....
<b>PROFESSIONAL LITERACY</b> In your contact with students, what do you do to provide them with information on professional issues?  What do you do to promote an understanding of ethics?  Under each year and course, list those professional issues which you think are necessary to teach at that specific level		
<b>VOCATIONAL LITERACY</b> What do you do with students to foster vocational skills? Please relate this to the relevant year.  What vocational contexts do you inform your students about and how do you do this?		

**RESEARCH:** Research methodology is taught in particular courses. But it is a skill that could be part of any course. In the courses you teach (besides specific courses on research methodology) do you do anything to foster research skills?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Appendix 2 - Exemplifying Quotes from Interviews

#1 - St11: I don't think it's my responsibility to go after people and check up on them. What is the point then of a tertiary educational institute? You're not here to run after every student and make sure they pass or that they're coping. It's the responsibility of the student to do that...otherwise it's almost turning university into a school again.

#2 - F18L2N: Definitely Human Movement Studies, I think I can say I definitely belong to HMS because there's a lot of socialisation that goes on there...and you get to know the people in the department. I don't know anyone in the psych department. Maybe if there were more **tuts**....

#3 - F18L2: I feel like an outsider in psych...I don't know why.

#4 - M18L1: The philosophy department, it's very one-on-one and I've got to know a couple of the lecturers. With psych, not really...I like my **tutor** and I know one of the third years doing SI...but apart from that I don't know anyone...it's probably because of the size of the class.

#5 - St4: I think in order to be a good lecturer you need to maintain a certain degree of professional distance, or people won't believe what you're saying.

#6 - St5: It's partly artificial, this student/staff distance thing. It's just setting up a guild boundary...and that is the fact of the matter but why have that attitude when the lecturer should be a student as well. It's a broader issue than just having an open door policy.

#7 - F20L1: I saw a psychologist for a while which was a complete nightmare, so I knew about the whole counselling side of things. But I guess I was expecting a bit more stimulation, I wanted to get into somebody else's mind...get in there and tackle the hard stuff, not learn about what Aristotle said and theories about split brain...But I suppose at first year level that's how it goes...

#8 - M19L1: My sister did Psychology and I knew first year would be disjointed...people expect first year to be what second year is, from what I hear from friends doing it. You expect Psych to

be studying people in this situation and that situation, which you don't do in first year. First year is just cramming this huge textbook into your head.

#9 - F18L2N: Not a lot but I had an idea of the basics because my mom was doing a psych course and I used to look through her books, like if I had a problem or something. Before I came to varsity I had the idea that psychology would involve learning about people and stuff so when we started with history and then physiology and stuff it was really disappointing but I guess you have to start somewhere.

#10 - F18L2: From my school teacher - he studied Psychology and he knew...he was always telling us that he knows a child because he studied Psychology and then he knew the answers before you tell him. So I was interested - how did he do that? So I decided to take Psychology as one of my courses. I thought I would be expected to read about how people behave..not biology and physiology...

#11 - St12: I don't know whether many staff take first year seriously...it's regarded as a kind of rite of passage and if they can get through first year then they deserve a place in second and third year.

#12 - St5: The thinking is that you can't expect too much from first years given the range of people that arrive...

#13 - St13: First year is just something that gets churned out and you start doing Psychology in second year. The first year text book we use forces us to teach a boring, dry, uninteresting, unexciting first year course.

#14 - F18L2N: I'm just taking in stuff, absorbing and absorbing and not really doing anything with it. I'm just doing it because it's there, not because it's interesting or anything like I thought it would be....

#15 - M19L1: I would have expected varsity to require a lot more thinking. But I guess it also has to do with the politics of our country. Because of inequalities, if we're ever going to bridge the gaps we have to adopt a spoonfeeding education system. I'm not sure how it works



overseas...maybe there you are left to your own devices, but here everything is given to you on a plate.

