

**Developing a workbook for a cooperative learning project: A
critical exploration of the extent to which an English I
cooperative learning project based on communicative language
teaching principles is compatible with the pedagogy of access
proposed by the Multiliteracies Project**

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES,
FACULTY OF HUMAN SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

PIETERMARITZBURG, DECEMBER 2000

SUPERVISOR: R Wildsmith-Cromarty

ABSTRACT

This research report encompasses the development and implementation of a cooperative learning project over four cycles of action research. The context for this research is eleven business communication classes, primarily comprised of Black South African adult learners using English as an additional language. The project was developed in response to national re-curriculation for Outcomes Based Education and Curriculum 2005, integrating aspects of the old English syllabus in a meaningful series of business communication activities that gave learners opportunities to interact with and visit local companies. Learners engaged in the project in groups and compiled various written responses, correspondence and reports in group portfolios. The project culminated in a group business presentation where the whole class learned about the company visited and peer groups joined the lecturer in the summative assessment process. The project aimed to empower students in a number of ways, using techniques such as peer-mediation, code-switching, genre-teaching and textual scaffolding. A study guide was produced in the second cycle of action research. The study guide was revised for the third and fourth cycles in response to reflections on student feedback and using Technikon Natal and the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) criteria. Data was collected using student reports and assignments, questionnaires and journals. Analysis of the data and the study guides was reflexive and guided further implementations. A fifth cycle is anticipated where the multiliteracies pedagogy will be applied to the activities of the project and the study guide will be transformed into an interactive learner workbook accordingly.

PREFACE

The whole dissertation, unless specifically stated to the contrary in the text, is my own original work. I, Nicky Sanders, declare that this study represents my own work and has not been submitted to another university. Where use is made of the work of others it has been duly indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Nicky Sanders', is positioned above a horizontal dotted line.

Nicky Sanders

Pietermaritzburg

12 December 2000

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

David Gordon Truscott

4 February 1904 - 5 September 2000

My grandfather, Gwakwa, my role model and inspiration. Your vision of the power of education was evidenced in starting the Truscott Bursary Loan at the University of Natal where my own studies were supported. Thank you.

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I want to say a simple thank you to the following people:

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Mrs Nomsa Peters: thank you for the speed and accuracy of your typing when I needed your help with inserts (Appendices 8 and 9)

Our students and mentors: thank you for your enthusiasm, commitment and encouragement

Mrs Margaret Blyth: thank you for the support of your friendship, thank you for proof-reading this dissertation

Technikon Natal: for the opportunity to work in the tertiary sector and study part-time and to end with where it all started

Mrs Mary Commons: thank you for your maternal support and faith in me.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED:

ABI	Associated Beverages Industry
ALS	Applied Language Studies
BBA	Bachelor in Business Administration
BSU	Business Studies Unit
CBE	Certificate in Business Education
CFC	Commerce Foundation Course
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
Co	Company
CSD	Centre for Science Development
DET	Department of Education and Training
F/T	Full-time Students
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HRM	Human Resource Management
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
IT	Information Technology
ITS	Information Technology Systems
LAN	Local Area Network
NCC	National Certificate in Commerce
NED	Natal Education Department
NLG	The New London Group
NQF	The National Qualifications Framework
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
OHTs	Overhead Projector Transparencies
PMB	Pietermaritzburg
P/T	Part-Time Students
SAPS	South African Police Service
SAIDE	South African Institute for Distance Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SG	Study Guide
SMS	Short Message Service (on cellular telephones)
TNP	Technikon Natal, Pietermaritzburg
UDW	University of Durban Westville
UNP	University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg
WP	Word Processing

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ABSTRACT

This research report encompasses the development and implementation of a cooperative learning project over four cycles of action research. The context for this research is eleven business communication classes, primarily comprised of Black South African adult learners using English as an additional language. The project was developed in response to national re-curriculation for Outcomes Based Education and Curriculum 2005, integrating aspects of the old English syllabus in a meaningful series of business communication activities that gave learners opportunities to interact with and visit local companies. Learners engaged in the project in groups and compiled various written responses, correspondence and reports in group portfolios. The project culminated in a group business presentation where the whole class learned about the company visited and peer groups joined the lecturer in the summative assessment process. The project aimed to empower students in a number of ways, using techniques such as peer-mediation, code-switching, genre-teaching and textual scaffolding. A study guide was produced in the second cycle of action research. The study guide was revised for the third and fourth cycles in response to reflections on student feedback and using Technikon Natal and the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) criteria. Data was collected using student reports and assignments, questionnaires and journals. Analysis of the data and the study guides was reflexive and guided further implementations. A fifth cycle is anticipated where the multiliteracies pedagogy will be applied to the activities of the project and the study guide will be transformed into an interactive learner workbook accordingly.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: THE CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter will describe the context and chronological development of a cooperative learning project which formed part of the English Business Communication course at Technikon Natal, Pietermaritzburg. It will cover the implementations during 1998, 1999 and 2000. This project is the main focus of the dissertation, but interwoven in its tapestry are leitmotifs that reflect my own position on learning and language. These issues are linked to concepts of knowledge and power, neither of which are neutral (Walker 1996: 78). Language and discourse constitute meaning which is socially constructed (Gee 1990; Clarence-Fincham 1999) and language practices are social and dynamic (Willett *et al* 1999: 171).

Learning is a process that should be negotiated and worked through collaboratively in classrooms that become sites of social construction (Noffke 1995: 75). Learning is embodied, situated, and social with human knowledge developing not as “*general and abstract*”, but embedded in social, cultural, and material contexts so abstractions and theories should be related to concrete contexts that recontextualize them (The New London Group 1996: 82). Drawing on the work of Fairclough (1995), Gee (1993, 1996), Luke (1996), Willett *et al* (1999: 167), The New London Group (1996), Cope and Kalantzis (2000), Kist (2000), and Delpit (1988) I developed the following notions: that meaning is socially constructed, that ideology is integral to language use, that communication tools are not neutral having both affective and political impact and that all voices need to be heard in all their forms. Changing classroom practice through participant action research should be related to the socio-cultural, economic, historic and political context. In turn, transformed classroom practices could eventually influence change in the broader context. We need a critical awareness of our own position as teacher-researchers if our students are going to define their own position, identity, role and social futures as being different and unpredictable in a multicultural language classroom ① (The New London Group 1996; Cope and Kalantzis 2000).

1.1 CONTEXT

The writer, hereafter referred to in the first person②, lectures English as a Business Communication subject to Commerce students at the tertiary institution of Technikon Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus (TNP), South Africa. I also coordinate and lecture a part-time Business Communication module for the Business Studies Unit which is affiliated to the Technikon Natal Commerce Faculty. The context of this lecturing has been the site of a series of four action research cycles (see Appendix 1: Table 3 Comparative Table of the Four

Cycles) between 1998 and 2000 implementing a cooperative learning project with eleven class groups.

1.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the project is to expose students to the working world they are preparing for by giving them real tasks in which they communicate with real audiences. It therefore includes tasks involving information gaps and using alternative assessment practices. It seeks to equip students to strategically choose the appropriate discourse for given situations (Morgan 1997: 98). Groups of students use various business communication strategies (telephone, fax, memo, e-mail or internet) to arrange and conduct site visits to local businesses and report on this firsthand investigation in a group business presentation to their class. The presentation is video-taped for formative self-evaluation as well as evaluated summatively by peer groups. Groups then compile a written report and submit a portfolio of work for lecturer assessment.

1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The Action Research approach supported the developmental purpose of implementing, reflecting and re-implementing the project (Carr and Kemmis 1986; McNiff *et al* 1996). I wanted to become more involved as an accountable participant researcher, critiquing my own practice, professionalising myself, and learning to substantiate my practice using grounded theories (McNiff 1988). I also wanted to grow beyond given assumptions and move “*from ignorance and habit to knowledge and reflection*” (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 116). In redefining the problem of theory and research, Carr and Kemmis determine that it is essential “*to develop theories of educational practice that are rooted in the concrete educational experiences and situations of practitioners*” to confront and resolve related issues (1986: 118).

This project was theoretically informed and evolved in my classroom practice as issues were addressed and needs met. The need was recognised to develop materials which scaffold discourse acquisition for students from diverse educational backgrounds, particularly disadvantaged students whose Primary Discourse (see 2.5 and 2.5.1) does not prepare them for tertiary study. I hoped that this research would contribute to similar projects as well as help students seeking placement for Experiential Learning in the workplace, part of most South African Technikon diplomas. I chose a resource-based approach to materials development, because of the possibilities of increased transferability to other classes and

lecturers. The Study Guide or workbook ③ could be used to guide and scaffold students' work through the steps of the project. I tested this by implementing the fourth cycle of action research with a completely different type of student group. This group were already fully employed in the workplace, but studying part-time to improve their qualifications. Feedback indicated that some were too busy to labouriously use the study guide while others felt they knew enough already: they were already sending memos, faxes and reports in their jobs. I concluded that it may be preferable to have a more generic model for general use, but to tailor the workbook for specific student and subject needs. This would serve to empower educators to develop their own materials modelled on the study guide or workbook so that they could in turn initiate projects that would empower their students. I realised that my research methodology and data collection would have to meet rigorous requirements if I wished to have a broader influence.

1.4 DATA COLLECTION

Data has been gathered qualitatively, mainly through students' interim informal progress reports. At certain intervals I asked students to write a two minute report on how their work on the project was going, highlighting their concerns at that time. This served to reinforce their own sense of controlling their projects, as well as to give me feedback on their progress. The main feedback was given in the assessment practices, in particular the group business presentations and portfolios. The instruments used to gather quantifiable data were statistical analyses of marks to measure academic progress. It was difficult, however to correlate English I marks as half the year mark was generated by traditional tests set on the Durban campus. On the whole the trend was that students fared better in their project marks than the rest of the course. This could mean that assessment of project assignments was inflated or that students perform better in groups. A further implementation would be necessary in order to challenge the appropriateness of departmental top-down testing methods.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in questionnaires in order to compile a demographic profile of my students and develop an accurate idea of their needs so that the project was more accessible to them. Conferences and seminars provided a platform to share the project with other academics and generate discussions and deeper insights (see Appendix 2: Dates for Data Collection and Analysis). Dialogue journal writing and research journal entries gave further data. My initial attempts to sustain dialogue journals with whole class-groups were eventually delegated to mentors who dialogued with up to ten mentees each.

These journals were confidential and I relied on mentors to give me ongoing feedback informally.

1.5 PEER-MEDIATION BY MENTORS

I had the opportunity of pioneering the mentorship project pilot study for the Technikon, seeing the benefit of holistic psycho-social development, peer-mediation and code-switching. The students in the foundation programme I administer have had senior commerce students working with them in their groups as mentors. The mentors helped with aspects of the project, such as using the telephone and working through the campus switchboard, as well as the word-processing of texts.

The mentorship project allows for peer support, helping the students to make sense of the new environment of a tertiary education campus and work out how they fit in there as well as how to succeed there (Reglin 1998). I hoped that mentors would play a key role in modelling academic discourse for their mentees, but this was not followed through and constitutes a silence in this research. The mentors themselves were still initiates in the discourses of the Technikon and the workplace. A long term goal would be to develop mentors so that they become skilled facilitators socialising mentees into tertiary academic discourses. Mentors were, however, able to help with group dynamics and code-switching into Nguni languages. Although not all mentees used these languages, there were benefits of mutual understanding, building confidence in conversation and group work, developing strategies and arguments and exploring new concepts. These new concepts were introduced through the study guide as the project developed.

Mentors were not available to the 1998 students or the part-time students, but group dynamics still played a key role in peer-mediation where group members helped one another in various areas, such as making sense of the activities and developing a holistic approach. Lacey (1996: 357) maintains that, *“learners are essentially active constructors of their own personal knowledge and understanding and that they strive to make sense of their environment.”* This active developing of student insight is enhanced by peer-support. Peer-mediation was a vital aspect in mutual learning. Issues of learning, particularly in English as an additional language, are linked with motivation and trust. Considering *“the affective and sociocultural needs and identities of all learners... all learners are secure in taking risks and trusting the guidance of others - peers and teachers”* (The New London Group 1996: 85). Trust was valued and developed in our classrooms, as one previously very shy person in the part-time BBA class

relayed: "... since an atmosphere of trust has been created between the students, it is not so difficult to participate." Peer mediation supported students' personal development through the project as well as allowing for the delegation of closer one-to-one interaction between mentors and mentees where possible. The project itself was developed with each implementation as discussed next.

1.6 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Action research suits the process of developing materials that will provide greater scaffolding and support through revision of course design, handouts and the study guide for students who are learning in English as an additional language. The first three cycles of the action research involved ten full-time classes while the fourth involved a part-time class (see Appendix Table 1: Comparative Table of the Four Cycles). Most of the full-time commerce students at TNP are Black South Africans and have been educationally disadvantaged. The project fits into one quarter or term of the traditional annual English I syllabus which includes business communication theories and activities devised for homogeneous English-mother-tongue classes. The same "Communication" syllabus is used in the 10 other official languages as taught in Technikons nationwide. The syllabus is subject to some of the following constraints: large class sizes, traditional transmission-mode lecturing, decontextualised role-play, imaginary exercises, traditional closed book tests and rote learning the formats of business genres (letters, agendas) done for marks. In contrast, this project has attempted to bring aspects of the syllabus together in a meaningful way (see the *Situated Practice* of the multiliteracies pedagogy in 2.11 and Tables 1 and 2). As mentioned in 1.3, the project was implemented for the fourth time with part-time students to see whether it was transferable to other groups and lecturers. This professional group, studying their Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA) part-time, did this project in the Business Communication module devised and coordinated by myself. It incorporated more relevant assessment practices like an open-book examination and media coverage of current events in case studies and assignments in a three-month trimester. The part-time students were older, more mature and heterogeneous, representing the full demographic profile of our South African population: male and female, several racial and cultural groups, several languages, with a range of positions and professional status (see 4.3 and Appendix 6: Table 4: Demographic Profile of NCC 2000 Students and Appendix 7: Bar Charts Depicting 2000 Students' Age, Gender, Language, Matric, and School Background).

In 1998, the project was initiated in response to research challenges and national directives for re-curriculation incorporating Outcomes Based Education (OBE, see 2.8). Initially Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles were used (Wildsmith 1992) such as the recognition of the information gap (see 2.7), as well as workplace discourse (see 2.5.2) and alternative assessment practices (see 3.4 and 4.5.7). I used a questionnaire (see Appendix 5: Demographic Profile of NCC 2000 Students: Questionnaire), written feedback and informal interviews with students to determine their needs and interests and compile handouts to help students with the activities of the project.

In 1999 the handouts were collated into an interactive study guide (see Appendix 10). This included aspects of the Technikon Natal English I syllabus in an integrated and meaningful way. For instance, a fax was used to confirm the telephone call to the company about the proposed visit, whereas a memo served to confirm an intra-institutional arrangement for Technikon transport to the company visit. The study guide included models of business genres as well as analyses of these genres, such as the business letter (Evans 1986). I saw this as textual scaffolding for students to use authentic activities and real audiences. With regard to gathering information about the students, having had a poor return of the questionnaire in 1998, I used class time for the audience analysis questionnaire in 1999, resulting in a return of about 90%. Having used the questionnaire before implementing the project in the first two years, in 2000 I used it (see Appendix 5: Demographic Profile of NCC 2000 Students: Questionnaire) as a retrospective tool for gaining student feedback on the project as well as for gaining insight into student background. In this way I was able to describe my target group of students (see 4.3 and Appendix 6 Table 4: Demographic Profile of NCC 2000 Students) and anticipate needs in further implementations of the project, including the 2001 revision of the study guide with more direct use of the multiliteracies pedagogy (see Tables 1 and 2). Although the return of the part-time students' questionnaires was poor because the module ended before the deadline, portfolios, interviews and comments in progress generated a range of insights from the fourth cycle.

1.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter's brief description of the chronological development of the project from its initial beginnings in CLT and OBE to its current focus on Multiliteracies will be expanded on in the following chapters. Chapter 2 explains the theoretical rationale, with particular reference to student disadvantage and learning, then expands on key concepts, tracing my development as a participant researcher growing into the Multiliteracies pedagogy. Chapter 3 will give a more

detailed account of the actual project and research methodology. This will be analysed along with the study guide in Chapter 4. A summary of recommendations for the next implementation will conclude this research report.

CHAPTER 1 ENDNOTES

- ① Multicultural classrooms is a term I use to indicate the diversity in my classrooms for, although some classes were made up entirely of Black students, a number of languages and backgrounds were evident (see Appendix 6, Table 4).
- ② While I recognise the need for academic discourse and conventions I want my thesis to be as readable and accessible as I hope the work book will become. I have chosen to use a more colloquial English and to introduce the student voice verbatim.
- ③ Most of the references to the study guide are to the actual texts produced in 1999 and 2000. However, I aim to develop the 2001 study guide into an interactive workbook, hence the title of this thesis, “Developing a workbook for a cooperative learning project”.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL RATIONALE AND KEY CONCEPTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers some of the scope and limitations of the project with particular reference to educational disadvantage and difference, literacy and acquisition of discourses, Communicative Language Teaching, Outcomes Based Education, cooperative learning, and Multiliteracies. In this dissertation, I have linked references to my project with the four phases of the multiliteracies pedagogy: *situated practice*, *overt instruction*, *critical framing* and *transformed practice*. In 1997 language acquisition and socio-linguistics readings laid a foundation for a literature survey which evolved in 1998 into a greater concern with discourse acquisition and issues of empowerment (see 2.3). This first phase focussed on student disadvantage and difference with related issues of literacy and discourse acquisition.. A second phase in the literature survey could be defined by a concern for CLT, and OBE with the focus on the specific outcomes of communication skills and teamwork or cooperative learning. My respect for genre-analysis approaches was tempered by critical literacy readings, however, in the context of *overt instruction* the scaffolding offered by genre-teaching has a key role to play in students mastering the discourse of the workplace. The third phase of my literature survey concerned the multiliteracies and workplace discourse with productive diversity, but in the interests of coherence I have arranged this chapter giving primacy to discourse issues and concluding with a discussion of multiliteracies.

2.2 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The changing relationship between education practice and its relationship to policy has been driven by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and South African OBE (see 2.8). Just as literacy currently has priority in most English departments in Britain (Baxter 2000: 26), it is becoming increasingly significant for language departments in South African tertiary institutions. We need to address the issues of literacy in the classroom, develop critically literate learners (Morgan 1997) and explore possibilities for new literacy pedagogies (Kist 2000: 711; The New London Group 1996; Cope and Kalantziz 2000). However, my experience has shown that it is unrealistic to expect the transformation of academically illiterate students into critical thinkers with the limited contact time of my class timetable. In spite of institutional constraints these challenges continue to inspire my work. Students need to be equipped with various discourse and technological skills to communicate in the new work place, but they also need to develop cognitively to survive the information age (Bond in

Cope and Kalantziz 2000). Communication skills encompass multiple technologies: word processing, data processing, electronic mail, internet on-line facilities and interactive media, chat rooms, internet telephones, landline, cellular/mobile phones with infra-red and blue-tooth enabled connectivity and short message services (SMSs), pay phones by coin, phone card, or credit card. Communication also encompasses multiple symbolic representations: graphic art, statistical graphics, music, mathematics, drama and cinematography. Yet the more advanced the technological capacity becomes, the greater our challenge as educators to keep the principles of appropriate communication simple especially if we want to give different students access to communication strategies. Paradoxically, in a multicultural classroom with a variety of backgrounds, a more complex system of communication may develop, especially if we challenge traditional Western customs so that other cultures and language groups do not have to adopt the strategies and coping mechanisms of this dominant culture. Students can bring the rich resources of their respective backgrounds to contributing to and modifying classroom discourse. We need to ask how we can ensure a student voice that redresses disadvantage, develops academic literacy, facilitates workplace discourse acquisition and empowers graduates for an academic and commercial career. However, as grand a vision for transformation as this starts out with small steps. It may only be possible in an academic year to develop a self-confidence and intrinsic motivation to encourage students in responsible lifelong learning. I tentatively wrote in a journal entry: *“I am not sure how inherently critical or emancipatory this project will be, but I hope that it will prove to be a key factor in improving student confidence, motivation and self-esteem, which I hope will ultimately improve academic performance.”* (1998)

While my vision of transformed classroom practice includes my own and my students’ learning, I am aware of the limitations here. Even trying to situate my teaching in the Nguni culture has limitations as there are no pre-established norms for genres in Zulu that relate to business communication genres. Most modern Zulu writing seems to be modelled on Western norms, but I still get correspondence which starts with traces of traditional Zulu praise poetry in flowery grandeur. Perhaps modern Zulu literature may yet influence South African workplace discourse, but this tangent is merely speculative. This context of language and cultural difference influences the way we position ourselves as subjects with unique identity (Brady 1994: 147). The classroom becomes a microcosm where mutual respect is given to our difference, not silencing, but celebrating debate and challenging dominant discourses (Brady 1994:147-149). This respect for difference is particularly significant in South Africa where the majority of teachers are women and yet the majority of educational managers, principals and council members are white men. Empowerment within such a male dominated and exploitative

system is not necessarily desirable if all it means is complicity within these corrupt structures (Cranny-Francis 1993: 98). I believe that empowerment should include a vision of a transformed and egalitarian society where mutual respect eradicates any exploitation from the past. My students are encouraged to speak out in supportive social group structures with student mentors. The textual scaffolding and genre analysis of the study guide as well as *Overt Instruction* dispel the mysteries of classroom and workplace discourse, empowering students to develop their own voice. Previously disadvantaged and silenced voices, especially those of Black women need to be heard. Recognising that the previously disadvantaged need to be empowered to represent themselves, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) is making progress in research into Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) so that they are not merely recolonised and subjugated. This argument is developed in 2.4 where it is argued that illiteracy not only marginalises Black people, but prejudices their languages.

2.3 STUDENT DISADVANTAGE, DIFFERENCE AND EMPOWERMENT

Increasing sensitivity to the different needs of diverse groups of students was enhanced by a peer challenge to “*meditate on the student as significant other.*” The notion of diversity and models of difference were developed through my literature survey (Edwards 1989: 26; Brady 1994: 146; Cope and Kalantzis 1993; Hewlett in Baker *et al* 1996: 90). How can we empower students to use their differences as a resource instead of a burden?

As teachers we may help to empower students if we, **firstly**, contextualise knowledge (Noffke 1995: 33) and use the *Situated Practice* of multiliteracies (see 2.11). We need **secondly**, to include knowledge that reflects multiple perspectives (Noffke 1995: 33) by interrogating assumptions about mainstream, dominant or universal paradigms and how people who are **different** become marginalised and disadvantaged. My class groups have been multicultural and multilingual (see Appendix 6: Table 4: Demographic profile of NCC 2000). Language practices are multiple and contradictory (Willett *et al* 1999: 174) and indeed there may be tensions between the language constructions of students. I would argue however, that being different, or offering different versions of reality, is not necessarily contradictory, but culturally rich and therefore rich in meaning. Multilingual students are more likely to be able to take several stances on an issue and to see things from various valid points of view. The challenge is for educators with a monocultural background to accept different perspectives, not to regard them as contradictory or opposite. I believe that in accepting the differences between us, we are then able to develop a climate in which students have the self-confidence to author their own identities and social futures to take the risks necessary in discourse

acquisition. A classroom which allows each member to participate without power differentials (Morgan 1997; Willett *et al* 1999: 165) allows for “*the negotiation of competing values and interests*” through valuing language practices and conscious reflection of all participants (Willett *et al* 1999: 170). Based on these concepts, I encourage code-switching to provide access to more complex terms and concepts in English through the mediation of peers, mentors and other languages. The project was instrumental in students gaining confidence to express themselves and gain an awareness of professional discourse (see 4.4 and student comments in Appendices 8 and 9). Further to becoming empowering teachers, we need to, **thirdly**, treat knowledge as open-ended and constructed, and teach the students **how** to think, not **what** to think (Noffke 1995: 33) by using the *Critical Framing* of multiliteracies (see Tables 1 and 2). **Fourthly**, we need to focus not on job training but on active involvement in society (Noffke 1995: 33), preparing the next generation of economic leaders in a multicultural society incorporating fairness and access to success. Where communities are increasingly diverse, the broader structure needs to become “*genuinely inclusive in what it privileges, its symbols and access to social goods*” (Cope and Kalantzis 1993: 64). The culture of the workplace is changing and students need to be prepared for productive diversity (Cope and Kalantzis 1997b). **Fifthly**, we need to be empowering helpers (Noffke 1995: 33) to facilitate *Transformed Practice* in multiliteracies. Students starting with limited language skills using coping mechanisms (Gee’s 1990 “*mushfake*”) need to develop language proficiency that will support the development of academic discourse. Empowerment in fast-capitalism means leaders empowering people through emotional and motivational highs to build their belief in their own abilities (Gee *et al* 1996: 32), but I use the term more in the sense of transformation of practice and society than merely personal growth. **Sixthly**, we need to engage students in active learning (Noffke 1995: 33) and in life-long learning, including all student voices without any cultural supremacy but rather constructing visions of a learning community (Willett *et al* 1999: 176) as we change and transform our own practice. Through the multiliteracies pedagogy students become agents in the transformation of their own studies to qualify for their desired certificate, diploma or degree and effectively become employed, not as a fledgling employee, but as a free-flying agent of change, facilitating transformation of the workplace and ultimately the economy and our nation.

