REVIEWING ENGLISH IN YEARS 7-10

A Report for the Board of Studies, NSW

Prepared for the Board of Studies, NSW by

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Executive summary

The literature reviewed in this report largely encompasses the period 1995-2000. Eleven conceptual topics provide a framework for analysing the significant issues that have arisen from the review of literature. These topics are:

(1) Theoretical Perspectives/Theoretical Models;

(2) The Relationship between English and Literacy Education;

(3) English Studies, Media/ Film Studies and Visual Literacy;

(4) English Studies and Techno-Literacy;

(5) English Studies and the "New Work Order";

(6) English and Students in the Middle Years of Schooling;

(7) Diversity of Learners and the Acquisition of Standard English;

(8) The Relationship between English and Contemporary Australian Civic and Cultural Perspectives;

(9) English and Gender Issues;

(10) The Practice of English Teaching;

(11) Assessment and Evaluation Procedures in English.

1. Theoretical Perspectives/Theoretical Models

The research conducted in this area demonstrates that the shifts in English that have occurred over recent decades can be seen as falling into three sections:

(i) there is an increasing range of texts for study in the field, and these originate in a range of media;
(ii) there is an expansion in the range of interpretive options and paradigms available for textual and cultural analysis; and 
(iii) modes of analysis and cultural practices have broadened the field beyond the traditional centrality of a "canon" of privileged and selected objects of study.

In the field of "English" at the moment, very little is unproblematic. Some writers argue that English, for example, should not be concerned with general literacy outside its own textual concerns. Even the very name of the subject is becoming increasingly problematic.

The dominant paradigm of the subject in terms of curriculum discussion in the 1990s, especially in this country, has undoubtedly been critical literacy. Critical literacy aims to develop knowledge about language and how it is used to position readers and writers in social and cultural contexts. Many critical literacy advocates have levelled significant criticism at both the "cultural heritage" and "personal growth" models of English teaching. Cultural heritage versions of English have been criticised as monocultural, exclusivist and too reliant on the genres of "literature" and notions of abstract aesthetics. However, such criticism does not take into account the way this model provides students with access to and appreciation of culturally valued texts. Personal growth has been criticised for its interest in the personal voice of students and for what is seen as student development in "natural" and holistic terms. But such a criticism ignores the element of rhetorical study in the NSW versions of "growth"; it also ignores the notion that "growth" should be understood in terms of growth in language ability rather than in terms of the personalist, individualist and Romantic themes that have come to be associated with it. Personal growth has served NSW students well as the model on which the 1972 and 1987 English syllabuses were primarily based.

This currently dominant paradigm of critical literacy and other, emergent, paradigms of English teaching are heavily influenced by sociocultural approaches to language and literacy.

Many argue that a critical perspective is most usually gained when units of work in English involve the juxtapositioning of competing discourses on an issue. Students then gain an understanding of the different ways that texts can be responded to and the reasons (or interests) behind these ways of responding.

A related position is that which sees the body of texts on which English is to draw as issuing out of cultural studies, rather than privileging traditional notions of "literature". This model
pays attention to popular culture as much as any other form of cultural practice. It involves exploring how texts are transformed in transnational contexts. Cultural studies usually studies this range of texts in terms of social acts of meaning-making. Cultural studies is thus also interested in analysing reading practices. The assumptions of a cultural studies model of textual and cultural analysis are that texts are seen as arising from intertexts; the reader-text relation is interactive and the relationship between "high", "popular" and "sub" cultures is fluid and unstable.

The dominance of critical literacy has begun to be questioned by those who would want to go beyond critique to a kind of "critical" creation. Some argue for a pedagogy of multiliteracies. English/literacy teachers under this model facilitate student composition using a number of elements of meaning making: linguistic, visual, audio and multimodal. Thus, a wide definition of texts should prevail: encompassing such texts as literary, electronic, film, media, documentaries, CD-ROMs, Websites, magazines, music clips, newspapers, advertisements, television, cartoons, as well as biographies, autobiographies, political speeches, treatises and tracts, essays, memoirs, reports.

An approach to English that would seem to encompass emerging as well as currently dominant paradigms, while retaining some valuable continuity with "growth" and with both the current K-6 and Stage 6 English Syllabuses in NSW is a rhetorical model. With such an approach, programs in English would revolve around questions of language as social practice in different situations and allow for an understanding of genre as something dynamic to be adapted to different contexts.

The world in which teachers operate differs from class to class and, indeed, from day to day, let alone from school to school. While pragmatic "mixing" may conjure up images of anti-intellectualism and contradiction, context is critical in teaching. Aspects of many of the models of the study of English can be incorporated into a rhetorical approach. Teachers can make conscious choices within this approach and students can be made aware of what these choices are and when they are appropriate for use. This then draws students’ attention to the metacognitive skills and forms a basis for the reflection required in the Stage 6 English Syllabus. An approach that allows teachers to make conscious and reflective choices between aspects of models suitable to the kinds of learning intended would seem to be an appropriate approach to curriculum design.

2. The Relationship between English and Literacy Education.
The role of the high school English teacher in the teaching of basic literacy skills needs to be reinforced. A sociocultural view of literacy is the dominant view of literacies in current literature. This sociocultural approach argues for a blurring of the distinctions between speech and writing and the hybridising of genres. The North American studies in genre also distance themselves from a view of genre teaching that involves teaching the abstracted and decontextualised features of text types. Instead, genres are located as forms of social action in context. Thus, there are political and ideological dimensions involved in the conventional use or subversion of genres. A nuanced and complex understanding of genre that brings together a range of theories can be used to help students read and write flexibly, with an eye to the rhetorical function of discourse but without becoming fixed in a single set of formal conventions.

Work on multi-literacies stresses understanding of language and literacy codes, multimodal reading and writing practices, multimedia authoring skills, multimedia critical analysis, internet exploration strategies and navigational skills. Students should be able to apply multiple semiotic modes in communicative processes. They should develop the capacity to generate information-management questions and resolve them.

3. English Studies, Media/ Film Studies and Visual Literacy.

The general sense of what constitutes a valid "visual text" itself needs to be broadened beyond traditional media texts and film. Visual texts generated through modern computer technology (video and computer games, CD-ROMs and the Internet) should therefore be highlighted in the development of resources and models for teaching viewing skills. Moreover, the syllabus should provide for close study of visual texts; it should also allow for an integrated approach that connects visual texts to the teaching of other texts. An important theoretical dimension in such approaches is the notion of comparative textuality, whereby the meaning-making resources and practices in one form of textuality (e.g. the novel) are compared to the meaning-making resources and practices of another (e.g. film). Comparative textuality should be a key theoretical underpinning to the teaching of a broad range of texts and cultural practices.