#16 - M18L1: I think this is teaching us, more than anything, how to write an essay for an exam, or how to look up information, find things...and be able to put it back down in your own words.

#17 - M19L1: They just want references from books, they just want an essay strung together from a whole lot of different opinions from different books ...I think they might have given a clearer instruction in the beginning as to what they really expect.

#18 - F20L1: They should be to get first-years into the mode of psychological thinking...but generally we do nothing in tuts. People don't have opinions..they're junk.

#19 - M19L1: The tutorial system is a waste of time. The record session with our tutor is about twenty minutes.

#20 - F18L2: I made so many mistakes ... first of all I didn't know how to make notes while I was reading and then I didn't know to combine them and make, like, one statement. And then, like, I think my English was very poor. Also, I understood the topic when they gave it to us ... but when I got my essay back I see that I didn't answer the question but I thought I knew what they wanted ... also, I didn't know how to reference but I know now.

#21 - M18L1: I read up on it, but I didn't go off and try to find as much information as possible. Then I sat down with it, I had a basic idea of what I wanted to do with the essay, a basic structure ... I didn't do a rough draft, I guess I'm lazy ... I paraphrased ... I failed 'cos of my referencing but I probably messed up the essay anyway, I wasn't in the mood to write it so I just bolted through.

#22 - F20L1: I know it's sneaky but I took three other peoples' essays from last year and I just sucked up the good information from them, and then I laid them down, which is probably why I was criticised for being unstructured but I had good points and I referenced really well. But as a first essay, to be honest, I made no effort whatsoever...

#23 - F1812N: I made notes from some of the books on short loan, took them down word for word and then changed it a bit as I wrote and put in my own opinions.

### **Appendix 3 - Psychology Department Academic Development Policy**

**RHODES UNIVERSITY  
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT  
ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

**PREAMBLE**

*Academic Development (AD) is broadly defined as a concern with the development of academic literacy, professional literacy and vocational literacy.*

Academic literacy is the set of competencies required to think critically, ask questions, communicate and access relevant resources within the discipline of psychology at the tertiary education level. Among these competencies are : the abilities to read complex texts, to communicate through writing; to attend and participate in lectures; to access and use resources including the library, computers and staff and peers; and write examinations.

Professional literacy is the set of competencies required for professional practice. These include: having a knowledge of professional ethics, structures and networks and the legal and professional requirements to practise as a psychologist; possessing the competency to reflect on the role and function of psychology in society; and being able to behave ethically and pursue continuing education.

Vocational literacy is the set of competencies required for the application of psychology in a variety of contexts. These include: being aware of different vocational contexts and their demands and being able to match one's skills to them; and being able to apply psychological knowledge and skills in these different vocational settings.

**Appendix 4 - Psychology Department Academic Development Curriculum for First  
Year**

## ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM

### FIRST YEAR :

#### Academic Literacy ---->

##### Reading :

- to become familiar with accessing information in the library
- be able to read and interpret basic texts

##### Writing :

- be able to understand the tasks inherent in assignment and test question (relevance of information, understand directive of question (discuss, outline, contrast)
- be able to structure an essay (intro, body, conclusion)
- be able to offer a logical argument (sequence of thoughts in body of essay, differentiate different voices in text (that there are differing opinions, that own voice is different), coherence of argument)
- be familiar with APA requirements

##### General :

- being aware of how psychology is different from other subjects
- being aware of the resources within department (lecturers, tutors, peers, SI, video library) and building confidence in using them
- realising the importance of being interactive/ participative in a variety of settings (lectures, tutorials, informal interactions) and taking responsibility for being active
- being able to manage being evaluated under examination conditions (studying for exams/test as well as writing under these conditions)
- being able to respond effectively to feedback in its various forms (lecturers, tutors, peers, SI)

#### Vocational Literacy --->

- being aware of different professional career pathways in psychology

#### Professional Literacy ---->

- having a basic knowledge of ethics in psychology (knowing that there is a code and its importance)
- having a basic knowledge of professional structures, networks
- developing an awareness of psychology as a dynamic discipline with the need to reflect on its role in society