2.4 ISSUES OF LITERACY

Recent research has recognised that international dialogue and networking is needed among those concerned with issues of literacy and its shaping of social and political worlds (Pandian 1999:xi). There has long been concern over illiteracy statistics (Jackson 1991: 8; Gee 1994:

168). The knowledge worker of the 21st century will need specific training and qualifications. With increased automation and technology, factory supervisors are replaced by cybernetic, computerised information systems and workers need more varied and higher levels of skills (Cope and Kalantzis 1997: 86).

A 1994 national survey indicated that some 80% of Africans and 40% of Whites in South Africa could not read or compute at the basic level of literacy (Bond in Cope and Kalantzis 2000: 311). As mentioned, illiteracy reflects the profile of inequality in South Africa and prejudices the use of African languages in many areas (Language Plan Task Group 1996: 146). If we are to empower illiterate masses we need to move away from the myth that illiteracy is the fault of the illiterate. Moreover, ascribing blame, particularly given the South African history of apartheid exploitation of the masses, is not going to solve the problem. Literacy alone is not likely to produce jobs, increase democratic participation, end poverty or reduce inequality. A broader process of transformation is needed, and it is my hope that the project reported on here may contribute to transformation in my immediate context.

While this paper is about tertiary students, research on primary level literacy acquisition and cognitive development in the mother tongue has a bearing on how my students are trying to develop academic literacy while still needing to improve their competence in English. Local academics argue convincingly for additive bilingualism where initial literacy is facilitated in the mother tongue, but English is taught alongside to facilitate cognitive development in both languages (Heugh *et al* 1995). Through additive bilingualism African languages will gain value and be developed as academic languages so that English is no longer seen as the only language of power and means of accessing social and economic success. I maintain that cognitive development in mother-tongue Zulu, even at tertiary level, will still benefit students in the English medium of their studies. This is where peer-mediation and mentors using code-switching may enhance students' performance (Adendorff, 1993:3-26; Peires 1994:16-17). In as much as English teachers may facilitate literacy, we need to take cognisance of the implications in discourse and literacy that may empower the disadvantaged, and see empowerment more radically than colonising students of different discourses into the successful Discourses of our society. Gee challenges English teachers to choose not to naively ignore social and political issues, but to:

accept the paradox of literacy as a form of interethnic communication which often involves conflicts of values and identities, and accept their role as persons who socialize students into a world view that, given its power here and abroad, must be looked at critically, comparatively, and with a constant sense of the possibilities for

change. Like it or not, English teachers stand at the very heart of the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time. (Gee 1994: 190)

Clarence-Fincham (1999) indicates that when classrooms provide a context in which students learn the meta-language necessary for discussion and comparison of different discourses, then they are providing the possibility of what Gee terms “*liberating literacy*” (1996: 145 in 1999: 95). However, it is difficult to actually measure what students acquire, both in terms of the learning-acquisition distinction and the type of discourse. “*It is important to realise that any explicit exposure to the mechanisms underlying discourse, whether linguistic or not, cannot be sufficient to provide total access to a discourse.*” (Clarence-Fincham 1999: 95). Access to discourse is pivotal to this project and if explicit exposure alone is not enough then the other mechanisms of multiliteracies and textual scaffolding of the study guide may measure up to more effective discourse access.

Given the central nature of literacy to this project it is worthwhile to consider a three-fold approach to literacy: functional, cultural and critical (Hewlett 1996; Brady 1994; Lankshear 1997:3). **Firstly**, functional academic literacy assumes competence in given technical skills including superficial English and academic discursive practices. **Secondly**, cultural academic literacy implies the ability to assess the academic culture and assimilate its peculiar conventions and Discourses (values, styles of language and behaviour). **Thirdly**, the critical literacy approach challenges these assimilationist views and empowers students to problematize knowledge and knowing, possibly using a critical functional approach to teaching academic discourse while examining how it supports the interests of dominant groups (Hewlett in Baker *et al* 1996: 90). This post-progressivist perspective encompasses genre-based approaches drawing on systemic functional linguistics, critical language awareness approaches, and multiliteracies (Lankshear 1997: 3).

Critical literacy means that we analyse, challenge and change how we interact in ordinary life (Brady 1994: 142). Students are encouraged to critically assess their own use of register and tone in various contexts and to achieve various objectives, such as arranging lifts to the companies they are to visit. Critical literacy aims for multicultural language practices, democratic participation and social justice (Willett *et al* 1999: 169). It questions whether essay-text literacy automatically ensures equality and social success or erases racism or minority disenfranchisement. Access to social power requires competence in discourse practices in outlook, thought, speech and essay-text writing (Gee 1994:190). But while access to essay-text literacy with its explicitness and syntax may give access to academic success,

socio-economic and political forces have to redress disadvantage, because literacy alone cannot empower people (Morgan 1997: 8; Gee 1994: 181). Moreover, we may have the best intentions to empower students, but merely produce submissive social subjects (Cranny-Francis 1993), because literacy can be oppressive (Gee 1994: 181). Many rural Black people have thought themselves literate, but the antiquated vocabulary and formality with which they use English has marked them as outsiders to the discourse of success (Adey and Andrew 1990). The tendency of students with rural backgrounds to use flowery language in business letters is a reflection of the customs taught in beleaguered schools that are unable to keep up with pedagogic changes and the changing needs of the workplace. Here the formal Zulu customs are transferred into other contexts, such as the corporate world, but in such way as to mark the users as different, perhaps even lacking the appropriate register and value system to fit into the modern world of work. This links back to notions of the influences of traditional Zulu praise poetry (see 1.5, 2.2 and 4.5.8). I have used models of business letters in the SG to provide students with options other than traditional customs. In retrospect, however, I would revise my approach to facilitate critical language awareness through questioning, rather than merely being prescriptive. Offering optional communication strategies addresses the problem that students face (or perhaps even avoid) in the conflict between their African heritage and their academic and professional prospects in a Western corporate environment.

Workplace literacy is regarded as a more specialized sub-domain of literacy (Lankshear 1997:3) and my focus is on workplace discourse. This needs to be foregrounded by a discussion of discourses, Primary Discourse and Secondary Discourse.

2.5 ISSUES OF DISCOURSES

We need to acknowledge the value of research that illuminates otherwise invisible contradictory discourses so that *“the theoretical lenses and analyses that help practitioners and researchers see the small productive moments in our negotiations may help us critique the discourses that interpellate us”* (Willett *et al* 1999: 208). A narrow perspective is likely to lead to a lesser analysis than one that allows for multiple perspectives, usually socially constructed. This involves an interpretation of data that is jointly made up of different perspectives - something done best in collaboration and discussion with other researchers. Collaborative research teams ideally include academic researchers and practitioner researchers who work synergistically to produce new insights and interrogations, with deeper analysis of transcriptions of discussions and consultation with cultural insiders helping them understand cultural norms and contextualising issues of positioning and identity. My own use of peer-

dissemination and interaction with students has ensured that this reports on a wider perspective than my own. Students are given the responsibility of evaluating their own and peers' work, especially the business presentation.

If we want to give our students access to certain discourses, such as workplace discourse, it is useful to adopt Gee's account of discourse as "*socially acceptable association[s] among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting*"(1990: 143). Morgan (1997: 3) ascribes four qualities to discourses: firstly, that they constitute and are constituted by social practices and institutions; secondly, that they engage in a complex dialogue of discourses; thirdly, that discourses are political and ideological; and fourthly that discourses help constitute not only the objects spoken and written about but also shape our own subjectivity. Similar to the distinctions of literacy in 2.4 above, several discourses are categorised by Morgan (1997: 17 - 20): **firstly**, the aesthetic discourse which conservatively celebrates the literary cultural heritage, nostalgically trying to retain the privileged past culture; **secondly**, the ethical discourse concerned with the personal and literary development through progressive discourse: promoting growth as responsive, expressive individuals; **thirdly**, the rhetorical discourse emphasising appropriate or correct expression and use of genre teaching and functional grammar, contrasted with the older discourse of functional literacy (skills and drills); and **fourthly**, the radically political discourse focussing on the effects of power in texts and society: where the ideal subject position of the teacher is as sociopolitical critic and agent of enlightenment, and students are offered a subjectivity as enlightened critic and liberated agent of sociopolitical reform. I would like to position my own practice of facilitating discourse acquisition in the fourth category, but also acknowledge the value of taking students through ethical discourse and rhetorical discourse mastery before they can become agents of transformation. The project offers models of various genres in the study guide, but challenges students to use them as starting points for their own applications. Students are encouraged to practice such activities as telephone calls and negotiation, until they feel confident that they have achieved a measure of mastery over that genre. It is more than a once off rewriting a telescript and reading it off like a script. Students are encouraged to visualise themselves interacting with professionals over the phone and to prepare themselves for the telephone call, anticipating the types of questions that are likely to be asked, thereby making initial contact with local companies from a position of confidence and assurance. Aspects of communication, such as register, are interrogated so that students can adapt their own level of formality to one that suits the professionals they are speaking to on the telephone. Students wrote in informal interim reports of learning different ways of speaking with different people and in different contexts (see Appendices 8 and 9).

2.5.1 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DISCOURSES

If the gap between our home-life and the school experience is too extreme, the difference is likely to lead to discontinuity and educational disadvantage (Cazden 1988: 74). Gee (1990) claims that we grow up in our Primary Discourse, learning the values, beliefs, and practices of our home. This Discourse with a capital D is defined as a socially accepted way of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, talking, listening, reading, writing, acting and inter-acting, using tools and objects, in particular settings and at specific times, so as to display or to recognize a particular social identity within a social network or to signal a socially meaningful role (Gee 1990: 143; Gee *et al* 1996:10).

We are immersed in the Primary Discourse of our intimate home environment and develop proficiency in it: “*By the time you’re an expert, however, you often can’t say what you do, how you do it or why. Though you could **show** someone*” (Gee 1990: xv/xvi). Unlike Krashen’s extreme distinction between learning and acquisition (Clarence-Fincham 1999), Gee allows for initial intuitive acquisition as an apprentice to lead to the more conscious learning of Secondary Discourses. The closer these are to our Primary Discourse, the easier the transition as shown by ethnographic studies (Brice-Heath 1994; Reynolds *et al* 1998). White mainstream youngsters cope better than students from disadvantaged backgrounds in the Secondary Discourses of school and tertiary institutions. They are able to immerse themselves in the familiar Secondary Discourse and intuitively acquire it. However, if Black students come to the Secondary Discourse as outsiders having to **learn** it, they will be marked as outsiders, even though they may be richer for having learned meta-cognitive knowledge about the Discourse. In some cases, outsiders are effectively colonised into the Dominant Discourse. There are local examples of Black children speaking fluent English without a township accent, Black South African English (BSAE, Makalela 1998) or Black English Vernacular (BEV, Edwards 1989: 151) and these children have been rejected by their township peers as “Model C” (cf Appendix 6: Table 4 on Model C schools) - they are then marked by their fluency in the school Secondary Discourse as outsiders to their Primary Discourse. Gee’s use of Primary (intimate) and Secondary (public) Discourse indicates that there are different ways of making meaning depending on one’s purpose, audience and context.

It follows that we need to develop “*an explicit pedagogy for inclusion and access*” (Cope and Kalantzis 1993: 64) using methods such as the genre approach to make the expectations of successful discourse transparent and available to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Even if this starts out being assimilationist, the challenge is to move beyond assimilating students

into the status quo and instead of making naturalised social subjects, helping them to critically engage with change in their own voice (Cranny-Francis 1993: 102-103). It is not enough to educate students so that they succeed in the Discourse of the school or tertiary institution: we need to give them space to establish their own identity, to speak their minds and validate the sincerity of their opinions, without trying to mould them into semblances of conformity.

I am aware that this project may be merely assimilating students and denying their cultural heritage, but you can only challenge a discourse once you have mastered it. I am teaching students how to cope with business visits and negotiations offering various strategies for them to choose, such as appropriate handshakes, eye-contact and creating good first impressions telephonically and in person. They tend to choose the accepted strategies that will ensure their fitting in and getting ahead, such as the non-verbal communication gestures of a single vertical firm handshake, discreet distance, candid eye-contact and a congenial smile. Verbal communication strategies are also considered, especially as mentioned above, the use of tone and register. Perhaps this access to success is enough for now, in their first year of study, but I still aim for emancipatory empowerment. Perhaps students need to first play the game by existing rules until they win enough ground to start changing the rules themselves. To reiterate, it is necessary to become a master of a discourse before we can challenge it (see 2.2). I encourage students to *critically frame* the concept of corporate culture. Is it merely the business culture prevalent in the workplace or should it incorporate all the cultures represented in the workplace? Such issues are more readily grappled with by part-time students who report on using communication strategies in their jobs, particularly where recent employment equity and affirmative action legislation has introduced new dynamics in their respective workplaces.

2.5.2 WORKPLACE DISCOURSE

Workplace discourse is a Secondary Discourse far removed from the Primary Discourse of most of my students. My project aims to give students firsthand experience and situated practice in workplace discourse as it is used in local companies at the moment, both through interacting with representatives from these companies and using business genres for professional purposes. Students report on how inspiring it is for them to see professionals in their offices with all the trappings of success, from the personal computer and telephone extension to the support staff to whom they are introduced (see Appendices 8 and 9: Student Comments in 1999 and 2000). However, I am aware of the constraints of introducing students to current practice in local business. Pietermaritzburg has its own unique sub-cultures and pace which may be slower and less efficient in infrastructure than that in other cities like Durban and

Johannesburg. Furthermore South African cities lag behind major world powers in terms of workplace practice and discourse. Our levels of illiteracy, unemployment, crime and disease are cause for concern. Notions of fast-capitalism and the knowledge economies of developed countries may not be applicable to the majority of South Africa. Moreover, fast-capitalism or post-Fordism is likely to be replaced by a workplace culture of productive diversity (Cope and Kalantzis 1997: 86) which celebrates the contributions of diverse cultures.

In the context of "Workplace 2000" however, workplace discourse is a relatively new concept that creates new social identities and new terms: bosses become coaches and leaders, middle managers become team leaders and workers are associates, partners, knowledge workers, just as customers become partners and insiders. *"The end result is the creation of the most 'lean and mean', quick and efficient, customer-pleasing and customer-creating businesses possible. Ever more creative and perfect products and services are created and re-created at ever faster rates"* (Gee et al 1996:27). The new workplace in developed countries is labelled post-Fordism, post-capitalism, fast- or new-capitalism (Gee et al 1996; Cope and Kalantzis 1997b) with a focus on *"fully informed workers who actively participate in the quality culture of the organization and have (and take) full responsibility for all the organizational ramifications of the jobs they do. This is what is meant by 'empowerment' "*(Gee et al 1996: xv). The new work order is about creating new social identities where people dissolve the boundaries between their lives inside and out of work. The concept is taken up by South African academic, Bond (in Cope and Kalantzis 2000: 319-320):

In the era of post-Fordism or fast-capitalism, which is characterised by rapid technological change, there are no more national standards. This aggravates the difficulty of establishing appropriate assessment criteria in a programme which is constantly transforming and developing to keep abreast of changes in the workplace. The increasing awareness of the limitations of set academic standards has to be seen in the context of a nation seeking to establish a National Qualification Framework as a means of increasing equitable access to educational provision (HSRC 1995).

This argument should be considered against OBE (see 2.8 and Appendix 11: Table 5: Comparison between traditional and OBE classroom practices). However, the tension exists in South Africa between preparing knowledge-workers for the future workplace of a developed country and at the very least giving students a leg-up to the level of competence local businesses currently expect. I hope to develop this project in 2001 to include both aims. In the meantime students have spoken of how motivating and encouraging it has been to visit professionals in the workplace and aspire to becoming successful with offices such as those

seen. Case studies will be a useful tool in giving students insights into the workplace of the future.

Educators should aim for “*reflective, strategic intelligence*” (Gee in Cope and Kalantzis 2000: 49-50) which is allied to the emphasis of the new capitalism on “*efficient problem solving, productivity, innovation, adaptation, and non-authoritarian distributed systems.*” He further indicates the need for schooling to move “*towards people who can work collaboratively in teams to produce results and add value through distributed knowledge and understanding.*” Where discourses are closely linked to “*the distribution of social power and hierarchical structure in society*” (Gee 1990: 4-5), those disempowered outside the discourse will not have access to the higher structures. Aware of assimilationist critiques, I use *Critical Framing* (see Table 1) to interrogate the need to “*fit in*” especially where this undermines students’ cultural practices. Otherwise their cultural background would give way to the interests of the new work order in trying to create new social identities (Gee *et al* 1996: xiii). This guides students towards meta-cognitive awareness where they are critically able to make choices and use strategies for professional success. Some students may have merely been assimilated, but feedback indicates that some have gone through this transformation and developed awareness of their power to choose communication strategies. Three of the business presentations of some of the part-time groups actually contrasted communication strategies of various workplaces. Students have commented over the years on developing this awareness of strategising communicatively:

This project was very helpful to our studies, practice and hopes to be successful in HRM (Human Resource Management), and using good practice in communication with the group and the people we communicate with in the company. It also helped us understand the differences in the manner of speaking to other people.(1998 Student)

The information age, new work order, fast-capitalism and the need for critical knowledge workers challenge my cooperative learning project to constantly change in order to facilitate the acquisition of workplace discourse in a way that is relevant to current market needs. Gee (1990: 4-5) proposes that discourses are closely linked to “*the distribution of social power and hierarchical structure in society.*” Literacy in English is regarded by many disempowered South Africans to promise power (see 2.3) and control over specific dominant Discourses could give access to social goods: money, power and status. However, access to material gain is a limited notion of success. Success may be measured in social and personal fulfilment as well as economic terms. Social success is largely linked to interpersonal communication skills and relationships with members of older generations. To this end, a discussion of discourse and literacy is extended to cover orality and oracy, if only briefly, in the next section.

2.6 ORALITY, ORACY AND LITERACY

The project culminates in a group oral business presentation described in 1.2 above so I chose to examine the relationship between literacy, orality and oracy. Multi-disciplinary approaches have moved beyond Ong's (1982) "*great divide*" thesis of orality and literacy to develop more realistic ways of dealing with various forms of communication and their implications for cognition, culture and education (cited in Street 1995: 158-9). Cope and Kalantzis (1993: 67) in an overview of orality and literacy, make the following observation:

Literacy, and the types of transformation of oral language that come with literacy, open linguistic doors into certain realms of social action and social power. It follows that literacy teaching, if it is to provide students with equitable social access, needs to link the different social purposes of language in different contexts to predictable patterns of discourse.

In Britain oracy in English currently values small group co-operation and consensus through collaborative discussion of viewpoints, mutual problem-solving and active listening (Baxter 2000: 27). The formal public speaking aspect of the old school has been undervalued even though it can empower people in a variety of ordinary settings from making a consumer complaint to dealing with bureaucracy (Baxter 2000: 27). Recent focus in GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) English examination syllabuses asks students to "*use language in a dynamic and influential way*" and "*make thought-provoking contributions through powerful expression and command of the situation*" (Baxter 2000: 28). Likewise there has been a tendency in South African curricula to move from old school public speaking to more meaningful oral discourses, such as mock labour negotiations and disputes. I started with individual and collaborative presentations on respective cultures, but saw the value of initiating a group-based business presentation. Not only would group presentations accommodate increased numbers of students (massification in education is a contested area that I will not deal with here), but sharing "*the stage*" with peers helped diffuse the nervous anxiety of public speaking. Moreover, teamwork is one of the critical outcomes of OBE and a characteristic of the new work order. The need to scaffold the business presentation grew in response to CLT principles.

2.7 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT)

The project started as an application of CLT principles as well as OBE criteria (see 2.8). Students were encouraged to make appropriate choices between communication strategies, media, genre and content to purposefully convey their meaning to a real audience. As co-

authors of meaning they were authoritatively sharing new information with me and their classmates, thereby facilitating mutual learning. Inter-disciplinary influences made for specific CLT notions of discourse, meaning, appropriacy, style and interaction. Some key principles of CLT have been summarised by Wildsmith (1992: 88-89) and grounded in my practice as described:

- 1 information gap where communication tasks convey information in an authentic context: students first wrote to and went to real companies to find out new information and then shared this with the class in business presentations - both authentic contexts. The group presentations were structured so that a real information gap existed. We were learning together. As their learning facilitator, I was learning as much as the rest of the class about the companies they were visiting;
- 2 meaningful and sustained discourse, where ongoing dialogue is developed with an awareness of the process of communication. Students interacted within their groups for the duration of the project as well as developing several dialogues telephonically and face-to-face with company representatives;
- 3 accuracy versus fluency, where differential communicative competence was acceptable, and where the speech act was analysed by usage versus use or appropriacy. Students were not penalised for inaccurate language use so long as their register was appropriate and they were communicatively competent. Their fluency developed with their confidence, because they did not feel pressure to perform with grammatical accuracy;
- 4 group and pair work: where interpersonal communication was developed and students worked in the same groups throughout the project and in some cases had to resolve group dynamic conflicts;
- 5 task-based exploration and problem-solving: where students had to work toward clear objectives and resolve any problems that arose, such as forgetting to book transport in time and then making a plan when there were clashes;
- 6 interpretation and negotiation, where communicative performance and a range of decoding or encoding concepts were facilitated within social norms and knowledge systems: students had to prepare negotiation strategies to get to visit the company and

interview key personnel, such as the human resources manager, as well as negotiate a suitable date and time for the visit.

Some of the principles of CLT (Wildsmith 1992: 89) are developed in policy-driven South African OBE.

2.8 OUTCOMES BASED EDUCATION (OBE)

As mentioned in 1.6, the project materialised in the context of the publication of the South African Qualifications Authority Act (No 58 of 1995) when Technikon Natal academics and programme coordinators engaged in rigorous re-curriculum and restructuring of subject presentations and qualifications, determining exit levels, specified outcomes and assessment criteria which link to content and the specific outcomes of unit standards. OBE has been debated internationally (McCurry and Bryce 1997) and locally (Chisholm 2000), but it has nevertheless been accepted as a guiding principle at TN (see Appendix 13: Technikon Natal Key Principles in Writing Learner Guides). The key benefit is that OBE is instrumental in changing educational assumptions and transforming classroom practice to become more learner centred (see Appendix 11: Table 5: Comparison between traditional and OBE classroom practices, Mkhabela 1999). The onus is on the student to participate and reflect on their learning, actively engaging in group-work and constructing knowledge themselves.

OBE is an approach advocated by the South African National Department of Education: *“Students will know what they are expected to show or demonstrate and how their knowledge and skill will be assessed. Their learning activities will be designed so that they can master the required outcomes to the required assessment standard”* (Department of Education Green Paper on Further Education and Training 1998:46, 10.5). Courses have had to be re-oriented to Critical Outcomes: problem-solving (thinking), teamship (group work), self-responsibility (manage and organise), research, communication skills, technological (interrelated systems) and environmental literacy and developing macrovision, study skills, culture, citizenship, entrepreneurship and careers (Government *Green Paper on Further Education and Training* 1998: 35).

I have related each critical outcome to the project as follows:

- 1) **PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS** - throughout the project the onus is on students to identify and solve problems, making responsible decisions using critical and creative

thinking. They have to think on their feet and make adjustments: for instance, if a targeted company cannot accommodate them then they need to be prepared to approach other companies, sometimes at short notice.

- 2) **TEAMSHIP** - students use cooperative learning in continuous group work, working effectively with group members and sharing in group peer- evaluation. Commenting on this, a student wrote: *“It’s also taught us how to be organised and responsible as a group.”* (Anon 1998, and Tables 9 and 10) ④
- 3) **SELF-RESPONSIBILITY SKILLS** - the Student study guide directs activities and deadlines guiding students in organising and managing their activities responsibly and effectively. As the ABI group wrote in 1999, *“The study guide helped us in knowing the logic of the topics and their due dates, so we knew when we should complete or submit our work. And it prevented us from procrastinating our work.”* ④
- 4) **RESEARCH SKILLS** - students are asked to collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information gathered while actually visiting companies.
- 5) **COMMUNICATION SKILLS** - effective communication uses visual and language skills, models of written business genres and persuasion in a group oral business presentation.
- 6) **TECHNOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY** - students use business communication technologies in word-processing documents and faxing companies, some use internet searches, ideally critical, if not appropriate choices of media are made.
- 7) **DEVELOPING MACROVISION** - students demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation and in visiting companies seeing business theories being implemented in the actual workplace. One group learnt the hard way that being late, even with a courtesy phone call, cost them the balance of their interview time, because their host had other appointments scheduled directly after their agreed time.
- 8) **LEARNING SKILLS** - students are involved in diverse assessment through reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively using group dynamics, negotiation and through concrete practical implementation (see 2.9 and 4.4).