The rise of the importance of "visual literacy" amidst our image-oriented culture is a key finding in the research. Clearly, as in the NSW Stage 6 Syllabus, both viewing and representing need to be incorporated into the integrated language modes of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Technological and multimodal literacy should be an essential aspect of the teaching and learning of subject English. "Communities of practice" focused on technological and multimodal literacy will need to be established in English classrooms. Students should be given the opportunity to compose a range of texts using new technologies and consider the social, economic and political implications of technology use.

5. English Studies and the "New Work Order".

In this era of rapid change, emergent literacies, multi-literacies and hybrid genres, the English curriculum should continually work to establish connections with mature versions of workplace, community and cultural communications. In relation to workplace communications, a number of researchers point out that the literacy demands are not simply about "neutral" skills but about literacy practices related to the cultures of workplaces and about facilitating awareness and negotiation of workplace values and working identities.

6. English and Students in the Middle Years of Schooling

Research in the middle years of schooling indicates that students learn at different rates and in different ways. Middle years students can be effectively engaged through an English curriculum which allows students to discover, construct and incorporate new knowledge, skills and understanding from the basis of their current understanding. Learning and the acquisition of strategies for learning need to occur in a context of high expectations.

A number of syllabuses reviewed stress the importance of relevant and independent learning. Among the key tools that enable independent learning are skills in research and reflection which can be effectively developed in the English classroom.

Students should be given the opportunity to study representations of youth and youth culture in contemporary society. The English classroom can be a site in which texts of youth culture can be enjoyed and evaluated. The values of these texts and their socio-political and commercial dimensions can be analysed.

Learners should also be given opportunities in English to embrace technology and the multimodal nature of contemporary literacy practice.
7. Diversity of Learners and the Acquisition of Standard English

The research conducted in this area indicates the growing awareness of the strong link between the study of language and the study of culture and cultural identity. Both bilingual and bidialectal students are encouraged to see the two languages/dialects as "different ways of knowing". Clearly, a positive attitude of affirming the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of learners needs to be incorporated into pedagogical models of English teaching. Use and reflection upon language(s) and dialects should be consciously related to the study of cultural ways of knowing and being.

Explicit language teaching methods play an important role in the acquisition of Standard English for ESL and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This should be balanced by the provision of immersive language experiences, critical literacy strategies and the opportunity for transformative meaning-making activities.

8. The Relationship between English and Contemporary Australian Civic and Cultural Perspectives.

There is a significant connection between a language arts education underpinned by a social view of language and literacy and civics education. Students should be given the opportunity to respond to a range of cultural texts, images and discourses. Students should study a wide range of literature including texts, both contemporary and from the past, which reflects the interests and values of both men and women and a diversity of viewpoints and perspectives on topics. Students should be given the opportunity to compose their own texts to represent Australian identities. Research indicates that the role of texts in constructing social understandings of the environment connects the subject English to contemporary Australian civic and cultural perspectives.

9. English and Gender Issues

The national and international syllabuses reviewed have integrated gender issues through stating that:
- text selection should reflect the interests of both genders,
- students should explore both male and female main characters in textual study,
• students should have the opportunity to analyse the impact of gender on the composition of and response to texts,
• students should have the opportunity to critique narrow textual constructions of gender,
• students should have the opportunity to analyse the role of language in shaping gendered identities.

In terms of the specific issue of boys' literacy, access to research specifically on successful teaching strategies needs to be made available to teachers through syllabus support documents.

10. The Practice of English Teaching

English teachers should create classrooms in which different ways of responding to and composing texts (and the implications of these ways) are invited and explored.

Teaching approaches in Australian and international syllabuses include a mix of:

• language immersion in a “language-rich” environment,
• the active use of language by students in whole, meaningful, authentic contexts,
• observational learning,
• discussion in both whole-class and group environments, preferably based on heterogeneous grouping,
• collaborative learning,
• workshop approaches,
• negotiated activities,
• modelling and demonstration,
• direct instruction and explicit teaching,
• guided practice,
• peer tutoring,
• a multimedia environment for both student use and teacher instruction,
• differentiated instruction for different student needs,
• positioning students as both independent and collaborative learners: giving students the opportunity to show independence and initiative and to work with others in self-managing teams,
• encouraging students to reflect critically on the language processes and strategies they use,
• having students engage in close and wide reading,
• developing student awareness of context, audience and purpose,
• having students use new technologies extensively,
• having students research and solve problems.

11. Assessment and Evaluation Processes in English.

Processes to assess and evaluate student work in English are being rethought. A rhetorical approach to English assumes that people construct texts with a view to achieving a desired result with a particular audience. This approach can assist in assessment. Standards-referencing makes its criteria and standards known to the student.

Attention needs to be paid to diagnostic and formative assessment to support teaching methods, resource selection and achievement profiling. The most useful assessment is that which specifically assists students in developing their understanding of the processes of composing, responding and reflecting on their learning.
Summary of recommendations

1. That no single model of English curriculum should predominate in the new English syllabus for years 7-10. An intelligent and intellectualised eclecticism should be built into the design of the new English syllabus so as to maximise teacher ability to respond to the demands of context and praxis.

2. That English studies in Years 7-10 be underpinned by a focus on multiliteracies: linguistic, visual, audio, multimodal and technological.

3. That the syllabus give equal emphasis to responding and composing. Students are composers of language as well as critics of others' language.

4. That the syllabus give equal emphasis to the imaginative and the critical. The latter involves analysis and critique, including critique of ideology particularly at Stage 5.

5. That English studies in Years 7-10 draw attention to multicultural and transnational forms of cultural production in a wide range of genres and media. Students should be exposed to a variety of cultural experiences, texts and cultures in the English curriculum. A wide definition of "text" should prevail. Students should also be exposed to a variety of interpretive frameworks used in textual and cultural analysis.

6. That the syllabus make a clear statement about the relationship between "English" and "literacy" and acknowledge that one of the roles of the English teacher is as a teacher of basic literacy skills.

7. That the syllabus recognise the complexity of texts and textuality and avoid the notion that literacy in the 21st century can be adequately addressed through the imitation of simple text types.

8. That the syllabus prepare students for Stage 6 by incorporating opportunities for composing and responding to visual texts.
9. That the syllabus take a broad view of what constitutes relevant visual text, provide for close study of visual texts and allow for an integrated approach that connects visual texts to the teaching of other texts.