**Appendix 5 - Psychology Department First-Year Assignment Assessment and Feedback  
Form**

**RHODES UNIVERSITY - PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

**FIRST YEAR ASSIGNMENT ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK FORM**

<b>NAME :</b>	
<b>COURSE/TUTORIAL :</b>	
<b>MARK :</b>	
<b>FINAL ADJUSTED MARK <sup>1</sup> :</b>	
<b>ASSESSOR :</b>	<b>DATE OF ASSESSMENT :</b>

**RATING SCALE**

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Needs some more work	Needs much more work

CRITERIA	5	4	3	2	1
Relevance					
Sufficient coverage of main issues					
Appropriate introduction					
Logical argument					
Appropriate conclusion					
Acknowledgement of sources					
Number and variety of sources used					
Adherence to APA style of referencing					
Legibility					
Spelling					
Grammar and Syntax					
Length					

Key :

This adjusted mark will be different from the mark given for the essay/practical report, if the student has missed a practical or tutorial without an accepted leave of absence.



# GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE ASSESSMENT FORM

Criteria	Excellent/Very Good	Satisfactory	Needs more/much more work
Relevance	Essay thoroughly answers question.	Essay answers question in a general way.	Essay is vague or unrelated to question.
Sufficient coverage of main issues	Main issues explored in great detail.	Main issues covered but lacking some depth.	Not all issue covered or issues covered far too superficially.
Appropriate introduction	Introduction shows sound grasp of question, provides clear outline of scope of essay.	Introduction tends to ramble and scope of essay is not defined.	No introduction or introduction that has no relevance to ensuing argument.
Logical argument	Develops a coherent argument, supported by evidence where ensuing concepts build on previous concepts.	Could be improved by sequencing some of the material better and/or using evidence to support your argument.	Fails to develop a clear theme or line of argument, and/or argument is not substantiated at all.
Appropriate conclusion	Good conclusion with draws together the various important points.	Conclusion is too brief and tends to be incidental.	No conclusion and/or conclusion merely rephrases the introduction.
Sources and referencing	Wide variety of sources used, that are accurately referenced and used for a further understanding of topic/field/theory.	Key sources accessed but with no additional reference material and/or referencing is not entirely accurate.	Little evidence of supportive reading with inadequate preparation and/or complete or almost complete lack of referencing. Plagiarism.
Legibility, spelling, grammar & syntax and length	No or very minor errors associated with these issues.	Sufficient spelling and/or grammar errors and problems with legibility such that it threatens to undermine the quality of the work.	Significant number of spelling and/or grammatical errors indicating inadequate reviewing of document or a serious problem with spelling and/or grammar.
<b>OTHER CRITERIA REWARDED'</b>			
Critical Insight	Theories/concepts given appropriate consideration, questioned & analysed.	Theories/concepts presented but not thoroughly argued or questioned.	Treatment of theories is descriptive rather than analytical.
Integration of concepts	Significant number of concepts discussed with sound understanding of relationship between them.	Fair understanding of relationship between concepts.	Shows little understanding of relationship between concepts.
Appropriate application of knowledge	Wide variety of original examples used to support argument and/or critical discussion of theory/issues within different contexts.	Satisfactory use of original examples to support argument and/or discussion of theory/issues in a different context but lacking in critical insight or own thought.	Inappropriate use of examples or lack of examples to support argument and/or failure to discuss theory/issues in different context/s.
Consideration of theory in broader theoretical context	Excellent understanding and argument of theory within a broader theoretical context.	Cursory comment on theory in a broader theoretical context.	Lack of evidence of understanding of theory in broader theoretical context.

## KEY :

Please note that evidence of these criteria is not expected of a first year student but should the student show critical insight, integration and appropriate application of concepts and theory in their essay, they will be rewarded for doing so.

## COMMENTS :