- 9) **CITIZENSHIP** - students participate as responsible citizens visiting and reporting on local businesses, learning accountability as group members and seeing the “big picture” of how their studies are preparing them for the workplace.
- 10) **CULTURAL AND AESTHETIC UNDERSTANDING** - students learn different registers for culturally different social contexts and purposes. Some showed evidence of making careful choices about media and genres differentiating between distinct purposes.
- 11) **EMPLOYMENT SEEKING SKILLS** - opportunities are given for exploring education and career opportunities, targeting the company and planning interviews. Student feedback indicated that the experience of conducting an interview with the support of other group-members gave many confidence to go through job interviews of their own some day (see 4.4 and Appendices 8 and 9: Some student comments).
- 12) **ENTREPRENEURSHIP** - some students may gain insights into developing entrepreneurial opportunities through site visits. Most however, will gain some experience in project management as a microcosm of business skills.

Most of these outcomes are more effectively achieved through the dynamics of group-work, one of the critical outcomes in OBE which is focussed on in the next section.

2.9. COOPERATIVE LEARNING

The concept of cooperative learning needs to be unpacked, because in the Technikon context it means experiential learning in part-time job placement which forms a part of the qualification. However, since it only applies to senior students it would exclude my first year students as well as my part-time students in 2000, as they were already working full-time with the support of their employers. I have used the term to focus attention on learning and group work, where students work together and learn cooperatively with each other and the workplace. Group-work facilitates the transition to more independent tertiary learning and thinking among students who are becoming more critical and reflective of their own academic skills. Group dynamics and conflict have to be dealt with in order to keep the groups in tact (see Appendix 10: Study Guide 2000). Leadership and accountability are also developed, with notions of group leadership discussed on the first page of the study guide. Status dimensions

and solidarity traits in languages serve as a function of discourse (Brady 1994; Edwards 1989: 149; Gee 1990). Employers are looking for team-workers so interpersonal skills become enabling.

Cooperative learning in the context of the English class and in the workplace, taps into the Nguni concept of “*Umntu ungumuntu ngabantu*” (I am what I am because of the people around me). If the concept of “*ubuntuism*” can be validated through group-work then students may find themselves empowered and encouraged to develop their own discourse strategies, making informed choices to ensure their success in communication.

The more opportunities for cooperative learning that are given students, the more likely they are to assimilate material and redesign their own meaning within the contexts of their experience. (The New London Group 1996: 85)

This is facilitated in *situated practice* (see 2.11), where each member of the group has a key role in the learning process. Cooperative learning is a technique in which students are collectively and individually accountable for the learning (Noffke 1995: 85-6). Students’ learning is facilitated by working together in groups towards a common goal. Potentially threatening situations, such as giving an oral in English as an additional language, are made less threatening by the group presenting together and supporting one another. Alternative assessment practices include peer-assessment of these oral presentations which is also conducted in group-mode, but facilitated and moderated by myself (see 3.4 and 4.5.7). Through group-work, knowledge and understanding become “*public, collaborative and distributed*” (Gee in Cope and Kalantzis 2000: 51). Furthermore, “*the other students, the various technologies in the classrooms, and the very structure of the activities themselves take on the role of the scaffolding, structuring expert, not just the traditional classroom teacher*” (Gee in Cope and Kalantzis 2000: 52). I used mentors to help resolve issues of group-dynamics through peer-mediation.

2.10 GENRE-TEACHING

When this project was first conceived, I was teaching genres, giving explicit access to meaning-making and closing the gap for those alienated from workplace discourse by different backgrounds. I found a genre approach helped to provide the textual scaffolding that my students needed. Ideally students will progress toward more academically valued ways of writing, learn content material and have a better chance to experience academic success (Martin 1989: 35). Cope and Kalantzis describe genre analysis as a way of “*engaging students in the role of apprentice with the teacher in the role of expert on language system and*

function. It means an emphasis on content, on structure and on sequence in the steps that a learner goes through to become literate in a formal educational setting" (1993:1). While the role of teacher may be contested, students who have come from a passive learning background are reassured to know that their lecturer is an authority in their field. Bhatia (1993) takes a multi-disciplinary approach to genre analysis as a form of discourse analysis. Genre is simultaneously a social and textual category (Cranny-Francis 1993:114; Lee 1992: 1999). Anecdotal reference may be made to an incident where a group copied the model of a letter of confirmation I had provided, but did not notice that they had omitted an entire line, rendering the text meaningless. It was clear that a formulaic approach was not enabling, but instead contentious and problematic.

How could textual scaffolding be used wisely? While it could be assimilationist, it should also be an empowering tool equipping students to use the discourse to position themselves against the dominant mainstream to express new and different points of view, developing their own literacy skills (Cranny-Francis 1993:114). Genre teachers have been accused of overlooking the *"personal, moral, aesthetic or even ethical formation of student-subjects. Their focus is on a more public competence and on the social benefits for the disempowered who understand the workings of genres"* (Morgan 1997:19). Genre instruction has been criticised for being a formulaic imposition of *"institutionalised cultural practices for accomplishing social purposes"* (Morgan 1997: 19). But through *overt instruction* (see 2.11 and Tables 1 and 2) it provides strategies to cope with various informational and organizational demands. The multiliteracies approach seems to me to be a culmination rather than a negation of preceding insights into learning.

2.11 MULTILITERACIES

In 1999 I was still assimilating the multiliteracies pedagogy proposed by the New London Group (The New London Group 1996). My approach was multi-modal, incorporating a literature survey by text and internet search. I also entered into e-mail correspondence with some of the group (NLG) and face-to-face interaction with some members at two annual International Literacy and Education Research Network Conferences on Learning. I was thus able to start exploring possible interpretations of the methodology. The appendices include Table 5, presenting the four stages of the pedagogy in graphic form, and its application to my project in Table 6. The final chapter refers to this further, integrating the theory and application in an interpretation of how my project can use the multiliteracies approach in the 2001 workbook.

The question posed by the NLG was: “*How do we ensure that differences of culture, language and gender are not barriers to educational success?*” (The New London Group 1996:61).

They premise this with their view of the human mind as:

embodied, situated and social. That is, human knowledge is embedded in social, cultural and material contexts. Further, human knowledge is initially developed as part and parcel of collaborative interactions with others of diverse skills, backgrounds and perspectives joined together in a particular epistemic community, that is, a community of learners engaged in common practices centred on a specific (historically and socially constituted) domain of knowledge. We believe that ‘abstractions’, ‘generalities’, and ‘overt theories’ come out of this initial ground and must always be returned to it or to a recontextualised version of it (Cope and Kalantzis 2000: 30-31).

The Multiliteracies movement recognises the diversity in English as a global language with different dialects and applications at a local level. Educators need to deal with the multiplicity of meanings and media, languages, texts and ever-new technological developments. There should be constant tension between issues of access and critical engagement, helping students to “*develop skills for access to new forms of work through learning the new language of work*” through critical negotiation of meaning and identity and the conditions of their working lives (The New London Group 1996: 67). Action research reflection is enhanced by the challenge in multiliteracies to use a meaningful way of “*designing, developing, articulating, and assessing the teaching of language and communication*” (Bond in Cope and Kalantzis 2000: 320). Not only is the multiliteracies pedagogy one of access to students, it is accessible to teachers as a useful and coherent pedagogy.

This project is structured to meet these criteria and facilitate the mutual or collective development of students as well as their respective individual growth through situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice (The New London Group 1996).

TABLE 1: A SYNTHESIS OF THE MULTILITERACIES PEDAGOGY: THE HOW:

The following table is my own graphic presentation of the Multiliteracies Pedagogical Practices of the New London Group:

<i>Situated Practice:</i> (Doing)	Basing learning in the students' own experience and common sense; Immersion in experience and the utilization of available discourses, including those from the students' lifeworlds and simulations of the relationships to be found in workplaces and public spaces.
<i>Overt Instruction:</i> (Reflecting)	Developing languages for systematic, analytic, and conscious understanding. In the case of multiliteracies, this requires the teaching of explicit metalanguages, which describe and interpret the Design elements of different modes of meaning.
<i>Critical Framing:</i> (Reflecting)	Interpreting the social and cultural context of particular Designs of meaning and how these fit in. This involves the students' standing back from what they are studying and viewing it critically in relation to its context.
<i>Transformed Practice:</i> (Doing)	Applying the Design in different (or newly created by students) contexts - making a new Design; Transfer in meaning-making practice, which puts the transformed meaning to work in other contexts or cultural sites.

(The New London Group 1996: 88, Cope & Kalantzis 1997)

The following application of this table was modelled on Cope and Kalantzis (1997a) "Putting Multiliteracies to the Test" on the LERN Internet site in 1999.

Firstly, in a *Situated Practice* perspective on business communications, students are involved in the project through role-playing and modelling telephone and interview techniques and targeting companies. Scaffolding comes in the form of the study guide (see Appendix 10) which models such genres as a telescript for students to make their own preparations for phone calls. Achievement is measured in whether spokespersons are successful in securing an interview, especially if negotiation is necessary such as setting a time and date which is mutually convenient.

Secondly, taking an *Overt Instruction* perspective, students are supported in using visual literacy to analyse past students' performances on video including the types of language and body language used, eventually viewing their own video-taped presentations to write self-reflection assessment papers which are guided by explicit probing questions. Ideally students will develop their own meta-language of definitions and ways of describing the positions of the

participants' power, interests, and alternatives such as negotiating their interviews with the companies.

Thirdly, taking a *Critical Framing* perspective, students explore the steps and strategies used in business interaction in order to understand and critique them. Students show that they know what the Design is for and what/ why it works.

Finally, taking a *Transformed Practice* perspective, students' own practice is transformed with the ultimate goal of transforming their socio-economic context. They move beyond academic-type written assessment to authentic applications, where they actually visit a company, conduct a fact-finding interview and then report back in a group oral presentation reproducing information they have assimilated on the company as well as transferring the meaning-making Design in a group written report on the visit. The group presentation is created by the students, where some go to great lengths to transform the classroom into a new site representing the company with posters, banners and other promotional visual aids, changing the decor, rearranging the furniture to give a different focus to that of other groups. Students also appropriate material gathered in the company visit to make their own portfolio of project work. These students are the Business Practitioners of the future and if they can transform their practice now, then institutional practice may be transformed through their intervention.

Multiliteracies has become a paradigm I find rewarding to work in and I hope to develop in this direction. The next chapter will describe the development of the project and study guide through action research, preparing for the analysis of the study guide and future prospects of a workbook in 2001.

2.12 CONCLUSION

In conclusion language issues and practices are part of a political process in which dialogues between learners and between learners and teachers need to be encouraged. The way our students use the English language will not be adequate to cope with the academic discourse of the tertiary institution (Technikon Natal) unless some explicit scaffolding is provided. In the educational arena it is no longer acceptable to merely transmit knowledge if we want the doors of learning and culture to be opened (Brown and Van Dyk 1991: 125). Access to discourses of power and empowerment needs to be further researched and I offer the following chapter as a reflection on the process I undertook to develop this project.

CHAPTER 2 ENDNOTES:

- ④ Where students are quoted it is with their permission. Some work-in-progress reports were anonymous and are quoted as such. When I included student quotes in papers presented at conferences, a draft was made available for student scrutiny beforehand.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: ACTION RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses my choice of action research and describes the instruments used as well as the implementation of the cooperative learning project over the four cycles through which the study guide was developed.

3.1.1 DEFINITIONS OF ACTION RESEARCH

A narrow definition of action research is to examine one's own practice (McLean 1995: 3-4). More specifically, it means rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the choices, materials and processes used to facilitate student learning (McLean 1995: 3-6) in order to make strategic changes in one's teaching practice. While practically, action research could be described as a technology of actions, it is philosophically a political commitment to address injustices aiming for the moral and ethical improvement of human life (Noffke 1995: 4). The process is typically cyclical although spirals of steps may change the pattern (Walker 1996:35). In redefining the problem of theory and research, Carr and Kemmis (1986: 118) conclude that:

the only legitimate task for any educational research to pursue is to develop theories of educational practice that are rooted in the concrete educational experiences and situations of practitioners and that attempt to confront and resolve the educational problems to which these experiences and situations give rise.

There appear to be three main goals of action research: **firstly**, to simply improve personal practices, **secondly**, to more widely give teachers the role of making professional judgements about the means and ends of instruction; and **thirdly**, to develop personally, improve one's professional practice, one's understanding of practice and the situations in which those practices are conducted to transform one's educational institution, the education system and society using justice, equity, caring, and compassion (Noffke 1995: 20,199; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead 1996: 8).

3.1.2 OTHER MODELS OF ACTION RESEARCH

A model presented by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988 cited in Noffke 1995:34) starts a cycle of four steps: planning, enacting, observing the plan, and reflection, with a three part phase:

Firstly reviewing one's situation, **secondly** identifying an area of concern for improvement, and **thirdly** "*a reconnaissance of the circumstances related to the thematic concern*" (Noffke 1995: 34). Literature on action research covers a wide range of approaches, for instance, in several accounts edited by Noffke (1995), various cycles pertain to different activities within a teaching programme. In comparison, my own approach had four cycles implementing the same whole project, but with different class groups and years. Thus a simpler model has three phases: conceptualisation, implementation, and interpretation (McLean 1995: 7, 67). **Firstly**, CONCEPTUALISATION, involving delineating the teaching learning processes, identifying inputs and outcomes. **Secondly**, IMPLEMENTATION, measuring outcomes, identifying and analysing any comparisons. **Thirdly**, INTERPRETATION, judging effectiveness and cost benefit, and determining action. In this continuous process, the conceptualisation and subsequent cycles is informed by the interpretation of the previous cycle. Likewise, my own model which can be described as a simple chronological repetition of the same project in different years with different students, making reflective changes with each re-implementation. The reflection looked both back and forward, making recommendations according to the retrospective analyses. Each cycle afforded the opportunity to develop or revise the project structure and the study guide as well as the degree of intervention and scaffolding given to the various groups of students.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND QUESTIONS

Having established the need for change I started to develop teaching tools that could enhance the dynamic, collective construction of language practices among my students in the English I class. The instruments and techniques that were used to collect data included peer-evaluation forms, self-reflection papers, reports (formal and informal, written and oral), assessment of students' work, statistical analyses of their marks, and questionnaires (Cohen and Manion 1993: 97). The study guide was critiqued according to SAIDE criteria (see Appendices 12 and 14) and Technikon guidelines (see Appendix 13 and 4.5).

In the collection of data I became aware of my own, often intuitive, judgements of teaching. Sometimes I recognised what I was doing in the literature survey. Most of the time the literature described issues that I needed to examine from other perspectives. What started as intuitive became informed practice. In 1998 two of the groups constituted multicultural ① classrooms as did the fourth cycle of the project with the part-time BBA group. Aside from these three groups most of the learners in this study were Black commerce foundation students. It was useful to employ multicultural language practices that would "*support the*

dynamic, situated negotiation of commonality and difference” (Willett *et al* 1999: 169). For instance I allowed for the individual student voice to express their own uniqueness, giving opportunities to hear their story – transforming the context of their history (his-story) into their own story and situating their new learning in the context of their respective backgrounds and practices. In 1998 I enthusiastically used literate life histories and dialogue journal writing with each student. However, given increased class sizes it was necessary to delegate this to mentors in 1999 and 2000 (see 1.5). The feedback from dialogue journal was given by mentors where deemed necessary, but the actual journals were kept confidential between the writers themselves. Having distanced myself from the dialogue journal writing it was necessary to establish other routes for informal feedback from students. Our class discussions were lively and interactive, often extending beyond our contact time with students coming to my office to discuss their ideas. Through this process of participation, students grew in confidence to express themselves. Student groups were able to give their own account of their site visit.

In summary, several techniques used to develop the student voice included: mentorship, mentor-mentee dialogue journal writing, progress or work-in-progress written reports by students, one-minute reports by students, group-work, group and class discussions, and presentations. The academic development as well as confidence and motivation of students was traced through entries in dialogue journals to their mentors who gave feedback to me.

In 1998 I was seeking ways to empower my students, to promote change in the English classroom and link theory with practice. Technikon Natal was in need of transformation to keep up with national developments such as the 1995 South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as well as adjusting to the changing demographic profile of the student body where a historically White institution now had a predominantly Black student body. Action Research has many forms but certain characteristics were relevant to my work and situation. Firstly, classroom intervention was necessary if change was to happen. Participant involvement had possibilities of empowering action consciously aiming at instituting changes to improve the area being investigated (Alwright and Bailey 1991: 50). This was cyclical and reflective. The project and assumptions were problematised (Morgan 1997: 43; Carr and Kemmis 1986: 32). These characteristics moved my work beyond being merely developmental or experimental (Wall and Husen 1968: 9). I became more aware of my own professional accountability as a lecturer, whilst gaining the reassurance of theoretical justification for what I was doing (McNiff 1988: xviii). For instance, I started teaching business communication genres with a less prescriptive approach, examining alternatives and leaving the choice of options, such as salutations or greetings, open to students. Secondly, the provisional findings should be made

public where issues of validity and alternative interpretation may be addressed (Noffke 1995: 7). This took place at a number of conferences and seminars (see Appendix 2: Dates for Data Collection and Analysis). Thirdly, the cyclical continuous revisiting of issues develops a theory-practice relationship that both validates the researcher and indicates needs for revision or change (Noffke 1995: 5). The implementation of this cyclic characteristic follows.

With each cycle the materials were revised and the project modified according to feedback received from students, reflection and further readings (see 1.2 Project Description and Appendix 10: 2000 Study Guide). For instance, in 1998, companies were approached before students were involved so that they merely had to choose among those companies whose participation in the project had already been secured and establish a suitable date and time for the site visit. While this was less daunting for students, several of whom had never even used a telephone directory, let alone worked through a switchboard, it was both time consuming for my office and undermined the authenticity of the communication exercise of students approaching strangers themselves. This project was implemented for the first time in the 1998 (see Appendix 1: Table 3: Comparative Table of the Four Cycles). The multiliteracies pedagogy suits this project and the fifth cycle will be a more informed application of the four phases of the pedagogy (see Table 2: Application of Multiliteracies).

My early questions in 1998 were tentative and naively grand:

- Would I be able to validate the previously disadvantaged students and facilitate their empowerment?
- Would they become my co-researchers and investigate disadvantage given multiple voices in our classroom?
- What criteria should be used in course materials development for a pedagogy of access? Why? How does my study guide meet these criteria?
- What criteria should be used in assessment? Why? How does this project meet these criteria?

In 1998 I was using literate life histories (Jackson and Thomson 1998) and dialogue journal writing to discover pertinent insights into students' backgrounds, seeking to bridge the gap between their Primary and Secondary Discourse at the Technikon (Brice-Heath 1994: 23). Some of the assumptions about student backgrounds were exposed as myths, while new insights were gained through student feedback. For instance, more students had televisions and other media influences than anticipated. Also, some students were more concerned about settling fees than learning academic skills. It was ironic that students blocked their chances of

passing by being preoccupied with fees and in a vicious circle were then disqualified from student financial aid support. I hoped through this project to increase their motivation and application to their studies.

In 1998, I used the following action research sequence: **firstly**, I identified the issue of students' motivation and accountability for their studies as well as their poor use of English. I wanted to make English I relevant, outcomes-orientated and a source of motivation and increased self-confidence for students. **Secondly**, I sought knowledge in readings about materials development, OBE, CLT and genre-analysis. I also sought knowledge about my students and revised the questionnaire for a demographic profile. **Thirdly**, I planned an action research project. I devised the current project for English I students which would integrate aspects of the mainstream syllabus, using techniques of genre analysis, modelling, and peer-, self- and portfolio assessment, as well as group work in planning and visiting a local company and reporting on it (orally and in writing). **Fourthly**, I implemented the project and wrote observations in a personal journal. I presented a paper at a local conference where peer dissemination generated useful feedback. Along with student feedback, discussions with other colleagues and the mentors, this helped me to **fifthly**, reflect further and revise the project. **Sixthly**, I implemented it again in the 2nd term of 1999, having reviewed it, re-worked the materials, such as handouts analysing the business letter and fax, I brought the whole project together in the first study guide which was thirty pages long.

I compiled the 1999 study guide to give students a clear sense of direction, responding to some student confusion with the handouts and process in 1998 which was "*un-understandable at first*" (anon) ③. Due to rising costs the 2000 study guide (see Appendix 10) was condensed from thirty to only thirteen pages. It is more closely analyzed in 4.5. The study guide provided guidelines on each of the activities in the project and facilitated self-tuition with assessment criteria and deadlines up front, releasing time-tabled lectures for more interactive, group organized learning, skills acquisition and discussion. Materials were mediated by myself, with a tutor and team of ten mentors in 1999 and twelve mentors in 2000. Delegating and sharing the load made the project feasible and sustainable, especially with the continued use of dialogue journals. This was sustained by each mentor writing weekly to up to ten mentees and relaying issues back to me or referring mentees to other specialist help such as our student counselling center. Students expressed gratitude for the support and guidance of their mentors as well as appreciation for the learning opportunities of working through group dynamic issues in their groups (see Appendices 8 and 9: Some Student Comments).

In 1999, I continued to refine the qualitative action research approach for the research issue: an assessment of the implementation of a cooperative learning project in an English I class with a hundred second language speakers from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds doing the National Certificate in Commerce ⑤. Feedback indicated that a great majority of Black students came to this course with inadequate and under-resourced schooling, with dysfunctional or indigent family backgrounds and a range of psycho-social problems (from stress and depression to basic transport problems). Black students have several cultures and African languages and practices, mainly Zulu and Xhosa, representing both rural and urban lifestyles.

My research questions in 1999 became more specific and realistic:

- How can a cooperative learning project in an English I class with a hundred second language speakers from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds doing the National Certificate in Commerce at Technikon Natal's Pietermaritzburg campus help initiate these students in the Discourse of academic literacy?
- How can portfolio assessment (of the project) and outcomes-based-approaches help initiate these students in the Discourse of academic literacy?
- How can materials developed for resource-based learning help initiate these students in workplace Discourse and academic literacy?

By 2000 I was grappling with more complex questions:

- How can you teach a genre **and** teach against it?
- How can the pedagogy of access proposed by the multiliteracy project improve my practice?
- How can critical literacy help my students develop a portfolio of communication strategies?
- To what extent are the principles of OBE compatible with the multiliteracies project?

I still use a genre teaching approach to *overt instruction*, believing that if I assume students will pick nuances up and they do not do so, that the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged will stretch wider. However, the use of *critical framing* ensures that students do not copy genre models without a deeper understanding of why such a format is used. For instance, a fax cover sheet requires certain basic information, including the sender's name and telephone number. The purpose is obviously to facilitate an efficient reply as well as for further correspondence. I have not delved deeply enough into issues of critical literacy and strategic

communication, but intend using resources such as the Janks (1993) Critical Language Awareness series of handbooks. Regardless of the origins of the project, multiliteracies approaches are suitable in as much as the critical outcomes of OBE have some universal value (2000 Literacy and Education Research Network Conference on Learning).

The part-time students relied on the study guide in varying degrees, some groups following it prescriptively with others submitting portfolios that re-interpreted the project according to their own constraints, representing their collaborative efforts with the inclusion of e-mails to each other and myself, with notes scribbled during their various telephone calls. A number of comments about time constraints as well as problems of meeting during and after working hours (which were exacerbated if a group member was working shifts) will need to be dealt with in any future implementation of the project with part-time students.

The fourth cycle, run in 2000 will be analyzed in greater detail in chapter 4. In short, I modified the project task, increasing the range of aspects to be investigated. I also relied on part-time students to take responsibility for meeting regularly and following the steps for preparing the business presentations and portfolios.

A comparison of the schemes of work used in 1999 and 2000 (see Appendices 2 and 3: Programmes for the Project) illustrates the evolution of the project to a more informed process eventually modelling the 2001 programme on the multiliteracies pedagogy. The table format was omitted in the 2000 study guide where contents and outcomes and group formation were introduced, as well as roles such as group leader and project planning responsibilities. For some groups, *overt instruction* was needed, whereas for others, they were able to work out the need to delegate responsibilities and hold fellow-members accountable for these respective areas. A simpler layout and numbering was used, but the table may have made the process more accessible.

Reflecting on these three years I have developed a critique and understanding of my lecturing while becoming more informed in my practice, what I believe in, what influences me and what this means in practice (Lacey 1996: 355). One of the realities of my practice is that my own position needs to be problematised. The next section considers the fact that I am a non-Zulu researching classes comprised of more representatives of the Zulu nation than any other South African group.

3.3 THE ROLE OF THE OUTSIDER IN RESEARCH IN AFRICA

A feature of action research that needs to be discussed is that of participant researcher. Although I have adopted a multicultural approach in my interaction with students who are primarily of the Nguni culture (see Appendix 6: Table 4: Demographic Profile of NCC 2000 students), it is necessary to consider literature sources on this matter: *“it is probably true to say that, whereas any qualitative research involving interviews, participant observation and other forms of intervention in the daily lives of the community (whether one is a member of it or not) raises problems of an ethical nature, there are specific problems faced by individual researchers coming from one very different community to research another.”* (Vulliamy, Lewin and Stephens 1990: 79). I have come to realise that being an outsider does not disqualify me as a participant researcher. One of my colleagues is a Zulu woman in a traditional family, living in the rural Taylors’ Halt community beyond the Pietermaritzburg townships. However, even though she is an insider she was regarded with suspicion when approaching the elders to conduct primary research in their area. She has had to conduct her research with a distant community near Greytown and Wartburg, 40 km on the other side of Pietermaritzburg, where she would normally be considered an “outsider” to the community. One may still argue that as a Zulu woman she is less of an outsider than I would be (as a white woman). The peer-mediation of mentors and the mentorship coordinator helped to bridge this gap. In the context of my classroom, I was not an outsider, but there was then the aspect of my power as their teacher to consider. Allegations of academic imperialism and the dominance of Western or industrialised or first world countries (Vulliamy, Lewin and Stephens 1990: 232) give a background awareness of the researcher grappling with issues of personal legitimacy, value systems and relevance or usefulness to the developing country in which research is occurring. Because of this, I have learned to depend on those who are cultural “insiders”, such as the mentors, who can use Zulu in code-switching as mentioned above (see 1.5 and 3.2).