10. That the syllabus prepare students for Stage 6 by including opportunities for comparing texts within units of work.

11. That an important component of the assessment of composing and responding be student explanation of decisions they make in these processes. This documentation of the process is significant in the development of critical literacy and reflection.

12. That the teaching and learning of subject English in Years 7-10 include the development of a technological and multimodal literacy that encompasses the composition of and response to technological texts. Students should consciously reflect upon the social context and implications of technology and literacy practices.

13. That the syllabus stress the importance of communal and collaborative learning, as well as independent learning.

14. That as the syllabus takes account of workplace cultures, it does so in a way that goes beyond functional literacy towards a vision of access to, and accompanying ability to negotiate and critique, those cultures.

15. That the syllabus be designed to allow aspects of its implementation to be based on independent (including individual and group) research projects.

16. That aspects of youth culture be considered as among the contexts to be focused on by the syllabus.

17. While the Stage 6 Syllabus has led the way in constructing separate syllabuses for ESL students, the English teaching community ought to balance this against the advantages of mainstream English classes for ESL students in years 7-10. This allows for the development of culturally responsive pedagogies, including the use of texts which reflect Australia’s culturally diverse population, particularly the heritage of Aboriginal people.
18. That the syllabus be designed so that English play a role in teaching the communication skills and cultural and critical understanding required for active and informed citizenship in Australian society within an international context. The subject of English is a significant site for the development of the "sociological imagination" of learners.

19. That the syllabus include the study of a widely defined Australian literature. This study is to be balanced by the study of literature from other countries, times, nationalities and cultures.

20. That the texts selected for study in the English curriculum reflect a variety of perspectives on gendered identity and gender relations.

21. That students in English are given the opportunity to analyse the impact of gender on the response to and composition of cultural texts, images and discourses.

22. That a support document providing a broader summary of research into the area of gender and success in English, be developed to accompany the syllabus.

23. That the syllabus operate within a broadly “constructivist” approach (i.e. it is assumed that students are at the centre of the learning process, play an active role in constructing knowledge, have prior knowledge and should interact with others), and emphasise interactive and dialogic teaching methods, while nevertheless allowing for eclecticism so that teachers can operate appropriately within their own contexts.

24. That ways of engaging Middle Year students be given explicit place in the syllabus - in particular, the learning of research, design and information processing and management skills, critical thinking, associative thinking, problem solving, and metacognition.

25. That the syllabus make explicit statements about assessment in English Years 7-10 giving equal emphasis to responding and composing and to the imaginative and the critical.

26. That assessment in English address the integrated language modes of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing through requiring students to compose and respond to written, spoken, visual and multimodal texts in a wide range of media. Assessment should be holistic and comprehensive and direct students towards acquiring an ever-widening rhetorical repertoire.
27. That assessment in English involve evaluation of the research, design and information processing, management skills, critical thinking, problem solving and metacognition of students.

28. That assessment in English involve evaluation of students’ awareness of the social contexts of texts and the social influences on their own interpretive practices. This may include evaluation of their critical language awareness and critical literacy.

29. That assessment criteria used favour assessing composing and responding in a range of contexts for their rhetorical effectiveness.

30. That assessment in English give greater attention to metacognitive awareness, evidenced in the ability of students to explain their own representational choices, deconstruct their own composing and responding, and reflect on their learning processes.

31. That the English Years 7-10 Syllabus provide for diagnostic, formative and summative assessment.

32. That the syllabus advocate the publication by teachers of criteria for assessment in relation to a standard of achievement.

33. That assessment processes be integrated into the curriculum to inform teaching and learning.
Further principles

Finally, the authors would like to state some further principles for inclusion in the syllabus that come from a range of research and that cut across a number of the areas dealt with above:

A. Wide reading should constitute a large proportion of time spent on reading. This however should be completed by adequate provision of time for the development of close reading techniques.

B. As far as possible, teacher freedom to adopt practices relevant to their contexts should be maximised in the syllabus.

C. The individual and the personal should not be lost among the concepts of social construction – such practices as the journal can remain sites of reflection and personal expression, allowing consideration of personal and social issues and identities, ways of recording reflections upon learning and for developing metacognition, as well as for considering and deconstructing reading and writing practices.

D. One of the real strengths of the current 7-10 English Syllabus is the concept of “pleasure” in the activities of the English classroom. The pleasure in reading, for example, should remain an important aspect of the syllabus.
Report and Recommendations

Since the publication of the current Years 7-10 English Syllabus in 1987, there have been a number of radical changes within English studies which make the development of a new syllabus an exciting opportunity. The literature reviewed in this report largely encompasses the period 1995-2000, though significant works which were written before this period have been included. The field itself has diversified greatly, and in order to map this diversity, eleven conceptual topics have been used to provide a framework for analyzing the significant issues that have arisen from the review of literature. These topics are as follows:

1. Theoretical Perspectives/Theoretical Models;
2. The Relationship between English and Literacy Education;
3. English Studies, Media/ Film Studies and Visual Literacy;
4. English Studies and Techno-Literacy;
5. English Studies and the "New Work Order";
6. English and Students in the Middle Years of Schooling;
7. Diversity of Learners and the Acquisition of Standard English;
8. The Relationship between English and Contemporary Australian Civic and Cultural Perspectives;
9. English and Gender Issues;
10. The Practice of English Teaching;
11. Assessment and Evaluation Procedures in English;

Within each of these conceptual topics there is considerable complexity and much of the research crosses borders to explore several of the topics. Nevertheless, our aim has been to provide a set of "keys" to open the doors to the central developments that are altering the nature and teaching of English in Australia and elsewhere.
1. Theoretical Perspectives/Theoretical Models

Rob Pope's excellent encyclopedic handbook (1998), which itself reconfigures the nature of English, provides a very useful outline of the ways in which the subject has undergone a number of shifts in recent decades. It is a very comprehensive overview of changes in the field:

* a shift from a focus on “literature” to a focus on a wider range of texts and genres;

* a shift from studying a text in isolation to studying it in its social context and from a range of contemporary social perspectives;

* emphasis on standardised language use is giving way to the ability to recognise, analyse and negotiate linguistic variety in uses of the English language in local and global contexts;

* as distinct from readers passively receiving the meanings of a literary canon, the "creative" is as important as the "critical" in contemporary English studies and indeed all responses to texts are in part "creative": students are encouraged to engage in critical-creative "rewritings" of texts;

* a shift from studying the history of "literature" to studying how literature and other texts are part of historical and social processes;

* a shift from literary study to the study of cultural and meaning-making practices in general;

* a shift from the formalist analysis of "aesthetic" texts to a cultural analysis of how and why values change over time and how texts are produced and used, evaluated, institutionalised and transformed in social contexts;

* a greater emphasis on the materiality of communication practices (i.e. viewing the text as a material object and analysing the impact of technologies of communication, modes of production and social organizations on its production and reception);

* non-Western-European genres of writing, oral performance and cultural production are being recognized and included in the English curriculum: texts in translation are also more likely to be included;
* a shift from a monocultural version of cultural heritage to a recognition that students need to be aware of a wide variety of regional, national and global cultures and their associated myths and belief systems;

* "culture" is no longer seen as something defined from above; rather, it is part of a continuing conversation;

* dialogic, interactive and interpersonal modes of teaching and learning in English studies take precedence over the teacher-led "banking" model of education; and

* a shift from assessment in English studies based on essayistic analysis to a broader range of new forms of assessment: these include rewriting tasks, cross-genre and cross-media transformations, the creation of generically hybrid texts, collages, script-writing and electronic texts.