3.4 ASSESSMENT AS DATA COLLECTION

Students entering tertiary institutions with language disadvantage as well as educational disadvantage (2.3) need to be given material access to various discourses (2.5) to bridge the difference between home and school discourses. The implications are that misunderstandings and miscommunication can occur due to these (sub-)cultural differences in the use of talk, silence and the various functions of language most often measured by teachers in writing exercises submitted by students.

Most of the data collected was qualitative and focussed on student work using alternative assessment practices, among my own monitoring, moderating and marking of oral and written submissions. **Firstly**, self-assessment was formative, with reflection papers and self-evaluation guided by questions. One student observed that her nervousness was betrayed on video by “*shivering*” trousers. Students recognize inappropriate body language and work to improve it. **Secondly**, peer-assessment was summative of group presentations. The peer-group that would be presenting next would evaluate the previous presentation alongside myself and moderated by me in a group discussion directly after the presentation. This gave the next group insights into evaluation criteria so that their final revisions of their own presentations were more focussed. The 1999 Spoornet © group reported, “*To be an evaluator as well as a presenter helps a lot because you will see where you might improve your presentation.*” **Thirdly**, group-assessment was formative in written reports and in compiling a portfolio. **Finally**, a real audience made the activities authentic, where the class watched the presentation and asked questions, and memoranda were sent to the Technikon while letters to companies of confirmation and thanks were posted or faxed. This data was used for research purposes in two ways, firstly to give me feedback on whether the tasks were meaningful and effective, and secondly, to give students feedback on whether they were reaching the anticipated outcomes. Both factors contributed to the ongoing process of action research giving input to inform the next cycle of implementation of the project.

3.5 MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

Communication tools or access devices used in this project centred on the study guide which was underpinned by Technikon and SAIDE criteria for resource development (see 4.5 and Appendices 12, 13 and 14). Applied language studies principles such as genre teaching, workplace discourse and multiliteracies perspectives deal with the growing significance of cultural and linguistic diversity among our students, as well as the influence of new communications media and technologies. Two implications raised by the Subcommittee of the Language Plan Task Group (1996: 149) are, **firstly**, that there are too few published materials available for teaching literacy in South African languages and, **secondly**, that the materials available seldom form continuous discourses:

Materials range from language-across-the-curriculum approaches to discrete skills approaches; methodologies range from syllabic and whole-word approaches to language experience approaches; and many courses described as being at the same level often reflect very different levels. (1996: 149)

This poses great challenges in areas of materials development, something which may be recognised, but is underfunded. SAIDE criteria were used when revising the study guide (Appendix Tables 12 and 14) as their approach seeks to increase access to educational opportunities by removing all unnecessary barriers to learning. SAIDE aims to give learners a reasonable chance of success by centring the learning system on learners' specific needs and multiple areas of learning (Department of Education, March 1995, White paper). Most of the SAIDE criteria will be expanded in the following chapter.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Action Research methods have made the process of the cyclical revision and re-implementation of both project and the study guide more rigorous and authentic. The insights given by Cook (1998: 106) encourage creativity: "*If we miss out the 'messy' bit, if we tidy everything up to fit in a system, the creative part of our work can be lost.*" I have recognised certain gaps in my research, which I hope to address in the next implementation of the project. For instance, it would be useful to draw statistical correlations between students' performance in the project in contrast to the rest of the English course, as well as to compare their English marks with those of other subjects, like Business Management. Attempts to do this accurately were thwarted by the teething problems of a new information technology system across the Technikon campuses. More concrete reports from students on aspects of the study guide could have given valuable feedback for revising the SG. Although the project started as creatively intuitive, I continued my literature survey and found fulfilment in the multiliteracies model. A more thorough investigation could have been made into the post-Fordist industries and the implications of a global economy and how third world aspects of our own economy could be modified or accommodated. I am looking forward to a more theoretically informed implementation in 2001 with a more user friendly workbook.

The next chapter seeks to address the question: To what extent can these materials be developed to bridge the gap between students' background and the classroom by explicitly granting access to various discourses? Some answers will be suggested in the final chapter through analyses of aspects of the project, process and the study guide as well as recommendations for the next research cycle.

CHAPTER 3: ENDNOTES

- ⑤ The National Certificate in Commerce (NCC) is the re-curriculated version of the 1998 Certificate in Business Education (CBE) and the 1999 Commerce Foundation Course (CFC).

- ⑥ The Spornet group refers to that group which visited and did their business presentation on Spornet.

CHAPTER 4: REFLECTIONS & ANALYSIS OF PROJECT & STUDY GUIDE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter briefly considers some reflections on the early implementations of the project, but its main focus is to analyse the study guide and make recommendations for a student workbook for 2001. I will also explore possibilities of classroom transformation that may impact on the facilitation of learning and discourse acquisition in future.

4.2 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH REPORT PROCESS

The years in which I have engaged in this project have been professionally rewarding as well as a process of self-discovery, revealing my tendency to be critical and even hypercritical, although to say I was naively hypocritical would be a paradox. But then having paradoxes, differences and opposites is acceptable in the paradigm of productive diversity (Cope and Kalantzis 1997b; 2000:146-7). The complexity and diversity of my experiences and reactions can be acknowledged without ascribing any pathology to the condition of co-existing extremes. As writers on action research have observed, the messiness is sometimes unavoidable (Walker 1996). There have been times over the last two years when I have lost my focus and gone off on a tangent that seemed exciting and relevant at the time, particularly in my literature survey. I wrote in a May 1999 personal journal entry that *“for me the greatest breakthrough has been the realisation that although I do a lot of diverse, but somehow (for me) integrated things, from curriculum and programme re-structuring and teaching techniques to the mentorship project. I need to hone the focus of my research in on one aspect only. The peripheral issues, including reference to SAQA, can be flagged in the contextualisation. My tendency so far has been to embroider the contextualisation too much and fuzz up the core issues - clearly there is a need for disciplined writing and conscious focus. I need to do some vigorous pruning.”*

Because the report was written over such a long period of time from 1998 to 2000, there were style shifts and conflicting voices demanding rigorous rewording. In July 2000 there were inconsistencies and gaps contrasting with yet too much tangential fuzz and too many emotionally charged words. By August 2000 I had swung to the other extreme where I was assuming too much, using nominalisation and vague expression. I needed to be more explicit, using language with clarity and articulation. The constraints of being a part-time student do not need to be elaborated here, but I could empathise with my part-time students. The passionate

belief that I was doing something good and worthwhile drove me forward. My enthusiasm, productivity and confidence were revived in conversations with colleagues and my University supervisors. I particularly struggled with issues of objectivity and found reassurances in notions of “*critical intersubjectivity*” (McNiff 1988 cited in Walker 1996: 44-45). It was reassuring to know that I was not the only one struggling with “*rampant subjectivity*” (Lather 1991 cited in Walker 1996: 45). I had to learn to make my interpretations empirically accountable while determining the reliability of my data. To this end it was useful to run the gauntlet of local University and Technikon seminars and international conferences. Peer feedback and critique through this dissemination both encouraged and interrogated concepts, particularly my tendency to nominalise and abstract work which needed more concrete expression. My research journal worked better in a dialogue with others than as a purely reflective tool bearing out the premise in chapter one that meaning is socially constructed. The process of articulating my point of view helped me to come to terms with the material and concepts that we were discussing. The silences of this research project will no doubt be revealed and in turn generate research questions for another cycle of reflective research. While I may be my own worst critic, I am also buoyantly positive and in everything give thanks, even if all I can glean is insight and wisdom about how not to do it again. For instance, when I first used a questionnaire to develop an audience profile, I omitted a question on gender, one of the most commonly used demographic characteristics. Subsequent questionnaires have been more inclusive as the next section indicates.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF THE 2000 QUESTIONNAIRE AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

This section summarises the data from the 2000 questionnaire which is included in Appendix 5. Appendix 6: Table 4 gives a table and Appendix 7: Bar Charts depict some of the data gathered in order to convey a demographic profile of the NCC 2000 students. While over half the students were male there was an even spread of gender leadership in groups, with occasional single-gender groups. In contrast, only four of the twenty three part-time students were women.

Only one full-time student was over 25 years of age, about 30% were aged 21-24 years, 70% were aged 18-20 years, with 60% being straight out of secondary school. The part-time group had a wider range in age from early twenties to fifties.

The NCC school background indicated that about half went to rural schools where the languages spoken most were Xhosa and Zulu. The other half was constituted in descending

order by model-C schools (former NED, self-governing multi-racial schools), urban schools (where black students speak Zulu amongst themselves and English with the White teachers), township schools (where the culture of learning is poor under the DET legacy), finishing schools (similar to urban Black-White student-teacher language barriers) and “Comm Techs” which were previously known as vocational schools. Student feedback over the years has developed a profile of learners who have come from authoritarian schools where corporal punishment and deprivation meant that theirs was an external locus of control. They needed to become self-directed learners.

Giving these learners the study guide was partly aimed at releasing them from habitual dependence on teacher instructions and reminders (see the Comparison between traditional and OBE classroom practices, Mkhabela 1999 in Appendix 11: Table 5). Groups gradually learned to set down their own deadlines and project plans for the phases of the project activities. On average two out of five groups found this problematic, but where early intervention occurred they learned self-discipline and motivation to get back on track. In the first year of involving mentors in the project, I noticed a tendency among some groups to transfer their dependence to their mentor. This was addressed at the time and avoided in the second year, where the mentors gave moral support, but were careful not to take responsibility for moving the project forward for their group.

The part-time groups operated with a different level of mutual accountability, but their schooling background counted less, because most had been in the workplace for over five years. When considering the part-time students’ locus of control, it was apparent that work and family demands on their time tended to obscure deadlines. Some reported difficulty in meeting in between weekly lectures, but most could keep in touch by telephone or e-mail. The part-time groups were strongly motivated to complete their studies successfully even when it meant extra effort.

Language is one of the core issues here. Over 80% of the full-time students in 2000 spoke Zulu at home, with a small proportion speaking Xhosa and even smaller proportions speaking Swati/Tsonga, Xhosa/Bhaca, Venda, English and English/Afrikaans. This confirmed my earlier assumptions that the majority of my students enjoyed an Nguni heritage with accompanying cultural practices. The part-time students represented a wide South African demographic profile with seven speaking English at home, although historically classified as White, Indian and Coloured. The balance of sixteen of the part-time class were Black and spoke Zulu among

other African languages. As mentioned earlier (1.6) this was the most heterogenous class that I implemented the project with.

4.4 REFLECTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECT

In this section I will be considering whether the project was viable with particular reference to group work, cooperative learning, textual support and site visits. I will refer in my conclusions to my hopes for further transferability, through the study guide to other groups and lecturers, of the project in 2001. In preparation for this I will revise the study guide, transforming it into an interactive learner workbook (see 4.5 and 4.7). Part of the preparation will entail revisiting the comments and feedback of the part-time students who engaged with the project in the fourth cycle. The differences between the part-time and full-time students are varied. Parts of the project were modified to accommodate this as exemplified below. The part-time students are already employed and many of them are already fluent in their given Workplace Discourse. So their objective was not to merely visit and report on a local company as the full-time students had done. I realised the need to extend the assignment question and developed the following options with them:

ASSIGNMENT 4 (for part-time BBA learners):

Note: Diagnosis, identification of issues and recommendations must be carefully substantiated (with reference to textual/internet research). Groups will coordinate and give a professional presentation in which they creatively interpret one of the following options (or discuss further options with their lecturer):

1 Compare and contrast two companies in a chosen area (for instance 2 banks, or 2 insurance companies, or 2 factories with similar/comparable products). A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis may be used.

Conclusions will need to be drawn.

OR

2 Report on group visits to several companies in which you explore an aspect of business in the context shared by most of the members of the group (for instance human resource management or industrial relations) and present your findings and conclusions as well as possible recommendations.

OR

3 Identify and examine a particular problem in a chosen company (written consent may be required) and present recommended solutions. Ideally this presentation should have been made to the company (or a transcript made available) to ensure transparency.

There were five groups in the BBA class and they chose to cover diverse aspects indirectly related to these options: Group 2 investigated the housing crisis, Group 3 compared the fully automated division with labour intensive divisions of Rotoflex and Aluminium Foil Converters and Packaging, Group 4 conducted an in-depth analysis of the communication styles of Umgeni Water, ABI (Amalgamated Beverages Industry) and Correctional Services, and Group

5 compared the communication strategies of Correctional Services with the SAPS (South African Police Service) in the Natal Midlands area. Group 1 bears closer examination, choosing to do a comparison of Nestle and Clover where the group *“decided to play the role of a Marketing team carrying out a presentation for a group of students studying marketing. We asked the class to sit back, relax and enjoy the beautiful country and fresh air, as if they were attending a conference in the Berg. Before the students entered the classroom a chocolate was placed on each chair. The promotional material and advertising displays for both companies were displayed very attractively in the classroom.”* (Group 1) This group reported time constraints as a reason for not conducting site visits, because they worked full time and sat in lectures every Saturday morning. They relied on industry connections of two members to gain their information by letters and other supporting documentation. They overcame the problem of group members being out of town during their preparations for the presentation by using telephones and e-mail to keep in touch while preparing their presentation. Their group developed synergies and a supportive infrastructure working together. One of their members reported, *“I have learned how to be more confident through this course, and realised that self-confidence is extremely important when communicating. I have also come to appreciate the fact that being assertive is sometimes necessary when communicating, one should not always avoid issues in order to keep the peace.”* It was immensely rewarding to share in the triumphs of this group member as she stretched newly confident wings. Having started out insisting that she could never do an oral she eventually delivered a professionally polished presentation with her group supporting her with only a flicker of her earlier nervousness.

The breakthroughs and learner-independence of the part-time implementation of the project contrasted with the extent of careful guidance and nurturing needed by the full-time learners. Some of my personal journal observations from 1998 included:

Students have responded to this project with a range between great enthusiasm from the start - a catching of the vision! and initial procrastination and apathy then a scurrying to make up for lost time. The more effort they have put into the project, the more positive they have been. They have learned about the consequences of leaving things to the last minute as well as the importance of being punctual. One group was late and discovered that the time was lost as the Marketing Manager had an appointment scheduled directly after their visit. The difficulties experienced this year were reflected on. Needs were recognised such as to develop the materials more so that students have greater scaffolding for each task as well as an overview of the whole project from the start, especially the early introduction of the concept of

portfolio assessment. I have been using reflective journal entries to guide my praxis and will continue to implement suggestions (often supplied by the students) to improve the format of the materials.

Students benefited from the process of a guided project which expected self-directed study and group accountability of its participants. To quote a senior student who served as a mentor in 1999 and 2000 and was an English I student doing the project for the first time in 1998:

I think the reflection would be that, the project created an independent, self-information acquiring person in us. This idea moulded us into learning to do and try things on our own rather than being told how to do things, we were guided towards empowering ourselves with these skills. Through this notion other abilities came to life, which I think would not have been possible have it not been clearly pointed out. So this is what I think has been imprinted on me, which is why I tried to instill this idea and tried to help mentees achieve and acquire what got through this project (Sifiso Shobede 1999 and 2000 Mentor, HRM II and III student) ⑦.

By 1999 I reflected that:

Issues of empowerment and ownership have been addressed, where students are given access to facilities (such as to make local phone calls and send faxes from my office), and are accountable for driving the project themselves. The scaffolding provided empowers them to make decisions and plan for success. Whether the project facilitated the acquisition of various forms of literacy (or discourse) is still under review, but there are ways of assessing this built into the assessment practice. There seems to be consensus that the project was instrumental in students gaining confidence to express themselves as well as an awareness of professional discourse in real-life settings which is the beginning of discourse acquisition.

Student support for the project's value is given in the words of the 1999 group who visited the local Albany bakery:

Our conclusion is that we will be very pleased if this project should proceed and it is an inspiration to our studies, and working in groups is excellent so that whatever we do is according to order and performance is very high, and we are all committed to our work ⑧.

It appeared that learning collaboratively encouraged students to perform better generally than when they worked individually. For example in the business presentation, two students worked on their own - one had been indisposed at the time of her group preparations and

presentation and was granted an extension to do her own presentation when she returned to class. Another student spoke to me at the outset about doing his own project on the coastal factory that his father worked at. This would have been too far for other students to visit and it was agreed that he work alone. Both of these students gave relatively strong presentations, but lacked the rich resonances of having prepared and delivered their presentations with group support. Their individual portfolios were not thoroughly compiled and overlooked some of the assessment criteria laid down in the study guide. It would be reasonable to conclude that these two students would have given a stronger performance and gained more from working synergistically with others. The possibilities of working and learning in groups are not incremental, but exponential with a synergistic output far greater than the parts of the whole.

How can students' learning be improved? Groups are clearly a successful strategy, but caution is raised to keep them small, "*Now my problem is this I don't get involved in the group's talkings as we are a little bit many*"^⑦. (Mzuphela Nodola, NCC L, group of 6) Another member of that group was more enthusiastic:

Last term was wonderful since we started working in groups. Our groups were mainly established for English project. These groups helped us a lot because when we are working in group we are combining different ideas and skills. We also use these groups to other subjects. I wish we can use this learning system throughout the year. ... Group work help even those who did not understand lectures because we all know each other and we are afraid of no one. That also help those who don't want to be pushed behind because in groups you all have to contribute^⑦. (Sbonelo Xulu NCCL)

Group work was clearly a successful learning strategy of this project, particularly in the context of Nguni "*ubuntuism*" and in the light of a new workplace requiring team-players in distributed systems (Gee in Cope and Kalantzis 2000). The problems that arose within groups meant that learners had a safe environment in which to resolve issues and sustain healthy group dynamics, compared to having to deal with such issues in the workplace itself. Having considered the interpersonal aspects, the most rigorous analysis of this project should engage with the study guide. It is in this textual tool that transferability possibilities should rest.

4.5 ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY GUIDE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

My main aim for the 2001 revision of the study guide or workbook is to make it user-friendly and accessible to learners so that they can work independently. Genre teaching needs a careful balance between scaffolding and prescriptive practice. The textual scaffolding therefore becomes an essential component of transferability. To this end, the open learning approach of SAIDE offers useful criteria (see Appendices 12 and 14) which will be discussed in this section. However, it is first necessary to examine what has been done in the project using the multiliteracies pedagogy of access, anticipating how it will be modified according to the four phases listed in the Table 2 application below. I have mentioned (see 1.11) that I developed this project intuitively in response to influences such as OBE, CLT and student needs, moving increasingly into the multiliteracies approach of the New London Group. This Table considers aspects of the project in multiliteracies terms.

TABLE 2: APPLICATION OF THE ‘HOW’ OF MULTILITERACIES PEDAGOGY AND ANALYSIS OF STUDY GUIDE:

Multiliteracies phase	Activity	Analysis
Situated Practice	Project planning, targeting the company, negotiation/conflict management	These concepts needed to be introduced to ensure that new methods were grounded in experiences and forms with which students were familiar – group discussions, mentoring by senior students, mediating, explaining the study guide and modelling by facilitator.
Overt Instruction	Study Guide and assessment	The materials developed in the study guide ensured that students knew their assessment criteria upfront and these were explained at the outset
Critical Framing	Roles of group members	Various roles were assigned within groups and issues were anticipated; groups discussed ways of resolving conflict & issues like being regretted by companies
Transformed Practice	Telephone techniques	Group representatives prepared telescripts (modelled in the study guide) and then practised before phoning through our switchboard and interacting with company personnel, accepting inevitable regrets, & trying again
Situated Practice	Written confirmation of the visit (as	Grounding this in students’ familiarity with business letter writing, they were now introduced

	arranged)	to preparing fax cover sheets
Overt Instruction	Study guide	The fax format and letter were given textual scaffolding in models. My letter gave further guidance, ensuring clarity for companies on the project, educational outcomes and expectations.
Critical Framing	Groups proof-read the fax letter before co-signing it.	Group discussions about persuasive language and register developed from the previous experience of the telephone conversations to include an awareness of the need for various communication techniques/ technologies for various purposes.
Transformed Practice	Faxing the confirmation	The fax cover sheet, letter from students, letter from lecturer (made available) and fax report (generated on completion of faxing) were then incorporated into the group portfolio of work. Not only were students moving from imaginary exercise letter writing, but they were managing their work as information managers (not just losing it once marks had been noted).
Situated Practice	Business etiquette and body language	Students' own cultural backgrounds and norms were explored (the difference between full-and part-time students was marked) and validated and the concept of corporate culture introduced
Overt Instruction	Business etiquette and body language, OHTs (overhead transparencies)	I modelled appropriate handshakes with individual attention, discussing OHTs and handouts on gestural clusters and expressions, making corporate behaviour more explicit
Critical Framing	Business etiquette and body language	Class and group discussion explored the options available & the need for a corporate culture that reflected the demographics of our social structure
Transformed Practice	Business etiquette and body language	Students were encouraged to determine their own interpretation of issues raised, to work sufficiently within the dominant paradigms until they were in a position to transform corporate culture. They visited companies, dressing and conducting the interview to suit their purpose. This was developed in their business presentations where they chose their own corporate identity as a group, dressed

		accordingly and structured their presentation with clear objectives.
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Note this format was followed with writing and faxing letters and memoranda of thanks (clearly highlighting the functions of both, eg memo for within the Technikon to the transport officer or the switchboard or assistants in my office...)

Situated Practice	Oral presentation	Students were reminded of their own experiences giving orals at secondary school as well as shown videos of previous business presentations (from the '98 and '99 applications of the project)
Overt Instruction	Video taped presentation de-constructions	Having gained permission from previous participants in the project, videos of their presentations were analysed by me in class time. Ideas to enhance the presentations were discussed, eg using company logos and promotional gear giving corporate identity.
Critical Framing	Videoed presentation de-constructions	Students were encouraged to comment (in class and on other videos in the library) on aspects of body language, group coherence and overall structures (also preparing them for their own self-evaluation)
Transformed Practice	Business Presentations	Students presented the findings of their visits to their peers, first evaluating their peers and then being evaluated by their peers (with lecturer moderation) – they were given opportunities of practising with videoing, but most did not do so and some expressed regret in retrospect).

The pattern continues for the culmination of the project in textual assessment through modelled group report writing, group portfolio compilation and individual self-evaluation and reflection papers – all given textual scaffolding in the study guide and explanation by facilitator and student mentors.

Although I had invested a degree of academic rigour in designing and implementing the project and the study guide, everything seemed to be rushed, leaving gaps and silences in my work which troubled me as a researcher. It is appropriate now to start planning reflectively for 2001 without the pressure of print-room deadlines and a bursting diary with full daily timetables.

I have adapted categories used by SAIDE (see Appendix 12: 1998 and 14: 2000) in reviewing a wide variety of learning materials to analyse the 2000 study guide. I have also taken into

account the Key Principles in Writing Learner Guides (see Appendix 13) devised by the Technikon Natal Academic Quality Unit.

4.5.1 ORIENTATION IN THE STUDY GUIDE TO THE PROJECT

The study guide (SG, see Appendix 10) assumes that a lecture orientation to the programme will be given during class-time along with an introduction that should motivate and challenge students. I need to start with a descriptive overview of the project and its benefits to learners. The first few pages should prepare students for the extent of what I expect and how I will assess their progress. I want to give an overview describing the project as a whole and how it fits into the syllabus, substantiating the overall learning and teaching approach used. I will include a flowchart for groups to fill in with some guidelines of how long each activity may take. Students will be able to pace themselves using the workbook to plan their interim deadlines and mutual accountability. The specified learning outcomes given on page one of the SG appear too soon and do not recognise prior learning or situate the learning opportunities in the students' own contexts. I need to give clear and relevant information to motivate and direct learners effectively in their study. Learners need to understand from the outset the requirements of the various components of the course. I need to give guidance to learners in the planning of their work as they prepare for the portfolio and explain its value for concluding assessment of their work. I need to consider technology and the rationale for including review and self assessment questions and how learners could approach these to maximise learning. I would like to use more reflective activities and explain how to approach these in order to improve practice. I should explicitly disclose the nature of the support offered such as mentors for my full-time students, but need to consider my aims for transferability (see 1.3, 2.9 and 3.2) in a resource-based independent use of the SG.