Within Australian secondary English teaching, Thomson (1999) lists the following as the key changes since 1968:

* the importance of metacognition, of students reflecting on their learning;

* the importance of language as a tool for learning: journals, informal talk, expressive writing;

* the conscious exploration of language and classroom work on textuality and critical literacy;

* widening definitions of "text";

* developing understandings of contemporary cultural and literary theory; and

* developing understandings of multimedia technology.

In general, it seems that the shifts in English that have occurred over recent decades can be seen as falling into three areas:

(i) there is an increasing range of texts for study in the field, and these originate in a range of media;
(ii) there is an expansion in the range of interpretive options and paradigms available for textual and cultural analysis; and

(iii) modes of analysis and cultural practices have superseded the traditional centrality of a "canon" of privileged and selected objects of study.

In the field of "English" at the moment, **very little is unproblematic**. There is, for example, largely centred in the UK, and based on experience with the National Curriculum, what may be termed a **"rationalist" approach to English curriculum design** (not in the sense of "rational", but in the sense of "rationalising"/"cutting back", as in "economic rationalism", but without the latter's synonymity with "totally irrational"). Davis (1996), for example, argues, that in an era of cross-curricular concern with "literacy", English should focus on its core concerns as being media study, knowledge about language and the study of literature, and should abandon its unique claims to teaching transferable skills of general literacy. The approach to literacy in the NSW DET at the moment would seem to hold parallels here, though we would want to add "fundamental reading skills" to Davis' list as something for which somebody should take special responsibility - and that English teachers are uniquely placed to hold onto this area. Similarly, Marenbon (1994) questions whether English should be dealing with speaking and listening at all, and argues that government mandate of English curriculum should not go beyond teaching pupils to read fluently and accurately; and to write Standard English correctly using a reasonably wide vocabulary.

Even the **very name of the subject** is becoming increasingly problematic. There is an argument that the name "English" effectively forms the central metaphor of the subject and has a powerful influence on how teachers and learners see themselves and the nature of the discipline. It has been historically associated with "England", "Englishness" and "English Literature". A number of syllabuses reviewed have dropped the name "English" for such things as "Reading/ Language Arts" (California), "Language, Literacy and Communication" (South Africa) and "Language and Languages" (New Zealand), which includes the language of English. In the light of these increasing developments one might consider how a term such as "Communications" might more readily fit the broad study of language, textuality, transnational cultural practice and multiliteracies than the current name of "English" (see Kress, 1996). Teachers and learners in such an area could explore such things as literary communication, workplace communication, public communication, cross-cultural communication and multimedia/ multimodal communication. A term like "Communications" may better signal that to recognise, interpret and negotiate linguistic, cultural and ethnic differences is becoming an increasingly valued ability in a globalised world. The postmodern scenario, and in particular our own post-colonial society situated in the Asia-Pacific region, may warrant a different central metaphor that positions teachers and
learners more as global citizens engaged in transnational cultural practice and effective communication. There might also be a democratic impulse behind such a re-naming exercise, that encapsulates popular culture, Aboriginal oral storytelling, literature in translation and sign language as it does to British canonical texts. This could have a positive impact on ensuring inclusion within classrooms and flexible assessment measures that validate the strengths and different cultural backgrounds of students.

The current NSW Syllabus (1987), as was its predecessor of 1971-2, is based on a personal growth model of English - heavily influenced in NSW by the work of John Dixon (1967) and James Moffett (1968). **Personal growth** has served NSW very well. In stressing English as an active pursuit - and thus encouraging extended discourse in speaking and writing, group activities and wide reading - it moved English away from the emphasis on de-contextualised grammar exercises which dominated previous syllabuses. It is often forgotten, too, that the first "growth model" syllabus in NSW was also heavily based on a rhetorical approach to language:

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WHO       says       WHAT       to       WHOM?
(           (                  (            
WHY?       HOW       with       WHAT EFFECTS
(NSW Secondary Schools Board, 1971: 5)
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The dominant paradigm of the subject in terms of curriculum discussion in the 1990s, especially in this country, has undoubtedly been **critical literacy** (see, for example, Griffith, 1992; McCormick, 1994; Anstey and Bull, 1996; Morgan, 1997, 1999; Lankshear et al, 1997; Prain, 1998). Many critical literacy advocates have leveled significant criticism at both the "cultural heritage" and "personal growth" models of English teaching. Cultural heritage versions of English have been critiqued as monocultural, exclusivist and too reliant on the genres of "literature" and notions of abstract aesthetics. However such criticism does not take into account the way this model provides students with access to and appreciation of culturally valued texts. Personal growth has been criticised for its interest in the personal voice of students and for what is seen as student development in "natural" and holistic terms, but such a criticism ignores the element of rhetorical study in the NSW versions of "growth" and also ignores the notion that "growth" should be understood in terms of growth in language ability rather than in terms of the personalist, individualist and Romantic themes that have come to be associated with it. Personal growth has served NSW students well as the model on which the 1972 and 1987 English syllabuses were primarily based. Debates about the range of texts in English such as about literary versus popular culture texts, frequently assume a "banking model" of education. There is a perhaps a need to de-
emphasise debates about the range of texts in the English classroom and keep the general focus of the current (1987) 7-10 Syllabus on developing the language growth, rhetorical sophistication and interpretive empowerment of students, to be enhanced by a more multiliterate cultural practice.