4.5.2 MEDIA

Eventually, this study guide will be truly interactive on the intra-net as a resource for all Technikon Natal students: multi-media could then be incorporated with links to relevant sites and business correspondence formats could be downloaded for efficiency. A data-base of companies and contacts could be established and updated with comments to prepare future students and help them avoid resistant companies. E-mail between students and companies would facilitate more immediate real time communication as well as emphasizing the nature of the global village. For instance, if a multi-national company has a branch in Pietermaritzburg, then students can augment their visit to the physical site and face-to-face interaction with staff

by visiting the web-site and e-mailing staff overseas or nationally to conduct wider research into that company. Obviously institutional constraints, such as the lack of an open learning centre or computer laboratory with internet access for students on the local campus would have to be addressed before this is possible. This was less of a problem for part-time students who had their own or work computers. Some full-time students used my internet access for their company research.

4.5.3 LAYOUT AND ACCESSIBILITY

Layout and accessibility were a problem, because the SG was too textually dense, students felt somewhat overwhelmed. They needed more white space at appropriate junctures for interactive notes, such as developing a schematic project planning flowchart (see p 85) or lined space for their own reworded and individualised telescript (see p 90). Paradoxically the 2000 version is even more densely textual than the 1999 SG. The 2001 project should be more user-friendly. The current cover is on a bright lime green paper with a simple title and the Technikon crest. While this identifies it as a formal academic document, it does not promise to be user-friendly. So a more appealing cover is needed which promises to make learning fun and relevant. Effective layout should maintain a creative tension between consistency and variety.

The text needs to be broken up into reasonable chunks (see Appendices 12, 13 and 14), and the layout should assist the logical flow of ideas. Learners will be able to find their way through the various sections through the provision of contents pages, headings, subheadings, statements of aims and learning outcomes. The workbook will have clear signposting and cross-referencing between sections and activities. I want to use graphics, icons, concept maps, pictures, cartoons, diagrams and other access devices, especially to help those who learn best through visual representations of ideas. The section on business presentations could be enhanced with material on developing visual aids, pictures, photographs, diagrams, captions and explanations accompanying visual aids. Photographs of successful sets used by previous groups using company logos and promotional gear giving corporate identity would also promote creative ideas and sustain a high standard of presentation.

Preparation for video-taping the presentations needs to be clearly indicated in the workbook and linked to the intended learning outcomes, particularly learners' self-evaluation. For instance, light-dark contrasts with learners in dark suits standing against glaring white walls could reduce clarity in a video-recording. I have collected videos of previous presentations in the campus library and could include some structured visual literacy lessons, but this would not

suit transferability to other lecturers and campuses. A long-term possibility would be for the workbook to be accompanied by a skillfully edited video which illustrates concepts.

4.5.4 RESOURCES

Ideas for supporting audio-visual aids could be suggested to enhance presentations. References could be made to further readings on each section as well as audio-visual aids at the back of the study guide. A list of web-sites could encourage internet searches where possible.

4.5.5 CONTENTS

The contents, particularly about local companies, will need to be up-to-date and relevant to the learners' studies in keeping with the outcomes and goals of the course, clearly explaining and illustrating concepts with relevant examples from previous groups and case studies. I have entered into collaborative research with a British academic who has pioneered case studies in the "*Times 100*" series with educational value for school use in England. We hope to develop case studies relevant to South African business contexts for Technikon learners. I would like to use multiple intelligences with social, kinetic, auditory and visual ways for learners to assimilate new concepts, rather than merely learn them off by heart. The multiliteracies *situated practice* and learners' experience will include recognition of prior learning (RPL) in discussion topics. *Overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice* will also be included (see Table 2 above). Questions will guide learners to contextualize new knowledge appropriately as they are given opportunities to interrogate what they learn. Their prior knowledge and experience should be valued and used in the development of new ideas and practices. Changing this SG to a workbook would mean learner interaction and note-space will give them the chance to co-author the text as they develop and respond to the issues. Table 2 will be incorporated in a user-friendly way in the new workbook. Frequent opportunities and motivation for application of knowledge and skills in the workplace will be given in a reflective rather than mechanical way such as students simply copying the models of business correspondence.

4.5.6 ACTIVITIES

I need to develop more work-related activities that show a range of difficulty, variety of task and purpose with reasonable time indications and references to resources and strategies available to learners to engage with the content. For instance standard office procedures of booking calls through a switchboard and sending faxes needed more hands-on *Overt Instruction* and the intervention of mentors became an ad hoc type of apprenticeship. I could have used more case studies to illustrate concepts such as negotiation skills, as well as given students activities in which they had to engage in the negotiation process themselves. Feedback is offered in the form of suggestions. The learners in their groups should be able to identify the errors they have made and then assess their own progress. Because of the implications of learners using English as an additional language, they may not notice language errors or problems with tone and register. I need to provide more feedback and commentary on the activities. This may be enriched in the workbook with anecdotal accounts of previous experiences and activities. Case studies of companies and previous groups' stories will further develop support frames in the workbook.

4.5.7 ASSESSMENT

I need to consider the various checks that can be introduced that are not too time consuming for the learning facilitator. Time constraints could be overcome by generating feedback on interim assessments in class discussions. Clearly explained mechanisms should exist for learners to respond to feedback on assessment. The assessment criteria (see 3.4) for the programme as a whole have been made clear to learners, but they need to be linked to the intended learning outcomes. Formative and summative assessment criteria were already set out clearly and made available from the start of the project, but it is necessary to simplify them and make them more accessible to learners in the following ways. In the learner workbook I will simplify the assessment tables (see Appendix 10: Study Guide 2000) into "*Rubrics*" (June 2000 Technikon workshop on OBE assessment). The inclusion of rubrics tables will be complemented by an explanation of the assessment strategy and assessment requirements. Rubrics include the title, description, instructions of the task and the set of criteria by which it will be judged. I would reduce the number of criteria from 10 to about 5, and the standards from 0% to 100% to fewer standards such as "Yes, Sometimes, No" or frowning ☹, blank and smiley ☺ faces with clearly understandable level descriptors. I could introduce built-in consistency in peer- and self-assessment, making the self-assessment more interactive eventually with on-line assessment worksheets where clicking on icons and then submitting the completed worksheet via e-mail or LAN (local area network) server would give students more of a sense of immediacy. This would have to be designed collaboratively with help from colleagues with greater information

technology (IT) expertise than my own, as well as developing a way of giving more personallised feedback to co-respondents.

4.5.8 LANGUAGE

I need to find simple, accessible words that are not only recognizable, but that do not have to be interpreted further to qualify my particular use of those words. Even though I have responded to student feedback about the vocabulary of the SG, further simplification is possible, especially in the reduction of jargon. I would like to use language that is clear, coherent and in the active voice, but that nevertheless reflects workplace discourse. This is becoming less formal and ironically for my text-based workbook, the new workplace is driven more by speaking and listening than writing (Cope and Kalantzis 1997b: 105). It would be possible to reflect this in a dialogue format with sketches illustrating interpersonal interactions, such as in conflict resolution, group dynamics and negotiation. The example of the workbook ought to encourage learners to use language that is friendly, informal and welcoming. The language of the current SG is sensitive as far as gender and culture are concerned, although it could be enriched with code-switching into Zulu or other Black African languages. A full translation by a professional translator could be a long-term goal. In the meantime, multilingual glossaries may serve as a point of increased access.

4.5.9 GENERAL

The workbook could be expanded with summaries and revision exercises or even pretests where feasible at intervals to assist the learners to learn. It could include skills for learning such as reading, writing, analysing, planning, managing time, evaluation of own learning needs and progress in an integrated way such as the section on negotiation. The workbook has a great deal of potential for *transformed practice*. The English I course and my teaching practice are continually transformed in each research cycle and the following section offers some possibilities of ideal literacy classrooms.

4.6 MODELS OF OTHER LITERACY CLASSROOMS

There are many forms of literacy with specific conventions and methods of communication to convey and share meaning, whether mathematical, textual, performed, or contractual. Kist (2000: 712 - 716) describes an ideal learning environment of many studios for students to experiment with various forms of creative expression, modelled by teachers who are also

working in studio space as professional producers of meaning. “*A classroom in which each student’s individuality of representation is respected would also be one in which students would be motivated to learn.*” (Kist 2000: 716) I have considered and expanded Kist’s five characteristics of a literacy classroom, which should feature:

- 1 ongoing, continuous usage of multiple forms of representation, for example, a web-page with text and print content in a multilingual form, graphic design content using Computer Aided Design or scanning in students’ own creative artwork, sound content perhaps incorporating students’ own composed music or poetic creativity, and interactivity between these components and the web-user;
- 2 explicit discussions of symbol usage currently and throughout history, for example, critical literacy (Morgan 1998), critical framing (The New London Group 1996, Cope and Kalantzis 2000), and the media resource specialist ideally putting together multiple versions of an incident or subject using multiple forms of representation or semiotics, challenging students with questions about who owns the depiction of the incident and whose interests are being served in the way it is depicted;
- 3 ongoing metadialogues in an atmosphere of cognitive pluralism, using a variety of designs, semiotics and design conventions: discourses, styles, genres, dialects, voices, (The New London Group 1996);
- 4 a balance of individualized and collaborative activities in order to allow for multiple intelligences theories (Gardner 1995 cited in Kist 2000: 715);
- 5 evidence of active, engaged students, exploring the concepts of “*flow, or the psychology of peak experiences*” (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, 1991, 1993 cited in Kist 2000: 716) where artists, athletes and craftspeople engaged in various activities describe themselves being totally engrossed and involved with the task in an enthralling way.

Kist makes radical proposals with ramifications both in teaching and the broader socio-economic context: “*If classrooms embraced a broadened definition of ‘literacy’, I believe literacy educators would become leaders of overall school reform and redesign*” (2000: 716). In a developing country like South Africa, literacy teachers are aware of the challenges facing students, especially those with disadvantaged backgrounds without access to the literacies of power and empowerment in English, academic and workplace discourses. Researchers in developed countries see the literacy classroom aspiring to the “*resource-rich, interdisciplinary environment that students currently live in outside of the school day*” (Kist 2000: 716). In South Africa we have a responsibility to model this rich context, to give students access to it and to prepare them for the workplace where such backgrounds would be assumed. Forms of

the multiliteracies' overt instruction are championed: "*Knowledge of forms of representation and different discourses would be made explicit for students enabling them to make effective use of them*" (Gee 1996; Kist 2000: 716). In a classroom that embraces multiple forms of representation, students' individual choices of symbol systems would not be discriminated against or controlled. Celebrating language diversity would become a part of the curriculum (Delpit 1988). In other words, students have a right to experiment with, explore and challenge a range of designs of meaning and through assimilating them produce their own meaning with their voice being heard as a unique contribution to the overall joint construction of meaning. As such, literacy teaching has the capacity for becoming a tool for empowerment and developing productive diversity (Cope and Kalantzis 1997b and 2000) for South African students. This project would both enable students to prepare for workplace discourse, as well as motivate them to develop academic literacy. Ideally, a venue such as that described by Kist (2000) could be used to complement the scaffolding of the learner workbook and allow students to practice aspects of the project until they achieve confidence and mastery. For instance, in a media centre, students could tape record their telescript and play it back in their groups to identify areas for improvement. In a similar way, groups could video-tape their practices of the business presentations and in playing these back, students will be able to detect annoying or distracting body language, such as fidgeting and rocking back on the heels.

Another illustration of classroom possibilities is Baxter's (2000) case study which opens up possibilities for my visual literacy analyses of video-taped group presentations, commenting to the class on the weaknesses and strengths of the previous presenters. Baxter suggests that in order to equip students with meta-analysis skills, they need to understand the politics of discourse and how people are positioned within their speech contexts. She suggests that we:

collect a resource bank of video- and audio-recorded materials of speakers in a variety of public contexts. In the UK, examples include Members of Parliament in the House of Commons; panel discussions like Question Time (BBC1); chat shows; 'live' TV programmes for teenagers involving young presenters; televised dramatisations of court proceedings or public investigations; after-dinner speeches or wedding speeches; 'live' and studio-recorded news or sports commentaries. Students might be encouraged to reflect on how effective or otherwise the speakers are in these settings, to look at the cultural contexts in which each is produced, and to give their reasons why particular speeches succeed or fail. (Baxter 2000: 34)

In South Africa, documentaries, live parliamentary hearings, pop-TV magazine programmes could be used to deconstruct the discourses for students. This could use worksheets or books,

such as Rooney's *New Perceptions* released in 1998 as an integrated skills coursebook supported by videos of magazine programmes. A problem with such a multimedia approach is that the more specifically relevant a teaching tool is, the more likely it is to lose currency and relevance. The paradox exists then to produce a workbook that provides textual scaffolding directly relevant to a certain type of student in a given context about specific content, but one which allows for divergence and transferability. The Janks (1993) series on Critical Language Awareness are a valuable resource, but also more relevant to a specific historic period of education for liberation. My immediate aim would be to develop the 2001 workbook according to the criteria identified above (see 4.5) which would have specific reference to TNP commerce students. My long-term aim would be to generalise the structure of the workbook, have it professionally illustrated and published along with a composite video for broader transferability.

4.7 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

My reflections and analysis point to several recommendations:

- I need to continue the process of reflective action research keeping a journal with daily entries and observations to develop critical intersubjectivity (see 4.2). I also need to develop the research partnership started at the Learning conference with frequent dialogue by e-mail.
- I should simplify and shorten the questionnaire to focus only on those demographic background features which pertain to the English project and workbook (see 4.3).
- I need to develop and model concepts of the new work order, productive diversity, distributed systems, accountability, and group dynamics, as well as develop pertinent assignment questions in the workbook (see 4.4).
- I need to work more integrally with the multiliteracies pedagogy, using the framework of *situated practice*, *overt instruction* and *critical framing* to guide learners into *transformed practice*. The contents should follow the multiliteracies framework and needs to be more concretely explained with case studies and illustrations (see 4.5.5).
- I need to revise the Study Guide and develop an interactive learner workbook that provides a balance of scaffolding and broader scope for creativity. This needs to

directly address criteria specified in 4.5 and in a further revision be developed into a workbook that is transferable and publishable.

- The workbook needs to have a contextualised orientation and overview with motivational impact from the outset (see 4.5.1).
- Multi-media opportunities need to be developed for project videos and workbook to be incorporated in on-line internet interactive facilities (see 4.5.2).
- Layout and accessibility need to meet user-friendly objectives with visual aids and signposting integrating the workbook (see 4.5.3).
- The workbook should lead students to further references and resources, encouraging self-directed ongoing learning (see 4.5.4).
- Activities need to be more integrated with specified outcomes and workplace expectations as well as student experiences (see 4.5.7) and case studies.
- The language of the workbook should be simplified and pitched at a level suitable for learners with professional translation and code-switching into Zulu enhancing their access to new or difficult concepts (see 4.5.8)
- I should consider the examples of other literacy classes in creatively flexible adaptations to make my own classroom practice more effective, such as using multi-modality and media, pluralism, multiple intelligences and actively involved student activity (see 4.6).
- The collection of resources available to students should be increased, particularly in library video collections.

4.8 CONCLUSIONS

This project could serve as a metaphor for my own professional development as well as a symbol of access for my students. While students enthusiastically supported the project (see Appendices 8 and 9) there is not sufficient correlation between their project performance and their more traditional test and examination marks which seemed lower (as evidenced in marksheets which are confidential). The Technikon changed to a new Information Technology

System in 1999 and statistical analyses have not been possible. This will be done in the 2001 implementations where I expect to have a range of classes across commerce disciplines and not just the NCC foundation students. It is likely that I will be able to enlist the participation of other lecturers to facilitate the project with the NCC classes that they will be lecturing next year. There will be future possibilities of transferability across the four campuses of the Business Studies Unit as I continue to coordinate the part-time Business Communication course for BBA students, encouraging three other colleagues to implement the project with the new workbook. The silences and gaps in this research to date will constitute the challenges and research questions in the next cycle of action research. If I may then conclude on a promise of ongoing cycles without possibilities of completion and closure, then this research report can at least be closed.

CHAPTER 4 ENDNOTES:

- ⑦ Student quotes are not corrected unless the original cannot be understood without editing.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

TABLE 1: COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE FOUR CYCLES:

The four cycles are represented graphically below in which the eleven class groups that have done the project are set out along with other comparable factors.

Cycle	1	2	3	4
Year	1998	1999	2000 f/t	2000 p/t
Class groups	1)Public Relations 2) Human Resources Management (HRM) 3) Certificate in Business Education (CBE)	Commerce Foundation Course (CFC): 1) J (Accounting & Management) 2) K (Marketing) 3) L (HRM)	National Certificate in Commerce (NCC): 1) J (Accounting) 2) K (Marketing) 3) L (HRM) 4) M (Management)	1) Bachelor in Business Administration
Course Context	English1, Full time, 1 year	English 1, Full time, 1 year	English I, Full time, 1 year	Business Communication, Part time, 3 months
Project	3 months, 3 rd quarter, July-Sept	3 months, 2 nd quarter, Apr-Jun	3 months, 2 nd quarter, Apr-Jun	last 2 months, Apr-May
Text	Handouts	1 st Study Guide	2 nd Study Guide	2 nd Study Guide

APPENDIX 2: DATES FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

DATE	ACTIVITIES
Term 3, July-September 1998	First implementation of project (with Human Resource Management, Public Relations and Certificate in Business Education first year students in English I, PMB campus), data in portfolios, students' reflection papers and questionnaire
September 1998	Presentation of paper on project at Technikon Natal's 3 rd Annual Commerce Research Conference (peer scrutiny)
October-December 1998	Reflection on implementation (Data), Establishment of criteria for course materials development (CLT, SAIDE, genre-analysis, OBE), assessment methods
February 1999	Commencement of English I lectures, Questionnaire to determine a demographic profile of the English I students
March 1999	Literate life histories written by English I students
Term 2, April - June 1999	Implementation of Cooperative Learning Project in English I writing observer comments
May 1999	English I interim reports giving feedback on the work in progress (synthesise readings on materials development) + my own reflection paper on last year's findings in the Cooperative Learning project - exploring emerging ideas and themes on the participants to clarify ideas.
	Technikon Natal Research day - reworking and presentation of Sep 98 paper for FRD/CSD - (peer scrutiny)
July 1999	Preparation of reflection paper on 2 nd implementation of project (synthesizing emic students' individual reflection papers, etic readings and findings on criteria for course materials development)
August 1999	INTERPRETING DATA - Qualitatively Assessing the trustworthiness of the data, verifying my interpretation of the trends, refining my understanding of the patterns (themes and concepts) and OBE criteria
August 1999	RETRIEVING DATA - Bringing a synthesis of comments made in dialogue journals (between students and mentors) and interim reports together in a synthesised report - writing an abstract synthesis of themes and/or concepts

September 1999	PRESENTATION OF DATA (in papers covering different aspects for peer scrutiny) Friday 3 Sep: UDW forum, Senate Room Friday 17 Sep: Paper, 4 th Annual Commerce Research Conference, TND Forum with ALS department UNP? 27-30 Sep: Presentation at the 6 th International Conference on Literacy and Education Research Network on Learning in Penang, Malaysia
October-December 1999	REFLECTION ON PAPERS preparing the way forward for the next implementation of the project
Term 2, April-June 2000	3 rd implementation of project: with NCC J, K, L, M class groups- data in portfolios, students' reflection papers and questionnaire
Trimester 1, April-May 2000	4 th implementation of project with part time BBA students - data in portfolios, students' reflection papers and questionnaire
July-September 2000	PRESENTATION OF DATA (Papers given for peer scrutiny) 3-7July - Presentation at the 7 th International Conference on Literacy and Education Research Network on Learning in Melbourne, Australia 13 September - TN Research Day, Durban 27 Sept - Seminar at The Nottingham Trent University, UK
October - December 2000	Preparation and delivery of first draft dissertation - indicating understandings and grounded theory developed through the process (narrative and chronological), responding to critique from audiences at presentations; Working with supervisor on redrafting dissertation
15 Dec 2000	Submission of dissertation to Higher Degrees

APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME FOR COOPERATIVE LEARNING PROJECT (1999):

wk	Term 2 1999 Scheme of work: English I for NCC: PMB
1	Negotiation skills, groups form and choose a leader and company to target
2	Project planning & introduction of PORTFOLIO concept of evaluation, Representative of group to phone (office) and set up an appointment, telephone techniques, writing (WP) & sending fax in confirmation of visit, booking transport
3	Conflict management, interview techniques, compiling questions, preparing visit
4	Professional etiquette and attire, Non-verbal communication, Company visits
5	Company visits continued, Compiling group oral presentation
6	Memo thanking TN for transport, Letter thanking Co for visit, more preparation
7	Group presentations on company (videoed & peer-evaluated)
9	Professional writing, compiling written reports
10	PORTFOLIO, Reflection paper critiquing project, evaluating own performance

APPENDIX 4: PROGRAMME FOR PROJECT (2000):

1	Negotiation & conflict management skills, groups to form and choose a leader and company
2	Project planning & introduction of PORTFOLIO concept of evaluation, Representative of group to phone (C309) and set up an appointment, telephone techniques (lecture and video), writing & sending a letter/fax in confirmation of the visit, memo booking of transport (local)
3	Interviews, compiling questions, (getting general info in preparation for the visit), Professional etiquette
4	Non-verbal communication/Body Language, company visits, memo thanks: transport, letter thanks: visit
5	Compiling group oral presentation, Professional writing, compiling written reports
6-7	Group presentations on company (to be videoed)
7	Compiling PORTFOLIO for submission, Review and evaluation of project
7	Students to do a reflection paper critiquing the project and evaluating their performance on video

APPENDIX 5: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF STUDENTS: QUESTIONNAIRE

[Please note that there was more white space in this, but inserting it here lost some of the formatting.]

Please complete the following questions to help me develop a profile of the students with whom I've been working. Names are voluntary and the information will be used anonymously in my research findings. You may omit awkward or non-applicable questions, but your cooperation is much appreciated. If you're unsure of an answer precede it with ±. Thank you for your help.

Nicky Sanders

1. NAME STUDENT NUMBER

2. DATE

3. CLASS GROUP

4. CAMPUS

5. DESCRIBE YOUR INVOLVEMENT ON CAMPUS (eg A member of a club or sports team)?
.....
.....

6. BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE CAMPUS FACILITIES (eg Library) YOU USE. ARE THEY ADEQUATE?
.....
.....

7. CURRENT LINE OF STUDY:

8. WHAT IS YOUR MAIN MOTIVATION FOR STUDYING?
.....
.....

9. HOW ARE YOU FINANCING YOUR STUDIES (eg loan, bursary or scholarship)?
.....
.....

10. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION (HIGHEST LEVEL, YEAR AND PLACE OBTAINED):
.....

11. PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION (HIGHEST LEVEL, YEAR AND PLACE OBTAINED):

12.

FULL-TIME STUDENT		PART-TIME STUDENT	
-------------------	--	-------------------	--

13. IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED PLEASE GIVE DETAILS (POSITION, RANK, GRADE, LEVEL OF AUTHORITY, YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, ...)
.....

14. WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER PLANS OR AIMS (BRIEFLY)?
.....

15. GENDER: MALE/FEMALE
16. RACE (For demographic purposes only):
17. CULTURE (For demographic purposes only):
18. RELIGION (For demographic purposes only):
19. AGE:

18-20		21-24		25-30		31-35		OTHER	
-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	-------	--

20. PLEASE GIVE YOUR SECONDARY EDUCATION BACKGROUND:

YEARS	SCHOOL	AREA/TOWN/SUBURB	PROVINCE	RURAL/URBAN

21. WHAT WERE THE NUMBER OF PUPILS IN YOUR HIGH SCHOOL CLASS:
22. WHAT WAS THE TEACHER: PUPIL RATIO IN YOUR CLASS (eg 1:30)?
23. HOW MANY SUPPORT STAFF WERE THERE? CLEANERS....., SECRETARIES
.....OTHER
24. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE FACILITIES YOU USED AT SCHOOL. WERE THEY
ADEQUATE?
.....
.....
.....
25. HOW MANY LEVELS/GRADES WERE THERE? PLEASE SPECIFY (eg grades 8-
12):.....
26. WAS IT CO-ED (MALE AND FEMALE)? YES/NO - OR SINGLE SEX? YES/NO
27. WAS IT EX-DET OR EX-MODEL C OR MULTICULTURAL? PLEASE DESCRIBE:
.....
28. WAS IT PUBLIC OR PRIVATE? URBAN OR RURAL?.....
29. WHAT MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION WAS USED (eg English)?.....
30. WHAT WAS THE MAIN LANGUAGE YOU SPOKE AT SCHOOL (TO YOUR FRIENDS?
.....AND TEACHERS?.....
31. WHAT WAS THE MAIN LANGUAGE YOU SPOKE AT HOME?
32. WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TO ENGLISH (good/bad/neutral)?
.....
33. WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TO OTHER LANGUAGES (specify them)?
.....
.....
34. PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR FAMILY (SIZE, AREA YOU LIVE IN, SIZE OF HOUSE,
FACILITIES, NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS, eg EXTENDED FAMILY, YOUR PARENTS/SPOUSE
AND THEIR OCCUPATION)?
.....

35. IS THERE A LAND-LINE PHONE IN YOUR HOME? YES/NO
36. DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN CELLULAR PHONE? YES/NO
37. DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO A PERSONAL COMPUTER (PC)? IF SO, WHERE AND HOW OFTEN?