The currently dominant paradigm of critical literacy and other, emergent, paradigms of English teaching are heavily influenced by sociocultural approaches to language and literacy. Critical literacy advocates argue for English classrooms in which all language practices (including "literature") are contextualised socially, and critiqued for their underlying ideologies. This approach needs to be applied to the entire spectrum of texts studied in English - both what are traditionally called "media" and what are traditionally called "literature". Morgan's (1999) approach to critical literacy would seem to encapsulate a number of the most useful questions for teachers issuing out of this paradigm:

1. **Situating the Text**
   * What is the topic and why is this topic being written about?
   * How is the topic being presented? What themes and discourses are being used?
   * Who is writing to whom? Whose voices and positions are being expressed, and whose are not?
   * How is the text encouraging you to think and respond?
   * What other ways are there of writing about the topic?
   * What wasn’t said about the topic, and why?

2. **Locating the Text in the World**
   * Where does this text come from?
   * What kind of text is this?
   * What meanings and contexts of meanings are possible from this text?
   * What social function does this text serve?
   * What kind of reader does this text propose and what position is afforded to him/her?

3. **The Writer, the Reader, and the World in the Text**
   * How does this text construct a version of reality and knowledge?
     and
   * What is left out of this story?

   * How does this text represent the reader and set up a position for reading?
     and
   * What other position might there be for reading?
* How does this text set up its authority and encourage your belief?
and
* How can you deconstruct its authority?

Morgan would argue that developing skills in questions such as these would leave students free to produce either submissive, negotiated or resistant readings of any text set.

The classroom work of Morgan and others shows that a critical perspective is most usually gained when units of work in English allow for the juxtapositioning of competing discourses on an issue, so that students gain metacognitive awareness about the different ways that an issue is viewed and the reasons (or interests) behind these views. This is quite distinct from simply developing cognition in a particular discourse. Students can assess for themselves the values and ideologies of different discourses and speaking positions, they can analyse the power relationships amongst discourses and consider how such relationships can be transformed.

Critical literacy issues largely out of an interest in poststructuralist literary theory. Misson (1997, 1999) highlights the importance of poststructuralism for classroom practice in explaining that poststructuralism sees the process of the creation of the individual human being and their positioning within ideology as largely happening through language, since it is language which "constructs" us. Poststructuralism argues that there is no self apart from the ways we use language in different discourses. The discourses we partake in are what constitute the self. Therefore the self is a social construct (the constructivist position), rather than being a given essence of a person (the essentialist belief). This provides a strong theory of how we are locked into certain belief systems. Texts put us into a subject position (the way of seeing the world implied by the text), and we become subjects (i.e. experiencing human beings with a particular configuration of attitudes and beliefs) through being positioned in this way. This theory of the discursive construction of subjectivity (i.e. the construction of our subjective selves through discourse) does, Misson argues, give an urgency to work on examining how texts are positioning us, because these texts may in fact be quite powerfully creating us and our belief systems. We may need to deconstruct the texts in an attempt to defuse their potential power over us.

A related position is that which sees the body of texts on which English is to draw as issuing out of cultural studies, rather than privileging traditional notions of "literature". This model pays attention to popular culture as much as any other form of cultural practice. It also involves exploring how texts are transformed in transnational contexts. Cultural studies also
usually studies this range of texts in terms of the politics of social acts of meaning-making. Cultural studies is thus also interested in analysing reading practices. Questions such as "Why do certain reading practices come into existence?" and "Whose interests are served by reading texts in certain ways?" interest practitioners of cultural studies. Reading in the secondary English classroom has often been viewed as an ideologically neutral activity. An approach through cultural studies would help students become aware of a wide range of reading practices that are applied in textual and cultural analysis. They would be encouraged to consider the assumptions and values behind different ways of responding to texts. They would also be given the opportunity to experiment with such reading practices when they develop interpretations of a text. However, existing reading practices should in no way constrain student interpretation; rather, the attitude should be one of enhancing and enlarging their perspectives. Students must be seen as active re-designers of systems of meaning, rather than simply receivers.

The assumptions of a cultural studies model of textual and cultural analysis are that texts are seen as arising from intertexts; the reader-text relation is interactive and the relationship between "high", "popular" and "sub" cultures is fluid and unstable. Thus, textual analysis itself is connected to wider questions of culture, ideology and subjectivity (Fuery and Mansfield, 1997, Kramsch, 1998). For Fuery and Mansfield, "canons" of selected texts cannot be avoided, as some texts are inevitably chosen for cultural analysis. However, they point to the importance of seeing "canons" as contingent social constructions and of critically evaluating their function in the wider society. Kress (1995) also discusses the culturally salient text, the aesthetically valued text and the mundane text as all important subject texts in creating critical readers.

This dominance of critical literacy has begun to be questioned by those who would want to go beyond critique to a kind of "critical" creation. Kress (1995), for example, argues that the creation of critically literate citizens is not enough if those citizens do not do something with that knowledge - he calls this education for social action: the envisaging, design and making of alternatives. Ultimately Kress emphasises going beyond critique into creation. Cranny-Francis argues the importance of secondary English students having access to the skills that enable them to produce readings as well as to be able to analyse and criticise those readings (in Hasan and Williams, 1996). The subject of English is a vital site in which to facilitate the development of active and informed citizenship. Students and teachers should view themselves as empowered designers, not just critics, of social futures.

Others in the "New London" group (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000) have argued for a pedagogy of multiliteracies. English/ literacy teachers under this model facilitate student design using
the six elements of meaning making- linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, spatial and the multimodal patterns of meaning that relate the first five modes of meaning to each other. Most commentators have used the term "multimodal" to describe the way contemporary texts use and integrate a range of semiotic modes. "Pen and paper" definitions of literacy no longer hold in the digital era, which demands of its "multiliterate subjects" such things as techno-literacy and visual literacy. Thus, a wide definition of texts should prevail: encompassing such texts as literary, electronic, film, media, documentaries, CDROMs, Websites, magazines, music clips, newspapers, advertisements, television, cartoons, as well as biographies, autobiographies, political speeches, treatises and tracts, essays, memoirs, reports.

Such an approach - based on multiliteracies - picks up the shift in the nature of the language itself as a form of communication. Goodman and Graddol (1996) examine the theoretical and practical implications of the global spread of the English language for English teaching. The contributors to Goodman and Graddol's book see current uses of language as being intricately connected to dominant social practices such as consumerism, global marketing, and online interaction. The main developments explored include how new communication technologies are shaping the way language is used, the way English is being expanded to express new forms of social relations and hybridised identities, the increasingly multimodal nature of texts in English, the impact of market forces on discursive practices and the relationship between globalisation and the English language.

The key issues they see resulting from this are:

- the blurring of genres and styles in contemporary uses of English;
- the importance of visual literacy and the relationship between visual and verbal communication;
- the role of English in cyberspace for constructing subjectivity and imagined and diasporic communities;
- the new genres and more fluid texts created through Internet communication;
- the increasingly informal and marketised use of English in a consumerist culture; and
- the forms of local and regional resistance to English that are changing the English language itself.

Ultimately, what encompasses all of the above is the notion of "reflection on the language" with the stress on "reflection". Curtis' (1993) view is that while competence comes only from USING the language - from speaking, listening, reading, writing - it is only by pausing and reflecting on the language that the students' knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills will benefit (e.g. listening to himself on tape; keeping a reader’s journal; and drafting a short story with a critical friend). Any area of language, he argues, could be
addressed in terms of composition and response; investigative and analytical work; individual and collaborative work; and sharing and evaluation.

Thus, a model of English that would seem to encompass emerging paradigms as well as currently dominant paradigms, while retaining some valuable continuity with "growth" and with both the current K-6 and Stage 6 English Syllabuses in NSW is a rhetorical model. As with any other model, however, there is no one aspect of such a model that is emphasised above all others by its proponents. Some of the assumptions implicit in Locke's (1999-2000) rhetorical focus, for example, include the belief that people construct texts with a view to achieving a desired result with a particular audience, that all texts are products of their functions, that texts are generated by contexts and that all texts assume a kind of social complicity between producer and audience that becomes formalised in the conventions of genre. However, with regard to the latter issue, in his view, a rhetorical model allows for a dynamic understanding of genre as something far more adaptable and socially rooted than a series of prescriptive recipes. Locke draws on the inquiry-oriented curriculum developed by Gordon Wells (involving the five steps of launch, research, interpretation, presentation and reflection) to facilitate student exploration of, especially, argument as a mode of discourse. This is a student-centred approach to learning about language and acquiring a metalanguage through inquiry which is not prescriptive about genre. Students gain in understanding the functions they want their texts to serve, the target audiences to which they are appealing and the role of social context in communication.

Andrews (1996) postulates that a curriculum for English should ask the question, "what are the best forms of language in the current context?" and he argues that the need is for a conception of language as social practice determined by social structures. But, unlike the critical language study (CLS) of Fairclough and others, his preferred "rhetorical" perspective is concerned with the arts of discourse, and hence more concerned with production than CLS. A rhetorical perspective sees as much artistry in everyday language as in literature. Hence, literature becomes an important part of the repertoire of "English", but is no longer its raison d'etre. Questions asked of assignments in a rhetorical perspective could include:

- Who is the audience for this communication?
- What is my/our purpose in this communication?
- What do I/we want to say?
- What media are best on this occasion?
- What large-scale forms of language are appropriate?
- What tone/audience orientation is required?
- What stylistic features are appropriate?
Under such a regime, programs in English would revolve around problems to be solved in language, not fixed genres, or themes or exercises.

Thomson's overarching model, which he calls a "Rhetorical, Ethical, Socio-cultural, Political Model", involves personal growth as well as a full awareness of the relationship between language and power, a familiarity with social practices and their discourses, and an understanding of the political and ideological formation of texts and of matters of value and ethics. It is the stress on the last of these that gives Thomson's view of "rhetoric" its particular flavour.

Postmodernity has involved fundamental changes to our understandings of "culture" and of educational practice. Culture is now understood not as simply a "high art" realm but as something that permeates every sphere of life. Raymond Williams' (1976) definition of culture as a whole way of life of a social group or whole society encapsulates such an understanding. We can speak of work-as-culture, popular culture, technocultures, urban cultures, global cultures, fan cultures, commodity cultures and diasporic cultures. Students should be given the opportunity to study the role of a variety of cultures in establishing ways of being in the world. Changes have also occurred in educational thinking as a result of postmodernism. The modernist classroom, Giroux (1996) notes, was focused on the culture of the book, certainty and "master narratives". The postmodern classroom, on the other hand, needs to affirm a diverse range of voices and "local narratives", incorporate popular culture into the curriculum, take account of electronically mediated information, and adopt an expanded notion of plural literacies. There has been a shift in educational philosophy away from teacher-centred instructional strategies, fixed curriculum and the "banking model" of education and towards a constructivist emphasis on learners and learning. A postmodern pedagogy recognises students as active producers of knowledge and cultural practice in their own right.

It would be simplistic and somewhat anti-intellectual to argue that teachers should just "mix" such models in the name of classroom pragmatism, if only because many of them issue from such different intellectual roots that simply "mixing" would create contradictory aims and practices. However, the fact that conceptual models of curriculum have such different views of the world still begs the question, "Whose world?". The world in which teachers operate differs from class to class and, indeed, from day to day, let alone from school to school. Context is all in teaching and, while pragmatic "mixing" conjures up images of anti-intellectualism and contradiction, an intelligent and intellectualised eclecticism that allows teachers to make conscious choices between models depending on
the current contexts in which they are operating from day-to-day would seem to be an appropriate approach to curriculum design (cf Anstey and Bull, 1996). The appropriate metaphor is not the classroom "recipe" in which a number of models and concepts are thrown in the mix, but a metaphor of the staffroom library, in which teachers are aware of the contents of the models, choose approaches appropriate to present contexts, and replace them for others as contexts change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That no single model of English curriculum should predominate in the new English syllabus for years 7-10. An intelligent and intellectualised eclecticism should be built into the design of the new English syllabus so as to maximise teacher ability to respond to the demands of context and praxis.

2. That English studies in Years 7-10 be underpinned by a focus on multiliteracies: linguistic, visual, audio, multimodal and technological.

3. That the syllabus give equal emphasis to responding and composing. Students are composers of language as well as critics of others' language.

4. That the syllabus give equal emphasis to the imaginative and the critical. The latter involves analysis and critique, including critique of ideology particularly at Stage 5.

5. That English studies in Years 7-10 draw attention to multicultural and transnational forms of cultural production in a wide range of genres and media. Students should be exposed to a variety of cultural experiences, texts and cultures in the English curriculum. A wide definition of "text" should prevail. Students should also be exposed to a variety of interpretive frameworks used in textual and cultural analysis.