.....

.....

38. IF YOU LIVE APART FROM YOUR FAMILY DURING TERM, PLEASE GIVE DETAILS:

.....

39. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE ATTITUDE TO YOUR STUDYING OF YOUR FAMILY

.....

.....

40. WHAT DO YOU DO FOR SPORT AND RECREATION?

.....

.....

41. WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE EVENTS IN THE YEAR (CULTURAL FESTIVALS, PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, SPECIAL OCCASIONS...)?

.....

.....

42. PLEASE SHARE ANY OTHER DETAILS WHICH MAY HELP ME BUILD UP A DESCRIPTIVE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF MY STUDENTS.

.....

42. PLEASE COMMENT ON THE ENGLISH PROJECT.

.....

.....

43. WAS THE PROGRAMME OF THE PROJECT EASY TO FOLLOW? WOULD IT BE BETTER IN A TABLE? WITH COLUMN SPACE FOR WRITING YOUR DEADLINES AND WHO WOULD DO EACH TASK?.....

44. IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ABOUT THE ENGLISH COOPERATIVE LEARNING PROJECT DONE IN 2000, PLEASE SHARE THEM HERE:

.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING TIME TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS RESEARCH PROJECT

.....Nicky Sanders

APPENDIX 6:**TABLE 4: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF NCC 2000 STUDENTS**

(compiled by Mrs Dudu Phoswa) [Formating complications could not be undone]

NAME/ code	AGE	SEX	MATRIC YEAR	SCHOOL TYPE	HOME LANGUAGE
L 1	18-20	F	1998	Model-C	Zulu
L 2	18-20	F	1999	Rural	Zulu
L 3	21-24	F	1998	Township	Zulu
L 4	18-20	M	1999	Rural	Zulu
L 5	21-24	M	1996	Model-C	Zulu
L 6	18-20	M	1996	Rural	Zulu
L 7	21-24	M	—	—	Zulu
L 8	21-24	M	1997	Rural	Zulu
L 9	18-20	F	1999	Rural	Zulu
L 10	18-20	F	1999	Rural	Xhosa/Bhaca
L 11	18-20	M	1998	Township	Zulu
L 12	21-24	M	1999	Urban	Zulu
L 13	18-20	F	1999	Rural	Zulu
L 14	18-20	F	1999	Finishing	Zulu
L 15	25-30	F	1996	Rural	Xhosa
L 16	18-20	M	1999	Urban	Swati/Tsonga/Eng
L 17	18-20	F	1999	Urban	Zulu
L 18	18-20	F	1999	Township	Zulu/English
L 19	18-20	M	1999	Finishing	Zulu
L 20	21-24	F	1994	Rural	Zulu
M 1	18-20	F	1999	Township	Zulu
M 2	18-20	M	—	Model-C	Zulu
M 3	18-20	M	1998	Rural	Xhosa
M 4	18-20	M	1999	Rural	Zulu
M 5	18-20	F	1999	Township	Zulu
M 6	18-20	F	1998	Rural	Zulu
M 7	18-20	F	1999	Rural	Zulu
M 8	18-20	F	1999	Urban	Zulu
M 9	18-20	F	1999	Finishing	Zulu
M 10	21-24	M	1996	Rural	Zulu

M 11	21-24	F	1998	Urban	Zulu
M 12	_	F	1999	Finishing	Zulu
M 13	_	F	1998	Urban	Zulu
M 14	18-20	M	1999	Rural	Zulu
J 1	18-20	M	1999	Rural	Zulu
J 2	21-24	M	1998	Rural	Zulu
J 3	18-20	M	1999	Rural	Zulu
J 4	18-20	M	1999	Urban	Zulu
J 5	18-20	F	1999	Model-C	Zulu
J 6	21-24	F	1997	Township	Zulu
J 7	18-20	F	1999	Model-C	Xhosa
J 8	18-20	F	1999	Rural	Xhosa
J 9	18-20	F	1997	Model-C	SiSwati
J 10	18-20	F	1998	Rural	Zulu
J 11	18-20	F	1998	Urban	Venda
K 1	21-24	M	1999	Rural	Zulu
K 2	21-24	F	1995	Rural	Zulu
K 3	21-24	M	1995	Rural	Zulu
K 4	21-24	M	1999	Rural	Zulu
K 5	21-24	F	1998	Rural	Zulu
K 6	21-24	M	_	Model-C	English
K 7	21-24	M	1998	Urban	Zulu
K 8	21-24	M	1998	Township	Zulu
K 9	18-20	F	1999	Rural	Zulu
K 10	18-20	M	1999	Rural	Zulu
K 11	18-20	F	1999	Rural	Zulu
K 12	18-20	F	1999	Comm Tech	Zulu
K 13	18-20	F	1998	Rural	Zulu
K 14	18-20	F	1998	Rural	Zulu
K 15	18-20	M	1999	Model-C	Zulu
K 16	18-20	M	1999	Urban	Zulu
K 17	18-20	M	_	_	Zulu
K 18	18-20	F	1999	Rural	Xhosa

K 19	18-20	M	1999	Model-C	English/Afrikaans
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KEY TO TABLE 8:

L 1 -20 = Personnel management students.

M1- 14 = Management students.

J1 - 11 = Accounting students.

K1 - 19 = Marketing students.

F = Female

M = Male

School Background

Rural = Rural schools where most of the time the languages spoken there are Xhosa and Zulu.

Township = Township schools where the culture of learning is poor.

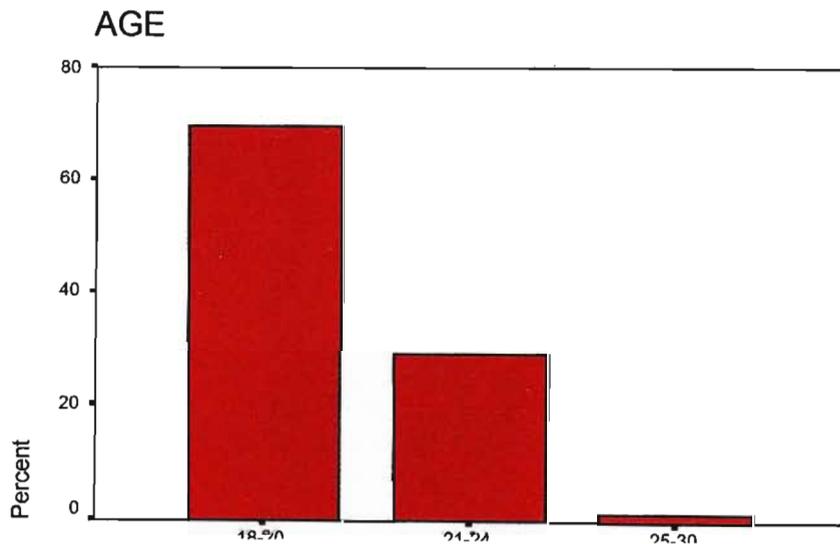
Urban = Urban schools, normally Black students versus White teachers. Language use is Zulu amongst students and English between students and teachers.

Model-C = Multiracial school, medium of instruction is English.

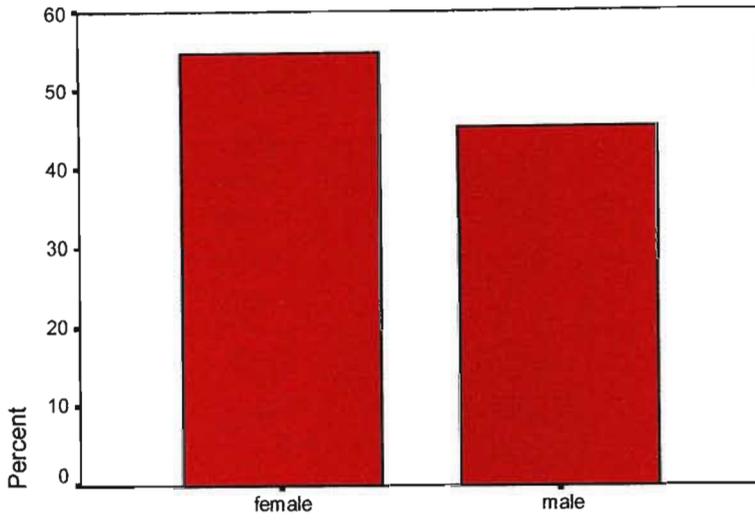
Comm Tech = Previous known as vocational schools.

Finishing = Finishing school, Black students versus White and Black teachers. Language use is Zulu and English.

APPENDIX 7: BAR CHARTS DEPICTING 2000 STUDENT AGE, GENDER, LANGUAGE, MATRIC, AND SCHOOL BACKGROUND

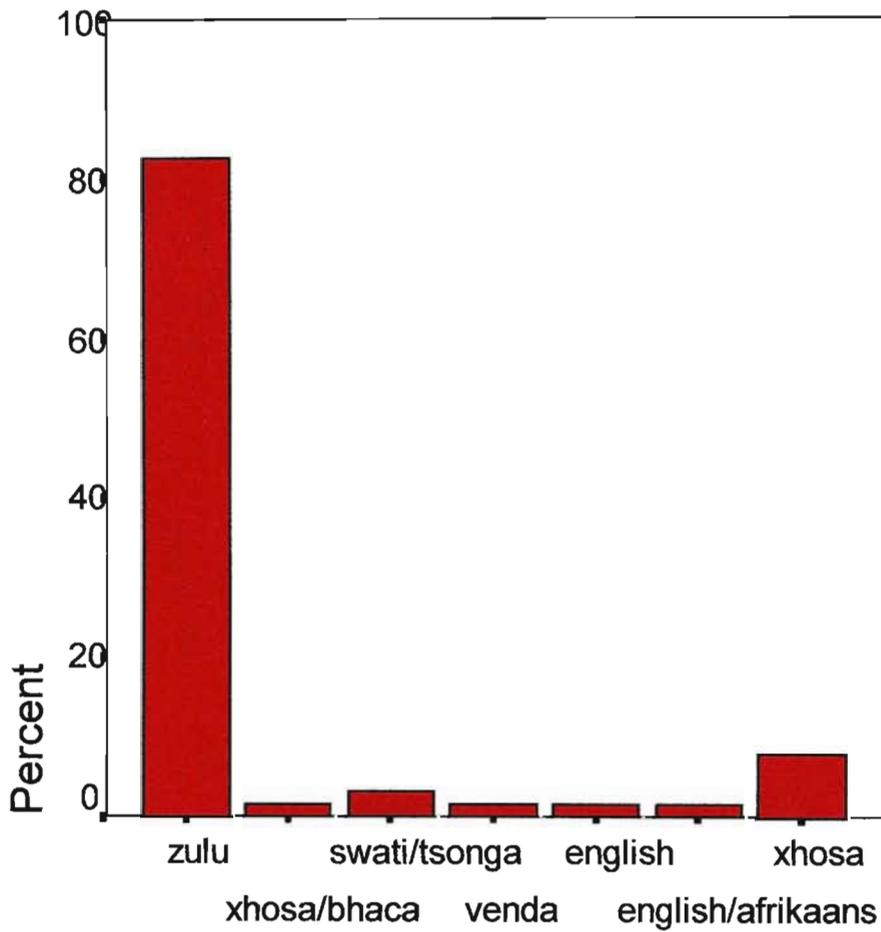


GENDER



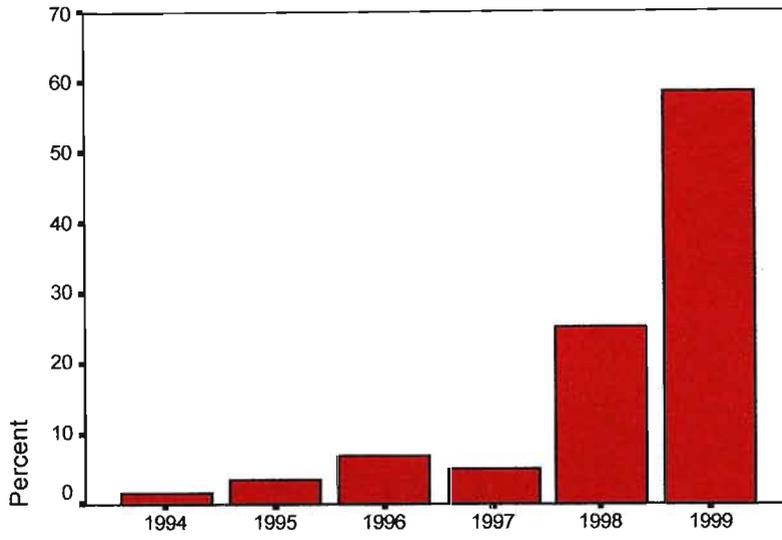
GENDER

LANGUAGE



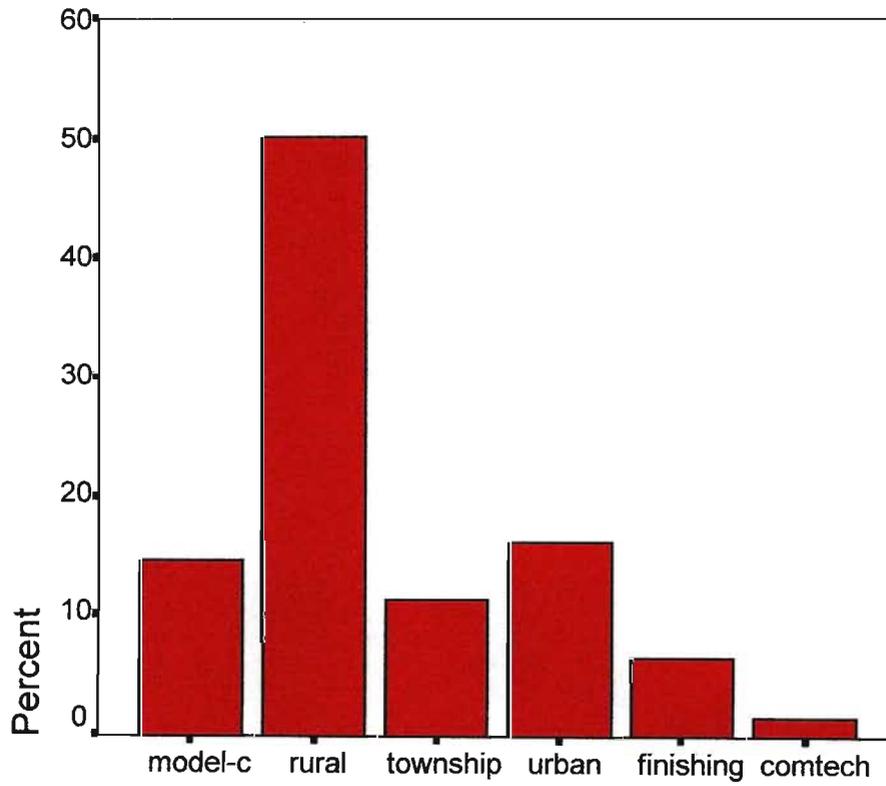
LANGUAGE

MATRIC



MATRIC

SCHOOL



SCHOOL

APPENDIX 8: STUDENT COMMENT 1999

(typed by Nomsa Peters)

"I want to make special thanks to Mrs Sanders as she opened my eyes and motivated me to believe in myself and work hard in order to achieve that goal." (Mzuphela Nodola)

"I enjoy(ed) this project and it motivate(d) us." (anon)

"My developing as an individual in certain things eg confidence, motivation, etc, has change(d), by doing this project now I have a new motivation." (Ayanda Kubheka)

"I enjoy visiting companies and presenting, it builds my self esteem because you work with EXPERTS."

(Marsha Elias)

"My self-esteem has developed well because I can now believe in myself that I can do any task and my confidence has improved, I can face people without being shy." (Mdumiseni Hadebe).

"The project also motivate(s) me because I like my work more than before. It also give(s) me confidence, I am proud of myself and my work now." (Sunday Ngcobo)

"I didn't want to look at myself on the video from the start. I thought what I done during the presentation was embarrassing. After a while I realised that it was over, all I had to do was to fix to where it went wrong and be ready for the future. I was so nervous when the presentation was still taking place. I never thought it was that frightening to talk even in front of the people I knew. What I noticed about my body language is that I done a lot of dancing with legs and waving of hands. My voice was in control, I talked fast, loud and clear for the audience to hear ... I wanted to be confident, to achieve my purpose but I didn't.... To comment about watching myself on video. It was worthwhile. About doing presentation differently in future, I won't rush to finish, I won't be nervous as on the first presentation. I will stand on one place and make sure I use my hands when it necessary. I will also control to being shy. As an individual I develop in time management. Recently I manage to do all my things in time." (Ntombi Ndabazitha)

"When I reach the secondary school things change. It was very difficult, it was very strict. Stick was used too much. But the system of using stick was very good, it encourages students to learn. If you didn't done the work you knew very well that you were going to got punishment. Also the teachers were encouraging us to learn".

(Zandile Zondi)

"As I was aging I entered at pre-school where I learnt quite many English syllables and I admired the foreign language although I attained it in a very humiliating way, because our teacher used to pinch us in the back of our hands for any mistakes in pronunciation and used to combine English together with Xhosa words in order to pass a message until I entered a primary school". (Zuko Macingwane)

"At the school where I finished my matric there was a library, it helped us so much but there was no caretaker, the books were thrown on the floor - some of the students take the books and never again returned with them so during that year I lost my interests in reading". (Hazel Mkhize)

"This project help me a lot to improve my thinking and learning skills in terms of working as a group. Sometimes I find it easy to understand someone opinion and disagree with it in a discussion way. Also I find it comfort to share your thought with other people's. For now I think I have great thing (the Project Study Guide) in my satchel for future concerning telephonign techniques and preparing for a speech delivery. I will manipulate it whin I am hunting for a job and when I am an HR manager years to come". (Siyabonga Mathenjwa)

"I learned a lot through my project and other groups' projects. I have a knowledge about other companies which I didn't know. It helped a lot, it was a great job to me and knowing what I want in future." (anon)

"I was motivated when I saw Mr Mohapi's office, I said to myself one day I will be having my own office like this one". (Sanele Mkhize)

"This project was very helpful to our studying, practice and acknowledge the success of HRM (Human Resource Management), and making a good practice in communication with the group and the people we communicate in the company as well as understanding the difference in manner of speaking to another person".

"The primary schools I attended there was no library even high school I attended so there was no much book to read". (Sanele Mkhize)

"I found the project very interesting because for the first time I learnt to talk and say what I think it should be done". (Hazel Mkhize)

"Cooperative learning boosted my morale of willing to study because everyone contributes and everyone is given a fair chance to express himself, this really helped me in most subjects other than English, like in Business Management where we were supposed to write an assignment in a group of six". (MI Hadebe)

"I found it very nice even though we not see things in one eye- Sometimes it's good because it make us learn and grow in terms of teamwork. There was no frustration because we were something in common that is to get a uncommon result". (Khetha Dlamini)

APPENDIX 9:

TABLE 4: Some Student Comment 2000:

INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT ON ENGLISH COOPERATIVE LEARNING PROJECT (MAY 2000) Answers are arbitrarily selected from about 120 student responses	
<p>Question 1 Are you enjoying working on this project? Why/why not?</p>	<p>Answer "I am enjoying working in this project, because it makes me feel like I'm in a business and the guys on my group are very friendly, we work as a team, every work that we suppose to do we divide it". (EN Mngade, NCC K) "Yes, I certainly am enjoying working on this project. Maybe that's due to the fact that I've got such enthusiastic people in my group who are enjoying working on the project just as much. The feeling of interviewing people of high authority was a great challenge and being in those large, thick carpeted rooms not only made me feel good but gave me the courage to do the best in my studies, so that I can one day call such a place "my workplace" with pride". (Sihle Nsibande, NCC J)</p>
<p>Question 2 How are you fitting in to your group? Is there adequate delegation and sharing of duties as well as mutual accountability in your group?</p>	<p>Answer "It comes to getting over those nervousness habits and when it comes to speaking English". (Sihle Nsibande, NCC J) "The group work was carried out professionally and all members participated in the discussions and decisions. I have benefitted from the group work since I have learnt that people of different cultures can communicate effectively if they try." (Prince Mkhize, P/T BBA) "I thoroughly enjoyed the group assignments. The group meetings were a great success since each member was always included in decision making, and there were no feelings of superiority. Thus we did not feel the need to nominate a group leader, since we all participated in the decisions made." (Amanda Burn, P/T BBA)</p>

<p>Question 3</p> <p>What social and professional skills can you report learning in the course of this project? For instance was this the first time you used a fax machine?</p>	<p>Answer</p> <p>"This project has taught me a lot. I never knew that there is a certain way of communicating with a business person over the phone. And the other things I've gained from the project are trust, trusting you group members, working together as a team". (Thabong Mlilwana NCC K)</p> <p>"I gained a lot in social and professional skills. In social skills we were used to sharing jokes and no one was left out when doing something. We are sympathetic to each other. We are brothers and sisters". (Sabelo Ndlovu NCC J)</p> <p>"My social skills I have learnt from the project are that you must have the ways to communicate with people that are assisting you with knowledge and try to be open and friendly as you could to them. My professional skills are to shake hands, be thankful for their time they shared with you and present yourself as someone very ambitious and with direction regarding academic part of view" (BD Dlamini NCCJ)</p> <p>"Social and professional skills - seeing myself in that big conference room, being surrounded by expensive furniture and being treated with great dignity by people of great authority and making a phone call to make arrangements for an appointment was so different from making an appointment with the dentist - scary but challenging". (Sihle Nsibande)</p>
<p>Question 4</p> <p>Are you developing a network of contacts in commerce and industry?</p>	<p>Answer</p> <p>"Yes, I am sort of developing a network of contacts since we constantly keep in touch with our company and are intending to keep in touch for holiday part-time jobs." (anon)</p>
<p>Question 5</p> <p>In what ways have you developed and grown as a person through your involvement with this project?</p>	<p>Answer</p> <p>"Combination of skills makes me realised that to combine your skill as a group leads to a success. Because sometimes you have limited skills but combining skills you gained a lot". (Sabelo Ndlovu NCC J)</p> <p>"I've learnt to learn from others, and I've also learnt to share my knowledge with other people in my group. I've also learnt to accept others ways of thinking. It also takes a lot to be a good leader - I have to be strong and motivational and lastly to be what I want to be. I need to set strong goals and I have to dedicate myself and aimed at achieving them and a little patience will pay off - six (6) or more years to get into the Chartered Accountants world". (Sihle Nsibande NCC J)</p>

APPENDIX 10: STUDY GUIDE 2000 FOR ENGLISH I COOPERATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

By NJ Sanders

Notes should be made to enhance this supplementary study guide and you are expected to bring it to class with you for the duration of the project.

GROUP: _____ **NAME:** _____ **STUDENT NUMBER:** _____

CONTENTS:

<u>PG:</u>	<u>ITEM:</u>
1	Contents & outcomes, group work
2	Project planning, Programme, Portfolio evaluation, Targeting and canvassing the company
3-4	Negotiation, Conflict management, Handling difficult people
4-5	Telephone techniques, Sample telescript
6	Format of a fax cover sheet, sample of a letter of confirmation
7	Copy of letter to be attached (from Mrs Sanders)
8-9	Business etiquette, Interviews, preparation for the interview
9	Sample of letter of thanks, Short report
10	Summary of forms of assessment, Group presentation
11	Group presentation evaluation sheet
12	Project self-evaluation and reflection paper
13	Blank portfolio evaluation form

SPECIFIED OUTCOMES:

The specified and behavioural outcomes of the project are as follows: Students will:

1. Be able to work in groups, Develop planning strategies, using time management and prioritisation techniques and demonstrating an understanding of group dynamics.
2. Practice telephone techniques in phoning a local company to request a visit.
3. Practice negotiation skills in choosing the company and making the appointment.
4. Practice conflict management skills in groups in disagreement.
5. Practice interview techniques in preparing for and conducting interviews.
6. Write and send a fax confirming the appointment with the company.
7. Write and send a memorandum requesting transport (specifying destination, day and time, and the number of passengers). Take and follow directions to the company.
8. Find background info on the company (referring to media - such as news clippings and advertising campaigns, and general knowledge about the company).
9. Conduct the company visit practising professional etiquette.
10. Write and send a memorandum thanking the driver for transport.
11. Write and post a letter thanking the personnel and the company for hosting the visit.
12. Plan and deliver a group presentation on the company.
13. Engage in peer evaluation of the presentation and develop consensus techniques on evaluation panel.
14. Learn and use video taping techniques while recording the presentations.
15. Develop and practice professional writing skills and compile a group written report on the visit, using redrafting and editing techniques, making recommendations for future use in a SHORT REPORT.
16. Practice self-assessment in completing a REFLECTION PAPER.
17. Compile a portfolio of work to be submitted for assessment.

GROUP WORK

Remember that a lot of group work will be needed outside of the time-tabled English classes so you must be committed to meet together in your own time. Choose a leader who you can rely on to keep the group motivated and ensure fair delegation of duties. The larger the group, the stronger the leader needs to be. You will be learning about negotiation skills and conflict management in your English lectures so will be equipped to handle any difficulties that may arise. You are strongly encouraged to work through any problems without bailing out and joining another group as this is good preparation for when you are working in a company and forced to work in an uncomfortable situation.