2. The Relationship between English and Literacy Education.

The relationship between subject "English" and the concept "literacy" has been ambivalent in NSW in recent years. On the one hand, "literacy" in NSW under the DET "Literacy strategy" has become - certainly at policy level, and undoubtedly in widespread practice - a genuinely across-the-curriculum phenomenon. Government school teachers across the
curriculum have been given every opportunity of becoming highly conscious of "literacy" in their subject areas. One result of this is a "message" being sent to the education community that "literacy" is no longer the peculiar province of "English". While this has a positive aspect, it also tends to separate "English" from the historical special role it has had in the teaching of "literacy". Davies (1996) actually supports this separation of English from any unique role in the teaching of general literacy, but this could leave those students whose need is for basic literacy skills somewhat stranded if no one is taking responsibility, beyond the demands of specific subject reading material, for the most fundamental skills of reading comprehension. Simply expecting that all students will have become generally effective "code breakers" and "text participants" (NSW Dept. of School Education Curriculum Directorate, 1997b) in primary schools, leaving high school teachers to deal with the demands of subject material leaves such students stranded. The role of the high school English teacher in the teaching of basic literacy skills needs to be reinforced. While there has not been a major paradigm shift in the classroom pedagogy of reading since the work of the major psycholinguists such as Smith (1971, 1978) and the Goodmans (cf Gollasch, 1982), classroom practice today tends to favour an eclectic approach that works on skills and comprehension in tandem. In terms of reading pedagogy, the DET Literacy Strategy documents can show the way here (NSW Dept. of School Education Curriculum Directorate, 1997a; 1997b) as does the Western Australian First Steps program (Education Dept of Western Australia, 1997a; 1997b).

On the other hand, given the present (1987) English syllabus' emphasis on a broad range of audiences, forms, purposes and contexts, the particular approach to writing as manifested in NSW "literacy" documents clearly causes some disquiet among English teachers - with the strong emphasis on the reproduction of text types. Outside English itself, the language of a subject area, which may be problematic for the learner, is not questioned in this approach to writing.

Ironically, despite the separation of "literacy" from a special relationship with "English", and despite the worries that many English teachers have about a text-type approach to writing development as manifested in assessment such as ELLA, when it comes to public, external assessment, "literacy" becomes re-married to "English". Thus in Years 7-8, students are assessed through the English Language and Literacy Assessment, and in Year 10 through a test in "English-Literacy". The relationship is ambivalent indeed.

A sociocultural view of literacy as social practice is the dominant view taken of literacies in current literature (Gee, 1990; Anstey and Bull, 1996; Hasan and Williams, 1996; Maybin and Mercer, 1996; Mercer and Swan, 1996; Schirato and Yell, 1996; Street, 1997; Christie
and Misson, 1998; Kramsch, 1998). Emphasis is given to the way form, function and the meanings in literacy events differ across cultures, communities, social groups and “literacy domains” (e.g. work and school). Current approaches to language education which are self-labelled as "literacy" are invariably based on such sociocultural accounts of language. Perspectives on literacy teaching and learning include:

- systemic functional linguistics (Hasan and Williams, 1996; Maybin and Mercer, 1996; Schirato and Yell, 1996; Christie and Misson, 1998; Gapper, 1998) and related genre-based and discourse approaches (Gee, 1990; Mercer and Swan, 1996);
- critical literacy (see references in previous section); and
- multiliteracies (Lo Bianco and Freebody, 1997; Cope and Kalantzis, 2000).

The term "explicitness" is being used almost unanimously in research writings and policy documents in Australia to refer to the way literacy and a metalanguage for literacy are to be taught (Hasan and Williams, 1996; Gapper, 1998; LoBianco and Freebody).

This sociocultural approach of one branch of the "New Literacy Studies" also argues for a blurring of the distinctions between speech and writing and the hybridising of genres (see Baynham and Maybin in Maybin and Mercer, 1996; Snyder, 1996; Tweddle et al, 1997; Christie and Misson, 1998).

The North American studies in genre also (Freedman and Medway, 1994) distance themselves from a view of genre teaching that involves teaching the abstracted and decontextualised features of text types. Instead, genres are located as forms of social action in context. Thus, there are political and ideological dimensions involved in the conventional use or subversion of genres. This “rhetorical” model of genre pays attention to notions of audience, context, purpose and occasion and draws on sociocultural approaches to language and writing, functional grammar and speech-act theory. The implications of this view of genre for a revitalised genre-based literacy pedagogy are that:

* students can be seen as using generic resources to act effectively on a situation through a text, rather than simply imitating the formal features of a text type;

* there is less emphasis on “banking” or transmission pedagogies. In a constructivist view of knowledge and learning, students are able to criticise genres, discern their social functions and evaluate why some genres are assigned greater value than others; and

* students are able to subvert and “rewrite” genres, combine generic resources in
inventive ways and invent new discursive forms, especially in the light of new technologies.

Writers such as Devitt (2000), argue that a nuanced and complex understanding of genre that brings together a range of theories can be used to “help students read and write flexibly, with an eye to the rhetorical function of discourse but without becoming fixed in a single set of formal conventions” (p. 714).

One of the foremost advocates of the “New Literacy” studies, Street, argues that literacy is more complex than current curriculum and assessment allow. We need curricula and assessment that are themselves rich and complex – as curricula and assessment that reduce literacy to a few simple, mechanistic skills fail to do justice to actual literacy practices in people's lives.

Work on multi-literacies stresses understanding of language and literacy codes, multimodal reading and writing practices, multimedia authoring skills, multimedia critical analysis, internet exploration strategies, internet navigational skills and environmental literacy that ensures an ecologically sustainable future. Students should be able to apply multiple semiotic modes in communicative processes known as designing and gain control of information-management problems (LoBianco and Freebody, 1997). This notion of students as designers of social futures (see also Kress, 1995) becomes an important one in the pedagogy of those advocating multi-literacies. The pedagogical model of the “New London” group reflects an attempt to manage the complexity of multi-literacy approaches by highlighting four principles: situated practice; overt instruction; critical framing; and a transformed practice that involves students, as meaning-makers, actively designing social futures.

The key themes that emerge from the “New Literacy” studies are “multiplicity”, “hybridisation, “plurality”, “complexity”. Curricula based on the idea that simple and “pure” text types exist to be imitated as the basis of writing pedagogy is an out-dated notion.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. That the syllabus make a clear statement about the relationship between "English" and "literacy" and acknowledge that one of the roles of the English teacher is as a teacher of basic literacy skills.
7. That the syllabus recognise the complexity of texts and textuality and avoid the notion that literacy in the 21st century can be adequately addressed through the imitation of simple text types.

3. English Studies, Media/ Film Studies and Visual Literacy.

Media and film, as visual texts, have gained increasing recognition in the teaching of English since the 1970s. Nevertheless, the general sense of what constitutes a valid "visual text" itself needs to be broadened beyond traditional media texts and film. Visual texts generated through modern computer technology (video and computer games, CD ROMs and the Internet) should therefore be highlighted in the development of resources and models for teaching viewing skills (cf. Beavis in Snyder, 1997; Beavis, 1998; Sefton-Green, 2000; Stroupe, 2000). Moreover, the Syllabus should adopt an integrated approach that does not separate visual texts from the teaching of such things as literary texts.