PROJECT PLANNING

You are responsible for the planning of your project and ensuring that you will be able to meet all the deadlines without disadvantaging your other subjects.

PROGRAMME FOR PROJECT:

- 1 Negotiation & conflict management skills, groups to form and choose a leader and company
- 2 Project planning & introduction of PORTFOLIO concept of evaluation, Representative of group to phone (C309) and set up an appointment, telephone techniques (lecture and video), writing & sending a letter/fax in confirmation of the visit, memo booking of transport (local)
- 3 Interviews, compiling questions, (getting general info in preparation for the visit), Professional etiquette
- 4 Non-verbal communication/Body Language, company visits, memo thanks: transport, letter thanks: visit
- 5 Compiling group oral presentation, Professional writing, compiling written reports
- 6-7 Group presentations on company (to be videoed)
- 7 Compiling PORTFOLIO for submission, Review and evaluation of project
- 7 Students to do a reflection paper critiquing the project and evaluating their performance on video

PORTFOLIO EVALUATION:

At the end of the project you will be asked to submit a group PORTFOLIO of the work done throughout the project. Wherever possible word processing should be used for documents and a professional standard maintained. The portfolio should include a title page, contents page and the items listed in the contents clearly marked and ordered accordingly as follows (please note that the REPORT is only one part of the portfolio - the contents page of the portfolio should not be confused with what is expected in the report):

TITLE PAGE:

THE NAME OF THE GROUP and COMPANY, English I Cooperative Learning Project 2000

For Mrs N Sanders, Due date

THE GROUP'S FULL NAMES and STUDENT NUMBERS (WITH GROUP LEADER NOTED IN BRACKETS) and CONTACT DETAILS (eg Cell phone numbers) of members of the group

COMPANY NAME: CONTACT NAME(S) & POSITION HELD (eg HR Mger, Senior Accountant):

COMPANY PHONE & FAX: COMPANY ADDRESS (physical and postal):

CONTENTS PAGE: COMMENTS:

LETTER (to Co confirming the visit) & MEMO (re transport)

QUESTIONS & NOTES ON VISIT

PRESENTATION peer-assessment

LETTER (of thanks to Co) & MEMO (of thanks for transport)

GENERAL COMMENTS: insights gained & REFLECTION PAPERS

SHORT REPORT & ANNEXURES (eg brochures)

TARGETING AND CANVASSING THE COMPANY

You should target a couple of companies (in case of refusals) that you anticipate will be suitable for your purposes and then look up the contact details (telephone directories). Check the booking roster to ensure that there is no duplication between groups. **Some ideas of companies (in the PMB area) are:**

Production Companies Independent Newspapers, Pfizer Labs, Hulett Aluminium, Innox, Nampak, Irving and Johnson (I & J), Willowton Oil Mills, Capital Oil Mills, Nestle, Clover, Golden Cloud, Meadow Feeds,...

Clothing stores Asmall's, Woolworths, Edgars, Truworths, Foschini, Miladies

Catering/fast foods Macdonalds, KFC

Supermarkets Makro, ACE, Game, Shoprite Checkers, Pick 'n Pay, Spar

Banking institutions ABSA, Nedbank, Standard Bank, First National Bank

Insurance companies Metropolitan, Rutgers and Checkley Broking, Peter Proctor Broking

Accounting firms GC Ford and Co, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Deloitte and Touche, KPMG, PCCI, Peter Warmington and Assoc, KFC

Public Services Eskom, Spornet, Telkom, Umgeni Water, SARS, Auditor General

Tourism companies City Royal Hotel, Oribi Airport, PMB Travel Agency, Imperial Hotel

Many of these companies have several different branches within cities, while others fit in the context of national and international structures. You would need to find out more about the organizational structure of the company you visit. A copy of the organogram would serve as an annexure.

NEGOTIATION

Negotiation is a problem-solving process in which two or more people voluntarily discuss their differences and attempt to reach a joint consensus/ decision on their common concerns.

The following are **five strategies of Negotiation**:

1. GENERATE AS MANY NEGOTIABLE ISSUES/ ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS AS POSSIBLE.
 - Obtain a flexible mandate
2. REFUSE TO ENGAGE IN PERSONAL ATTACKS OR DIRTY TRICKS.
 - Separate the people from the issues.
 - Dirty tricks can only be used once - and once discovered, ***you will never be trusted again***
 - Ethics tend to outlast dirty dealing
3. EXPLORE THE REAL INTERESTS / NEEDS OF BOTH PARTIES
 - Take trouble to clarify and confirm your assumptions and understanding during the negotiation.
 - Focus on the real interests and needs that lie behind both the stated positions - **educate each other about your concerns**
4. AGREE TO OBJECTIVE PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATING ALTERNATIVES.
 - In striving for a solution based on principle, you are being open to reason, and not to threats
5. TIE DOWN THE IMPLEMENTATION CLEARLY AND CAREFULLY.
 - Think through the threats to implementation very carefully.
 - Take the trouble to list all possible events that could derail the implementation of the agreement, and evaluate the probability that they might occur.
 - Jointly develop strategies to ensure smooth implementation.
 - Maintain clarity
 - Avoid leaving the table with genuinely different perceptions of how things are going to be implemented.

THE COSTS & BENEFIT: You must take the interests of the other party seriously, remain open and flexible and be cool and patient. The main **benefit** of the suggested strategies is that it **leads to creative solutions to conflict**

Some homegrown tips for negotiating:

Aim for a win-win solution with mutual benefit!! Show respect and value the other party. Trust is one of the most important qualities in effective communication. Use feedback techniques to ensure mutual understanding. Even if you disagree with each other, at least be clear on what you disagree about. Find common ground on which you can agree and establish some rapport.

CONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATION (ACCORD 1995):

- 1.1 Identifiable parties who are willing to participate
- 1.2 Interdependence
- 1.3 Readiness to negotiate
- 1.4 Means of influence or leverage
- 1.5 Agreement on the issues and some interests
- 1.6 Will to settle
- 1.7 Unpredictability of outcome
- 1.8 A sense of urgency and deadline
- 1.9 No major psychological barriers to settlement
- 1.10 Issues must be negotiable
- 1.11 The people must have the authority to decide
- 1.12 A willingness to compromise
- 1.13 The agreement must be reasonable and implementable
- 1.14 External factors favourable to settlement
- 1.15 Resources to negotiate

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT:

Conflict may be intrapersonal and interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup. It is a form of competitive behaviour between people or groups. It occurs when two or more people compete over perceived or actual incompatible goals or limited resources (Boulding, 1962). Conflict may result in damage, harm or exploitation of others. However, conflict may also promote communication, problem solving, and positive changes for the parties involved (Coser 1956; Deutsch 1973).

What **causes** conflict or a dispute?

1. Problems with the people's relationships
2. Perceived or actual incompatible interests
3. Structural forces
4. Problems with data
5. Differing values

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES:

- **AVOIDANCE** when individuals withdraw from the conflict situation they act to satisfy neither their own nor the other party's concerns
- **ACCOMMODATION** a willingness to cooperate in satisfying others' concerns, while at the same time acting unassertive in meeting their own
- **FORCING** a party competes strongly with another party and show a corresponding unwillingness to satisfy the others' concerns to even a minimal degree
- **COMPROMISE** the parties settle for partial satisfaction of their own concern and partial satisfaction of the other party's concern - each party gives up something and no one group is the clear winner.
- **SEEK A WIN/ WIN SOLUTION** the flowing or uniting of different streams of thought. A party striving to satisfy both their own concerns and the other party's concerns by, for instance, looking for alternatives.

METHODS OF RESOLVING DISPUTES:

(Adapted ACCORD, 1994. Copyright 1990 Centre for Dispute Settlement)

NEGOTIATION	MEDIATION	HYBRIDS	ADJUDICATION
	Conciliation	Neutral Expert	Arbitration
	Facilitation	Non-binding arbitration	Court

HANDLING DIFFICULT PEOPLE:

- **Take them aside** Talk to them in private where you are not likely to be interrupted - be very specific about the feedback you give them about what they are doing that is undesirable: "When you.... I feel - I would like you to" You are pointing out their problem without making them defensive by indicating the consequence to you and giving them a solution to help them do it differently.
- **Stay in control**
Non-verbal controlling techniques: closing your eyes until they have finished interrupting, putting up your hand or looking away
Verbal controlling techniques: "Please let me finish... Hold on... Hear me out... I've still got something to say..." - use both at the same time
- **Reward what you want** Avoid responding and rewarding undesirable behaviour (like offensive interrupting jokes) and focus on what you do want "Good for you... That's terrific ... Keep up the good work..." And acknowledge when a member of the group has done well so that the group can praise them.
- **Do not take it personally** Rise above any outburst (do not get embroiled in argument) and get on with things - it will be less stressful.
- **Push for commitment** Push for specific concrete things to be done by specific times and dates (part of project planning). Use the broken record (repeating requests) and being persistent means that you get the message across to them that you are not going to let them fob you off.

TELEPHONE TECHNIQUES

The telephone can save you a lot of time if you use it well and maintain clarity about agreements reached over the phone. THINK and SMILE before speaking. Your style should be cheerful, alert, controlled, concerned, courteous, polite, friendly, interested and authoritative yet sympathetic. Your voice should be audible, clear and well-articulated. Breathe correctly (do not sigh, smoke, chew or swallow gulpingly).

Associated Management (Jude 1994) give the following 5 points about telephone techniques:

1. **PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE**
Knowledge = power ... what it is and does (the Project) and how it will benefit the company (and you the students). Your objective is to be totally focussed on what you hope to achieve, but still be flexible (you want to secure an appointment for a visit).
2. **TELESCRIPT - Know what to say in which order and what to leave out - TIPS**
 - 2.1 keep it short and simple
 - 2.2 involve the other person by asking questions throughout (use their name and say thank you)
 - 2.3 be very specific - aim to get the appointment agreed to
 - 2.4 deliver it warmly, sincerely and with empathy
3. **VOICE CONTROL**
Practice speaking clearly: aeiou, dkpt, problem sounds s, r
Aim for your voice being warm and smooth, hold the receiver out in front of your mouth and keep your chin parallel to the ground, not bent or hunched over (muffling or distorting your voice).
4. **OVERCOMING CORE RELUCTANCE**
 - 4.1 Be prepared ... have your telescript and a positive mental attitude
 - 4.2 Do not delay between making calls (if the first one is disappointing, have plan B ready with alternatives to target)
 - 4.4 Know your numbers (have contact details ready, eg to confirm fax number, rather than ask for it)
 - 4.5 Do not take rejection personally
 - 4.6 **Smile before you dial** (enjoy yourself - the shape of your mouth determines the **tone** of voice)
5. **TIMING**
Most executives are more likely to be available for the phone very early or late in the working day. Prioritize your lectures so that you do not miss any and give yourself enough time to focus on the call. Work respectfully with their secretary as an ally who may understand the importance of your project and promote it. Use their name for recognition, respect and ensure that you are talking to the key person

SAMPLE TELESCRIPT:

Note that this is a sample and you should prepare for your call by re-writing this (a copy for the portfolio **), selecting what you want to say, inserting the details you need and carefully anticipating any problems or arguments and having possible responses ready. Plan a time where you are not likely to have to cut your call short or be interrupted. In C309 work through switchboard (9) who will get the number for you. **You only have one chance to make a good first impression!** You should prepare your telephone approach along these lines:

GREETING - Good morning, this is (Name and class) from the ... Course at Technikon Natal, (place)

REQUEST - I would like to speak to ...OR Is your (Human Resource/Acc) Manager available and what is his/her name? How do you spell it please? Is there a direct number to his/her office? (NB: save the extensive details)

TIMING - Determine whether this is a good time to talk to them: "(Name), Do you have 3 minutes now?" if not, establish a time at which you are free to phone them that would suit them better and then ensure that you make that call as arranged (build trust and credibility)

BACKGROUND TO THE COURSE - briefly

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT - Our Business Communication lecturer, Mrs Sanders has asked us to do a primary research project. We would like (Number, eg three) of our students to visit your company. The whole visit shouldn't take more than an hour of your time.

OPPORTUNITIES (to you and them)

Opportunity for you to: practice business correspondence; ask questions in an interview situation; see the business world; give a presentation & write a report

Opportunity for them to: promote their company as you will share with peers in classes of about 30 by giving an oral presentation

NEGOTIATION OF VISIT - (Use the roster supplied by the phone to book a visit at a time & date that suits both you and the company - be very clear and repeat what is decided, writing down the details carefully. Promise to fax the confirmation of the appointment to them and ensure that you have the person's name spelled correctly; well as their correct title (eg Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr, Prof...) As well as the fax number.)

DIRECTIONS - Use this opportunity to get directions to the company. Write them down and check for accuracy

THANKS AND CLOSURE - Thank them for their time in taking your call and willingness to host your visit.

Remember to use their name (correctly) as much as possible to strengthen the rapport

RECORD KEEPING -Take notes during the call. After the call read through these notes to check that they are understandable to the writer of the fax of confirmation) and fit for presentation in your portfolio.

FORMAT OF A FAX COVER SHEET:

TECHNIKON NATAL: PIETERMARITZBURG/other

FAX

**TO:
COMPANY:
FAX:
TEL:**

**FROM:
FAX:
TEL:**

DATE:

**SUBJECT:
PAGES:**

SAMPLE OF A LETTER OF CONFIRMATION:

Technikon Natal
P.O. Box 101112
SCOTTSVILLE
3209

15 April 2000

Name
The Personnel/Public Relations Manager
Company name
Co address

Dear Mr(s) name

CONFIRMATION OF STUDENT VISIT

Following our telephone conversation, we would like to thank you for agreeing to host us on a visit to your company. This is to confirm that we will be visiting you on DAY, DATE, at TIME.

There are members in our group. NAME can be contacted at TELEPHONE NUMBER should you wish to contact one of us before or after the visit. Our lecturer, Mrs Sanders, has prepared a letter of explanation for your interest, which is attached. Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely

SIGN & PRINT YOUR NAME(S)

(Note: keep it brief so that it DOES get read - not shelved and forgotten)

COPY OF THE LETTER TO BE ATTACHED FROM MRS SANDERS

National Certificate in Commerce
Pietermaritzburg Campus

PO Box 101112
SCOTTSVILLE 3209
nickys@pmb.ntech.ac.za
Cell phone: 082 49 33 743
TEL: 033-3421088/ 3425506 ext 2219/2250
FAX: 033-3426570/ 3421599

9 April 2000

To whom it may concern

English I project: visit

I lecture Business Communication on the Pietermaritzburg campus of Technikon Natal and I have asked my English I students to embark on a project which is centred on a visit to a company and they have chosen yours. Thank you for your willingness to host them.

Technikon Natal is well known for its philosophy of co-operative education and experiential learning. We believe that the more contact students have with commerce and industry the more likely they are to see the relevance of what they study in applied situations. I also believe that students need to start doing primary research and discovering things for themselves.

OBJECTIVE & ASSESSMENT

The objective of the project is for each group to give a 40 minute presentation to their peers in class. Systems of self- peer- and lecturer-assessment will be used to award marks, but I will be looking for measurable outcomes throughout the project: skills such as telephone techniques, writing business correspondence, preparing for and conducting interviews, reporting on the visit, as well as the actual presentation.

THE VISIT

I envisage that the visit will take about an hour and include some form of orientation to the company (perhaps a PR presentation and a tour of the premises, especially if there is a production section), and a forum during which the group may interview representatives of your section.

Some companies have in the past treated our students to fine hospitality and refreshments. This project has the potential of being a useful PR exercise for your company as well as benefiting the students in many ways (not least of which is the enthusiasm with which they are undertaking their work for it). The onus is on the students to organise and collect information. Some groups may be accompanied by myself or a colleague.

Thank you for being willing to assist our students and afford them this opportunity to gain insights into your company.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Nicky Sanders
English Lecturer
Administrator: National Certificate in Commerce
Coordinator: BSU BBA Business Communication

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE:

As a visitor to the company you should be accorded VIP status, but respect the seniority and expertise of the people you are interviewing - it is a privilege to be hosted by them. You want to keep the door open for subsequent visits.

GREETINGS: They should make the first move as host - do shake hands with everyone - where a name badge (stick on label with your name in bold clearly legible script). Maintain direct eye contact, smile and give a firm handshake. Use individual's correct title - if in doubt ask - most common titles are Mr and Ms. Avoid being over-familiar and using someone's first name until you are invited by them to do so. If you know that someone has a difficult name to pronounce (from your phone call) then practice it before the interview.

RESPECT OTHER'S SPACE: Never barge into someone's office without invitation. Most companies will have a foyer or reception area where you will report your arrival to the receptionist and wait for your host (or their secretary) to come through to you. If you are kept waiting for some time remain cool and calm and use the time well to look around, pick up brochures or related material that may be informative about the company (ask whether you may have a copy - never presume to help yourself). You may even need to go through security procedures. You may be escorted to a board room if there is not enough room in your host's office. If you wish to see their office be discreet in your request. If they stand it is a strong non-verbal cue that their time is up and the interview is over - respond immediately so that they do not have to be blunt and ask you to leave.

TOURING PREMISES: Whoever arrives at a door first should hold it open and keep it open till all the others have passed through. Follow any regulations graciously (do not smoke or spit, wear a hard hat if required to).

BODY LANGUAGE: Be alert for non-verbal communication cues (a gesture towards a chair to indicate that you should sit - if in doubt confirm this verbally, but **never presume to sit without invitation**; a tilting of the head to indicate that they are ready to listen to you now, a nod or shake of the head). Dress appropriately and give the impression of control and intelligence. **You only have one chance to make a good first impression!** Maintain a body posture which is alert and erect. Smile readily and show a sense of humour. Avoid irritating mannerisms and distracting gestures (particularly if they are offensive like picking your nose!). Have a calm, relaxed and confident manner. Use English with clear articulation (audible).

BARRIERS: be careful with language usage, non-verbal cues, listening skills, rapport, interviewing skills, external or internal "noise".

INTERVIEWS:

Interviews are forums where purposeful communication can occur at a predetermined time and place. Establish an atmosphere that is relaxed, open and spontaneous, using interpersonal skills with empathy, sincerity and warmth to build rapport, allowing information to flow freely

PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW:

Show a genuine interest in the company. Know as much as possible about the company and the respondent's background, culture, personality, current position, attitude and reactions. Let them do most of the talking, but interact smoothly, supporting the flow of conversation. In your group you may choose to assign members the roles of interviewer (to ask the questions and maintain rapport - eye contact) and scribe (to write down responses) - this may be more efficient than erroneous presumptions that someone else is jotting the facts down. Show that you are thinking about the answers by drawing comparisons where appropriate (try and keep your analogies professional). Think quickly and keep input relevant - avoid going off at a tangent - keep focussed. You will be conducting an information interview. It will be semi-structured: partially planned, partially spontaneous. A list of the essential questions should be prepared, and any additional questions may be asked as the need arises. Avoid closed (yes/no) questions - ask open questions that can lead to free flow of information and even develop into an interesting discussion.

PREPARING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. WHAT questions are you going to ask? | 3. WHO are you going to ask? |
| 2. HOW are you going to record your answers? | 4. WHAT are you going to do with your results? |

TYPES OF QUESTIONS:

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. Classification eg age, sex, occupation | 4. Factual eg how much money do you spend on...? |
| b. Opinion eg what do you think ...? | 5. Knowledge eg do you know what ...? How do you...? |
| c. Motivation eg why do you....? | |

HINTS FOR INTERVIEWS:

- Prepare yourself (questions, note paper, equipment - if you want to record the interview and or take photographs - get prior permission for both).
- Develop a trusting relationship in your introduction, especially if you are using a tape recorder.
- Choose a quiet place (without distractions) - if in an office ask if they are able to re-route their calls (make sure your own cell phones are switched off).
- Listen with interest and take notes (of all essential information)
- Do not interrupt and try not to argue (you've yet to become an expert)
- Be friendly - casual and relaxed, but not overly familiar and presumptuous
- Do not rush away afterwards. Keep the door open for return visits or follow-up phone calls to verify information or to get more details
- As soon as possible afterwards, go over your notes, write a summary or report while it's fresh ... note important issues that you want to follow up.

SAMPLE OF BODY OF A LETTER OF THANKS (to be posted):

THANKS FOR HOSTING VISIT/ THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Following our recent visit to your company on DAY, DATE, at TIME, we would like to thank you for having hosted us and having given us so much of your time. Thank you for sharing such valuable and useful resources (as your annual report, promotional literature, posters, brochures, samples, or whatever it is that they gave you). The material you gave us helped/will help us make a better impact in our oral presentation and will be useful in compiling the report.

The members in our group really appreciate all the help and support that you gave us. Without you our project would have been impossible. (NAME or I) can be contacted at TELEPHONE NUMBER should you wish to contact one of us in future.

Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely

(List all names and signatures of the members)

SHORT REPORT:

Your group is required to write a short report.

LENGTH: 1 - 2 pages

TOPIC: Report on visit to (Company NAME)

You are required to answer the following questions in dealing with each section:

1. INTRODUCTION: Describe your group and indicate your brief. How did you form your group and what were your objectives?
2. PROCEDURE: What did you do and did it go smoothly? If not, please describe what went wrong and explain what you did to resolve the problems. Did you need to contact the company again for any reason (please expand). Did you have any intragroup problems (if there were interpersonal problems that you would rather submit under separate cover please do so in the Reflection paper)? Were there any institutional problems in the procedure (eg a booked vehicle not being available on time) - please elaborate.
3. RESULTS: What was the visit like? Did you enjoy it and benefit from it?
4. INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS:
How did the visit impact on your presentation - did the class benefit from the presentation? How did you feel about the peer-evaluation of your presentation - did the comments made benefit you? Did it help to be an evaluator as well as a presenter? Did it help to have a graduate assistant as well as a mentor to help you? Did the study guide help you? In what way?
5. RECOMMENDATIONS: Would you recommend that this project continue to be run? Please give some reasons. What recommendations would you make for future implementations of this project?

Give the date and sign above your names and student numbers (plus class group)

FORMS OF ASSESSMENT:

NJ Sanders 1998-2000

LECTURER monitored &/or assessed each stage

SELF- Reflection paper (✓ Lecturer)

PEER- Presentation evaluation (✓ Lecturer)

REAL AUDIENCE

Class watched Presentation

Technikon staff received Memoranda

Companies received Letters of confirmation & thanks

GROUP

Conducted primary research (interviews, presentations)

Telephoned, faxed & posted to companies

Wrote and sent letters to companies (kept copies)

Performed oral presentation (✓ Lecturer & Peers)

Wrote a report (✓ Lecturer)

Compiled portfolio, giving their own comments + receiving lecturer assessment on whether it was duly performed (✓ Lecturer)

Syndicate Based Peer Group Learning (SPGL, Hartman 1986: 7) is described as the classwork being organised on a cooperative basis by the syndicates acting as teams, and mostly without the presence of a tutor. The rationale behind SPGL is that "through interaction with their peers, students learn how to learn about their subject in greater depth and with deeper personal involvement in subject and material." I would suggest that using group-work would have a two-fold benefit:

- 1) that students would work synergistically together and perform better than on their own
- 2) that lecturers will have fewer documents to read through (one per group) and that their feedback on each can be more thorough and student-centred, with thought-provoking responses to meaning and content, above grammar, accuracy and fluency.

GROUP PRESENTATION

This presentation may take any form: perhaps a role play of a situation that will illustrate the function of Accounting, Management, Marketing or Human Resource Management (a launch or an industrial relations issue or interaction). Groups should aim to inform us as well as persuade us about the importance of this function to the company. You may report back to the class on their observations, describe their tour and recount the experience of the visit. The form that the presentation takes will be largely inspired by the visit itself.

Presentations will be videoed (for assessment purposes) and should you wish to see these videos they will be stored in the library. Videos of 1998 presentations are held in the library, but should be watched with discretion (some were much better than others and it is up to you to determine what makes a successful presentation - do not copy these ones as they may lead you astray).

A booking sheet will be presented to the class for you to fill in. (First come first served - the first groups get a bonus 5% for starting the ball rolling). We hope to use special venues so keep informed:

eg ENGLISH I GROUP BUSINESS PRESENTATION BOOKING SHEET:

DATE, time, venue	LEADER	GROUP MEMBERS	COMPANY	EVALUATORS	completed
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It is your responsibility to ensure that you are ready on time. If you miss an appointment you will get zero - if your group missed it you will all get zero. Groups may try again if they are not happy with their first attempt. An average will be taken of both marks. If your name is down as an evaluator and you cannot make it for a legitimate reason then the onus is on you to swap with someone else. Marks will be detracted individually for missing sessions and disruptive behaviour. Bonus Marks may be earned individually if your participation as a supportive member of the audience is noted (for instance in well timed questions that show that you have been interested in the topic and give support to the group presenting). Please take the evaluation form seriously as a guide to how to construct your presentation. If you succeed in informing us you will do well, but if you also entertain us you will do even better. Please note number 10 and make it relevant to your audience.

TECHNIKON NATAL: ENGLISH I/BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
GROUP PRESENTATIONS EVALUATION SHEET

CLASS ...
 STUDENTS' NAMES:

TOPIC (COMPANY):

EVALUATOR'S NAME & SIGNATURE:

DATE: TIME: Time taken:.....

KEY: A: 80-100%, B: 70-79%, C: 60-69%, D:50-59%, E: 40-49% (FAIL), F: 0-39%

CRITERIA	A	B	C	D	E	F
1 INTRODUCTION: is there evidence of careful preparation? does it prepare us for the presentation? Does it get our attention? Is it effective?						
2 BODY: is the message clear? Are materials, illustrations/examples suitable? Is it coherent (good links between speakers) and cohesive (no gaps or overlaps)?						
3 ORDER: are ideas logically developed, supported, organised, signposted (to keep up)?						
4 CONCLUSION: is the ending decisive (conveying it is finished), rounded off, summarised?						
5 IMPACT: How good is the first impression made by the group? What message does their environmental body language give: their appearance, dress-code, neatness, personal hygiene (no halitosis)? Is promotional gear used (for corporate identity)?						
6 DELIVERY: Is it audible? Is there good voice projection? Is there variety of pitch, pace and power? Are there smooth transitions between team members (no awkward pauses)?						
7 FLUENCY: is language used with smooth control, good vocabulary, is it clearly pronounced and well structured? Is the expression clear and easy to follow?						
8 RAPPORT: is eye contact established and maintained appropriately? Are gestures open and smooth, especially in the context of team-work (inclusive gestures)? Are facial expressions enthusiastic and keen (paying attention to other team members)? Are there annoying distractions (chewing, scratching, sniffing, rattling change)?						
9 AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS: Are notes/cue cards (small, A5) efficiently used? Are OHPs/videos/posters/slides/articles/items/ tapes/CDs (music/sound effects) used effectively?						
10 OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: was the presentation of value? Was it interesting & entertaining? Did the group achieve their purpose? Is there audience interest and support? Is it clear that the group have prepared and practised and that this is a professional presentation?						
SUB-TOTAL						
BONUSES: humour, effective time management (groups: between 30-40 minutes) and questions						
PENALTIES: arriving/starting late, causing disturbances in other presentations, any distractions. NOTE: if the group does not present the whole group will get 0. If a member of the group does not contribute to the presentation they will get 0.						
TOTAL MARK: (100%)						
RE-PRESENTATION (on request and time permitting):						
AVERAGE OF BOTH MARKS:						

PROJECT SELF-EVALUATION and REFLECTION PAPER:

Please write the date, your class, group (leader or company name) name, your own name and student number at the top of the page and submit this with your group's portfolio or under separate cover if you so wish. These questions are meant as a guide - more can be said if you wish.

THE PRESENTATION:

- 1 Have you viewed the video of your presentation? (in the library - present your student card to the librarian - English I video, class, group leader's name, topic) - the whole group can watch at once using headphones so as not to disturb others. When did you watch it (date and time) and were there any difficulties (describe)?
- 2 What did you think of your own part of the presentation (please be objective in this exercise in developing self-awareness):
 - a) your body language (facial expressions, gestures, tone)
 - b) your delivery (voice control, ease to follow)
 - c) the structure of the presentation and how your part fits in with it
 - d) the content of the presentation and how your part fits in with it
 - e) did you achieve your purpose, did your group achieve its overall purpose?
- 3 Any other comments about watching yourself on video: was it worthwhile, did it give you valuable insights into how others may see you, have you got some ideas about how you would do it differently?

THE PROJECT OVERALL:

- 4 Are there any observations you would like to share about the project now that it is over? (your comments in progress were very useful and interesting to me).
- 5 Were the materials used useful to you - the models of letters and telephone technique, the notes on interview techniques and questions, etc? Please explain why/why not.
- 6 Were our class discussions useful to you and if so, in what way? (Eg brain storming ideas for questions to ask on the visit)

GROUP WORK:

- 7 How did you find working in a group? (Did you enjoy and benefit from it? Was it frustrating, and if so, please explain why?)
- 8 Has this project given you social skills you can use later (both studying and in your career)? Did you make valuable **networking contacts**, are you developing them?

PERSONAL GROWTH/ DEVELOPMENT:

- 9 Please describe how you have developed as a student (your thinking, learning, language, and linking theory with practice,).
- 10 Please describe how you have developed as an individual (your self-esteem, confidence, motivation, wisdom, time management,)

SOURCES: (KEY: V = Video, TNDL = Technikon Natal Durban Library)

ACCORD 1995 *Workshop on Basic Conflict Management* UNP

Boulding, K 1962 *Conflict and Defense* Harper & Row: New York, NY

Cleese, John *The Cold Call* by Video Arts (658.85 COL, V TNDL)

Coser, L 1956 *The Function of Social Conflict* Free Press: New York, NY

Deutsch, M 1973 *The Resolution of Conflict* Yale University Press: New Haven, CT

Evans, Desmond 1990 *People, Communication and Organisations* 2nd Edition, Pitman: London

Fielding, Michael 1993 *Effective communication in organisations* Juta: Kenwyn

Inc Magazine 1989 *Making Effective Sales Calls: How to develop your own winning strategy* (M658.85MAK, V TNDL)

Jude, Dr Brian L 1994 *Selling Successfully by Phone* Associated Management (658.84SEL VTNDL)

Quarry, Dr Peter *Handling Difficult People* part of the *People Skills* series (V TNDL)

Skinner, Chris and Llewon Essen 1996 *The Handbook of Public Relations* (4th Edition)

Thomson: Johannesburg

PORTFOLIO EVALUATION:

PROGRAMME/class..... COMPANY NAME:.....

STUDENT NAME:	ST NUMBER:	MARKS: Oral %, (portfolio 50 + reflection 50 = 100), final %				
		100	50	50	100	%
						??

ASSESSMENT:

PORTFOLIO CATEGORY	MARKS	AWARDED
TITLE PAGE (GROUP NAMES + COMPANY NAME)	1	
CONTENTS PAGE (LIST)	1	
OVERALL PRESENTATION (Appearance)	2	
SECTION DIVIDERS/LABELS	2	
LETTER OF CONFIRMATION (COPY)	5	
COPY OF LETTER (from N Sanders re project)	1	
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & preparation, NOTES ON VISIT	2	
PRESENTATION (COPY OF EVALUATION FORM)	1	
MEMOs arranging & thanking for transport/the project	10	
LETTER OF THANKS (COPY)	5 (-2 if original)	
APPENDICES (anything extra)	1	
PORTFOLIO MARK (SUB-TOTAL)	-30	
REPORT (ORIGINAL)		
FORMAT: INTRO, INFO, RECOMMENDATIONS	5	
CONTENT	15	
REPORT (SUB-TOTAL)	-20	
PORTFOLIO MARK	[50]	
PROJECT SELF-ASSESSMENT	-50	see individuals

APPENDIX 11:**TABLE 5: COMPARISON BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND OBE CLASSROOM PRACTICE**

(TABLE 3.8 in Mkhabela 1999)

	Traditional classroom	OBE classroom
Level of participation of the learner in lesson	Largely passive - listen and take notes	Largely active - participate and discuss
Syllabus demands	Generally low - rote learning fostered	High - critical thinking, reasoning and reflection
The role of the educator	Emphasis on understanding and memorising subject information	Emphasis on integration and relevance of knowledge in real life contexts
Responsibility for learning	Clarifies textbook information and reinforces the material through worksheets	Facilitates learning via individual and group activities in which learners construct knowledge
	Educator takes responsibility for motivating and ensuring learners learn	Learners take personal responsibility for their own learning and are motivated by constant feedback

APPENDIX 12: SAIDE CRITERIA FOR RESOURCE BASED LEARNING 1998

A checklist for editorial analysis of open learning material by S vd Bergh from diverse sources, principally D Swift, R Moon, and D Rowntree (from a SAIDE resource given to me at a workshop in 1998). Each of the questions may be answered with a score of 1 (poor/absent), 2 (average/variable), or 3 (good/present).

STEP ONE - SCAN

VISUAL DESIGN

- 1 Legible type (typeface, size, leading, paper type)?
- 2 Pages visually attractive (good use of white space, not 'busy')?
- 3 Page design functional?
- 4 Graphics appropriate?
- 5 Enough graphics?
- 6 Visual quality of graphics?
- 7 Illustrations well labelled?
- 8 Appropriate use of colour or is colour an unnecessary cost?
- 9 Effective use of design and shades of grey rather than colour?
- 10 Material bound as logical units?

INFORMATION FLOW

- 1 Structure of course clear from design and headings?
- 2 Functional table of contents?
- 3 Functional alphabetic index?
- 4 Functional glossaries?
- 5 Hierarchy of headings clear?
- 6 Not too many levels in hierarchy?
- 7 Definitions, activities, readings, etc. clearly signposted?
- 8 Important references clearly identified?

STUDENT'S OBJECTIVES

- 1 Objectives clearly stated?
- 2 Are the objectives testable or measurable by the student?
- 3 Not too many or too few objectives?
- 4 Do objectives reflect content in balanced way?
- 5 Interim objectives building up to ultimate learning outcomes?
- 6 Summaries at end of sections?
- 7 Do summaries reflect objectives?
- 8 Objectives not such that course can be learned by rote-learning objectives?

PACKAGING

- 1 Whole package (texts and other media) well packaged and labelled?
- 2 Good signposting among different components, clear where to start?
- 3 Attractive but functional covers maintaining same theme throughout?

STEP TWO - READ

LANGUAGE AND NUMERACY

- 1 Written for students not for the author's peers?
- 2 Vocabulary accessible to all students?
- 3 Numeracy requirements reasonable for target group?
- 4 Style personal, friendly and appropriate; not authoritarian or patronising?
- 5 Varied tone (sympathetic, humorous, challenging)?

- 6 Pedantry, circumlocutions and technical jargon avoided?
- 7 Sensitive to audience (race, gender, disabilities)?
- 8 Active voice where appropriate?
- 9 Sentences not too long and overloaded with sub-clauses?
- 10 Sentences not too short (enough syntactic markers to maintain logical flow)?
- 11 Effective paragraphing?
- 12 Effective chunking (units, chapters, sections)?

LOGIC

- 1 Does text build continuously on prior knowledge?
- 2 Concepts, facts, examples, discourse, and opinions clearly identified?
- 3 Concepts well defined?
- 4 Concepts well placed in the context of theory and principles?
- 5 Enough functional examples of concepts?
- 6 Do examples and readings justified?
- 7 Are examples and readings justified?
- 8 No logic gaps, dead-ends, red herrings?
- 9 Good signposting among components (all media)?

AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA

- 1 All media integrated with and relevant to other components?
- 2 Do they serve distinct purpose not readily achievable by text?
- 3 Professionally produce (if professional production is appropriate)?
- 4 Integrated use of multiple channels; no interference between audio and video?

ACTIVE LEARNING

- 1 Does course teach by doing rather than merely explaining?
- 2 Do explanations involve students in exposition?
- 3 Enough functional activities?
- 4 Adequate formative self-assessment?
- 5 Adequate summative self-assessment at key points?

CONTENT

- 1 Is there a hidden curriculum?
- 2 If there is, does it support the overt purpose of the course?
- 3 Content relevant to student's expectations?
- 4 Content relevant to vocational, professional or societal requirements?
- 5 Adequate and appropriate use of contemporary scholarship?
- 6 Clear to student what course seeks to achieve?
- 7 Are at least 50% well-prepared students the target?
- 8 Are the most well-prepared catered for?
- 9 Undeclared ideological bias or inadequate coverage of other perspectives?
- 10 Declared ideological base with balanced coverage of other perspectives?
- 11 No detectable bias and major perspectives covered in balanced way?

TEACHING THE ABILITY TO LEARN INDEPENDENTLY

- 1 Sound balance between rote learning and interpretation?
- 2 Overall effect to encourage students to think?
- 3 Students stimulated to explore beyond the confines of the syllabus?
- 4 Linkages of the elements clear enough to give students sense of command?
- 5 Does course inculcate sound long-term academic habits?

APPENDIX 13: KEY PRINCIPLES IN WRITING LEARNER GUIDES
TECHNIKON NATAL, NOVEMBER 2000

The following questions should inform you in writing or reviewing a learner guide.

1. TITLE

- ☞ Does the title clearly state what the learner guide is about?

1. PURPOSE STATEMENT FOR EACH MODULE

- ☞ Does the purpose statement indicate the competence the learner must demonstrate at the completion of the learning unit/module?
- ☞ Does the purpose statement comply with the following format: noun, verb and object?

2. CLEARLY DEFINED LEARNING OUTCOMES

- ☞ Are the learning outcomes clearly defined?
- ☞ Do the learning outcomes relate to the purpose statement?
- ☞ Do the learning outcomes integrate academic and vocational elements?
- ☞ Does the learning outcome relate to critical outcomes?

3. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- ☞ Do the assessment criteria identify the essential evidence to prove that the outcomes have been achieved?
- ☞ Does each criterion relate directly to each learning outcome?
- ☞ Do the assessment criteria follow the following format: noun-verb-condition written in the present tense?
- ☞ Do the assessment criteria consist of an essential result of an activity and an evaluative statement?
- ☞ Do the assessment criteria relate to the verb in the outcome?
- ☞ Do the assessment criteria stipulate the level and quality of performance?

4. LEARNER NEEDS, INTERESTS AND READINESS

- ☞ Does the content consider the learners' needs, interest and readiness?
- ☞ Is there provision for the recognition of prior learning?

5. CONTENT-EMBEDDED KNOWLEDGE

- ☞ Is there balance between theoretical knowledge with practical examples and case studies?

6. COHERENT STRUCTURE

- ☞ Is the guide coherently structured and integrated?
- ☞ Is new knowledge related to prior or current knowledge?
- ☞ Is the material systematically sequenced?

7. DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCE

- ☞ Is each learning experience built on the previous one?
- ☞ Are there recurring opportunities to practise and develop desired competencies?
- ☞ Do the pace and workload allow for ample time for learners to acquire, consolidate and apply new concepts and skills before proceeding to the next stage?

8. RELEVANCE

- ☞ Are the content and application examples relevant to the needs of the:
 - > Learner
 - > Society
 - > Industry

9. LANGUAGE COMPETENCY

- ☞ Does the style of writing match the language competency of all learners?
- ☞ Does the writing of the guide make provision for learners who use English as a second language?
- ☞ Is the learner gradually introduced to the discourse of the discipline?

10. GRADUAL PROGRESSION IN LEVELS OF COMPLEXITY

- ☞ Is there gradual progression in the levels of complexity in the content and application exercises?

- ☒ Is a major activity broken up into a series of smaller tasks?
- 11. COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**
 - ☒ Does the guide consider learners' predisposition to a particular learning style?
 - ☒ Is there provision for the development of higher order cognitive skills (for example, analysis, synthesis, evaluation), forms of reasoning (inductive, deductive) and problem solving strategies?
- 12. CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT**
 - ☒ Are key concepts and codes (specialist terms) clearly developed?
 - ☒ Are new concepts compared with the learners' existing ideas?
 - ☒ Are examples provided to facilitate concept learning?
- 13. ACTIVE LEARNING**
 - ☒ Does the guide make provision for active learning throughout the learning process?
- 14. CONSOLIDATION**
 - ☒ Are main issues consolidated at the end of the learning guide?
- 15. ASSESSMENT**
 - ☒☒ Does the guide make provision for a variety of assessment methods?

AQU/ P P/LEARNER GUIDES-KEY PRINCIPLES IN WRITING

APPENDIX 14: CATEGORIES FOR THE REVIEW OF LEARNING MATERIALS

[Again, importing documents tends to lose formatting integrity. These documents are used with permission by SAIDE.]

The following categories are used by SAIDE in reviewing a wide variety of learning materials.

Categories

Orientation to programme, introductions, aims & learning outcomes

This category for review is about the way that clear and relevant information can motivate and direct learners effectively in their study. Learners need to understand from the outset the requirements of the various components of the course. As learners, they need to be motivated by relevant introductions and overviews within each individual module/unit. They also need to be clear about what they have to achieve in each unit and these aims and learning outcomes should be consistent with the goals of the course.

Selection and coherence of content

What is at issue here is rigour, interest and relevance. The content should be well-researched, up-to-date and relevant to the South African context. The learners should also be able to see how the content is related to the learning outcomes and goals of the course. Coherence is also important. If the components of a course are contradictory or unrelated to each other, the impact of the course will be considerably lessened.

Presentation of content

This is to do with how the content is taught. There is no one 'right' way to teach content - it will vary according to the subject and the audience. However, there are certain pointers for a reviewer. These include, clear explanation of concepts and a range of examples, as well as sufficient and appropriate ways for learners to process new concepts, rather than merely learn them off by heart.

View of knowledge and use of learners' experience

In the South African context, where rote learning and authoritarian views of knowledge have been the norm, particular attention needs to be paid to the way knowledge is presented. The perspective we would wish to promote is that knowledge should be presented as open and constructed in contexts, rather than merely received in a fixed form from authorities. Learners should be given opportunities to interrogate what they learn, and their prior knowledge and experience should be valued and used in the development of new ideas and practices. Frequent opportunities and motivation for application of knowledge and skills in the workplace, where relevant, should be provided, but this should be done in a reflective rather than mechanical way.

Activities, feedback and assessment

A major strategy for effective teaching in course materials is the provision of a range of activities and strategies to encourage learners to engage with the content. If the course designer provides feedback or commentary on these activities, then learners will experience a form of the discussion that takes place in lively classrooms.

Furthermore, because learners work through the materials largely on their own, they need some means of assessing their own progress. Comments on the activities in the materials can help to do this. The assessment criteria for the programme as a whole should be made clear to learners and should be appropriate to the intended learning outcomes.

Language

Aside from the obvious importance of clear, coherent language at an appropriate level for the learners, the kind of style that is used is crucial. The style can alienate or patronise the reader, or it can help to create a constructive learning relationship with the reader. Style needs to be judged in terms of specific audience and purpose, and so a standard set of criteria is not useful. However, it is always helpful if new concepts and terms are explained and jargon is kept to a minimum.

Layout and accessibility

Effective layout of printed materials maintains a creative tension between consistency and variety. It is important that learners are able to find their way through the various units and sections by the provision of contents pages, concept maps, headings, subheadings, statements of aims and learning outcomes, and other access devices. The text also needs to be broken up into reasonable chunks, and the layout should assist the logical flow of ideas. At the same time, a very predictable format can lead to boredom. A good way of introducing variety is through the use of visual material such as concept maps, pictures and diagrams. This has the added advantage of catering for learners who learn best through visual representations of ideas. Where appropriate, concept maps, pictures and diagrams should be included.

Where the course is presented through another medium, or where other media are used to support printed course materials, similar issues of accessibility need to be applied to the other media employed. The medium chosen, and the way it is used, should be appropriate for the intended learning outcomes and target audience.

Detailed criteria

Orientation to programme, introductions, aims & learning outcomes

1. Orientation to the programme/course

2. Give an overview of the course as a whole and how it fits into the relevant qualification. This overview includes a short description of the modules in the course.
3. Give a simple description of the main outcomes of the programme/course as a whole.
4. Explain how the course is taught. This section should provide a simple description of the overall learning and teaching approach used as well as details about each of the following aspects:
 - 1 the purpose of the activities including portfolio activities
 - 2 the rationale for including review and/or self assessment questions and how learners could approach these to maximise learning
 - 3 the use of reflective activities and how to approach these in order to improve practice
 - 4 the nature of the support offered during contact sessions
 - 5 the use of technology
5. Explain the assessment strategy and assessment requirements.
6. Describe the kinds of support available.
7. Introduce the writers of the course and the course coordinator.
8. Give guidance to learners in the planning of their work.

2.0 Introductions to programmes/modules/units/sections

- 2.1 Explain the importance of the topic for the learner and create interest in the material
- 2.2 Provide an overview of what is to come
- 2.3 Forge links with what the learners already know and what they are expected to learn
- 2.4 Point out links with other lessons/sections
- 2.5 Provide some indication of intended learning outcomes in ways that are directly relevant and useful to the learners
- 2.6 Give indications of how long the learner should spend on the material in the lesson so that the learners can pace themselves.

3.0 Learning outcomes

- 3.1 Are stated clearly and unambiguously
- 3.2 Describe what the learners need to demonstrate in order to show their competence
- 3.3 Are consistent with the aims of the course and programme
- 3.4 The content and teaching approach support learners in achieving the learning outcomes.

Selection and coherence of content

4.0 Selection of content

- 4.1 Content is contemporary and reflects current thinking and recent references
- 4.2 Content is appropriate both to the intended outcomes of the programme as well as recognising prior learning
- 4.3 Content builds on learners' experience where possible
- 4.4 There is appropriate variety in the selection of content.

Presentation of content

5.0 Presentation of content

- 5.1 Concepts are developed logically
- 5.2 Concepts are explained clearly using sufficient and relevant examples
- 5.3 New concepts are introduced by linking to learners' existing knowledge
- 5.4 Ideas are presented in manageable chunks
- 5.5 A variety of methods are used to present the content and succeed in keeping the learners' interest alive
- 5.6 Theories are not presented as absolute - debate is encouraged
- 5.7 The course materials model the processes and skills that the learners are required to master - i.e. they practise what they preach.

View of knowledge and use of learners' experience

6.0 View of knowledge and RPL

- 6.1 Learners' own experiences and understanding are seen as valid departure points for discussion
- 6.2 Knowledge is presented as changing and debatable rather than as fixed and not to be questioned
- 6.3 Learners are encouraged to weigh ideas against their own knowledge and experience and to question ideas/concepts that do not seem to be adequately substantiated
- 6.4 Learners are helped to contextualise new knowledge appropriately and a concerted effort is made to empower learners to use theory to inform practice.

Activities, feedback and assessment

7.0 Activities

- 7.1 The activities are clearly signposted and learners know where each begins and ends
- 7.2 Clear instructions help the learners to know exactly what they are expected to do.
- 7.3 The activities are related to the learning outcomes.
- 7.4 Activities reflect effective learning processes
- 7.5 Activities are sufficient to give learners enough practice
- 7.6 Activities are distributed at fairly frequent intervals throughout a section
- 7.7 Activities show a range of difficulty
- 7.8 Activities are sufficiently varied in terms of task and purpose
- 7.9 Activities are life/work related
- 7.10 Activities are realistic in terms of time indications and resources available to learners.

8.0 Feedback to learners

- 8.1 Feedback to learners is clearly indicated
- 8.2 Feedback is offered in the form of suggestions and is only prescriptive where necessary
- 8.3 The learners are able to identify the errors they have made, and they are able to assess their progress from their responses
- 8.4 Where calculations are required, the stages in the working are displayed and explained.

9.0 Assessment

- 9.1 There is an assessment strategy for the course as a whole
- 9.2 The assessment tasks are directly related to the learning outcomes
- 9.3 Formative and summative assessment strategies are employed
- 9.4 Assessment criteria are made known to learners and feedback is provided on interim assessments which helps learners to improve
- 9.5 Mechanisms exist for learners to respond to feedback on assessment and these are clearly explained in the courseware.

Language

10.0 Language level

- 10.1 New concepts and terms are explained simply and these explanations are indicated clearly in the text
- 10.2 The language used is friendly, informal and welcoming
- 10.3 Learners are not patronised or ‘talked down to’
- 10.4 The discourse is appropriate to the learning intended
- 10.5 The language is sensitive as far as gender and culture are concerned
- 10.6 The language takes cognisance of the multilingual reality of South Africa
- 10.7 The language is active and sufficiently interactive

Layout and accessibility

11.0 Learning skills

- 11.1 Summaries and revision exercises are included at frequent intervals to assist the learners to learn
- 11.2 Skills for learning (such as reading, writing, analysing, planning, managing time, evaluation of own learning needs and progress) are appropriate to the outcomes of the course and integrated into the materials

12.0 Access devices (in texts; corresponding features will be looked for in other materials, e.g. videos)

- 12.1 The numbering/headings system makes it easy for learners to find their way through the text
- 12.2 The text is broken up into reasonable units
- 12.3 Headings and sub-headings are used to draw attention to the key points of the lesson. This makes it easy for the learners to get an overview of the lesson at a glance. It also makes it easy to find parts the learners want to refer to.
- 12.4 There is a contents page
- 12.5 Pretests are used wherever feasible to help the learners know what skills or knowledge they need to have before starting the lesson/section
- 12.6 Links with previous knowledge and experience, with other parts of the same lesson and with other lessons are indicated.

13.0 Visual aids (pictures, photographs, diagrams and cartoons) (in texts)

- 13.1 The visual aids used complement the written text
- 13.2 Line pictures, cartoons are well-drawn and appropriate for target learners. They are gender and culture sensitive.
- 13.3 Where appropriate, concept maps and diagrams are included to help the learners to get an overview of the material and to assist the learning process.
- 13.4 Captions and explanations accompanying visual aids are adequate and give the learners a clear idea of what their purpose is.
- 13.5 Instructions/explanations accompanying diagrams are clear and learners know what they are expected to do.
- 13.6 Visual aids are well placed in the text.
- 13.7 Visual aids are of suitable size.
- 13.8 Where printed materials are supported by other media, use of the other media is clearly indicated in the materials and appropriate for the intended learning outcomes.