A number of recent publications (Cartmell, Hunter, Kaye and Whelehan, 1996; Campbell, 1999) focus on an integrated approach to teaching about texts and textuality that crosses such things as the literature/media divide. An important theoretical dimension in such approaches is the notion of comparative textuality, whereby the meaning-making resources and practices in one form of textuality (e.g. the novel) are compared to the meaning-making resources and practices of another (e.g. film). Comparative textuality should be a key theoretical underpinning to the teaching of a broad range of texts and cultural practices and how they come to have meaning.

The rise of the importance of "visual literacy" amidst our image-oriented culture is a key finding in the research (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996; Stroupe, 2000; Hancock and Simpson, 1997) and connects to the practice of teaching multiple literacies. Visual design is playing a significant role in the contemporary management and communication of information (Kress, 1995; Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). Clearly, as in the NSW Stage 6 Syllabus both viewing and representing need to be incorporated into the integrated language modes of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

A key finding in relation to visual literacy (Hancock and Simpson, 1997; Oldham, 1999) is that it is increasingly being seen by literacy educators as a means of connecting to, and building on, students' existing literacy competencies. The reading and producing of visual texts, in other words, is being seen as a contemporary path to both print literacy and a more fully multimodal literacy. Oldman, for example, has conducted research into the positive ways in which moving image media enables secondary school students to improve their print
literacy standards, as well as such things as oracy and performance, and concludes that students' competence in one medium supports their acquisition and development of competence in another medium. Visual texts can be seen as a scaffold for both print literacy and multimodal literacy in subject English.

As visual texts and the visual impact of written texts are having an increasing role in conveying information, students need to create (Hancock and Simpson, 1997; O'Shaughnessy, 1999) the visual - as is the case with any texts in the syllabus. Another of the key discoveries revealed by Hancock and Simpson in their final report on an investigation into the teaching practices of middle school teachers' work with visual texts, however, was that rarely did teachers consider who is advantaged or disadvantaged by particular portrayals, omissions, selections and representations, or help their students challenge and resist the constructions identified (Hancock and Simpson, 1997). Therefore, critically literate viewing skills should be seen as central to the teaching of visual texts (see Luke, 1996; Hancock and Simpson, 1997; Kellner, 1998; Mackey, 1999) and that students should be given the opportunity to produce critical readings of images, as well as creating and designing their own.

Hancock and Simpson also point to the importance of assessment issues in their report, including such things as the use of a range of tasks (written, oral, visual and performance) and explicit criteria. A major finding was that the teachers who were most successful in assessing understanding of the constructed nature of texts were those who asked their students to explain the decisions they had made in the process of constructing their texts. This practice has important consequences for the assessment of "representing", and has clearly already started to become a standard practice in the assessment of Stage 6.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

8. That the syllabus prepare students for Stage 6 by incorporating opportunities for composing and responding to visual texts.

9. That the syllabus take a broad view of what constitutes relevant visual text, provide for close study of visual texts and allow for an integrated approach that connects visual texts to the teaching of other texts.

10. That the syllabus prepare students for Stage 6 by including opportunities for comparing texts within units of work.
11. That an important component of the assessment of composing and responding be student explanation of decisions they make in these processes. This documentation of the process is significant in the development of critical literacy and reflection.


The research indicates the need for the subject of English to address itself to the technologically demanding demands of contemporary society. An important point raised by a number of commentators regards the technological nature of current literacy practices (Green and Bigum, 1996; Snyder, 1996; Tweddele, Adams, Clarke, Scrimshaw and Walton; Lankshear, Snyder and Green, 2000). English educators play a central role in preparing students for the communication demands of educational, civic, workplace and leisure activities. Traditional "pen and paper" literacy teaching is no longer an adequate preparation for such demands in the digital age. It is vital that techno-literacy be seen not simply as an "add on" to the activities of the English classroom. **Technological and multimodal literacy should "infuse" the teaching and learning of subject English.** Although this heralds a major change, multi-literacy abilities should actually be enhanced. In terms of the gap between the "information rich" and the "information poor", it may be that through such curricular mandate the issue of real equality of access to information resources will be brought to a head. Multiliterate practices carry significant cultural capital in the "information age". With equality of access to resources, English can offer a key point of access for all learners to such practices.

Clearly, there is a range of social and political issues raised by the use of new technologies. Students in English should be given the opportunity for both creation and socially aware critique in electronic textual environments. There is general agreement amongst contemporary researchers that technological literacy practices are fundamentally social practices (Lankshear, Peters and Knobel, 1996; Luke, 1997; Buckingham, 1999; and Lankshear, Snyder, and Green, 2000). Students should be encouraged to consciously reflect upon the social context and implications of technological literacy. The authors recommend that critical literacy practices be extended into "cyberspace". Lankshear, Peters and Knobel (1996) have outlined the questions that can be posed in critical textual analysis in digital environments. These include, "What counts as knowledge in this textual/electronic environment?", "Who stands to benefit and who will be disadvantaged?", "What subject position is encouraged?" and "What partial version of social reality is created?" Students should be given the opportunity to produce critically literate readings of representations of the use of information technology in popular culture texts. Luke (1997) has outlined questions that can be posed, including "Who are the technology users?", "Why
are they predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon and seemingly middle-class?" and "How are women portrayed as technology users?"

Such analysis means that techno-literacy in the English classroom will involve much more than just "functional" skills with using new technologies. Students will be able to reflect on the socio-political dimensions of "technocultures". The model of technological literacy consisting of the "three dimensions" of the "operational", the "cultural" and the "critical" has been developed and considered by a number of commentators (Green and Bigum, 1996; Lankshear, Snyder and Green, 2000). The "operational" involves reading and writing in a range of contexts; the "cultural" pertains to understanding social practices and discourses, and the "critical" involves a recognition that all social practices and literacies are constructed and selective and can thus be actively transformed. There would be advantages in adopting this "three dimensional" view of technological literacy in subject English.

"Communities of practice" (Creely 1995; Buckingham, 1999) focused on technological and multimodal literacy will need to be established in English classrooms. Students should be given the opportunity to compose a range of texts using new technologies and consider the social, economic and political implications of technology use. This can involve not only the use of word processing and keyboarding skills, but creating Internet sites that deploy a range of modalities (i.e. image, text and sound), producing e-mails, interacting with and establishing virtual communities, researching on the World Wide Web, using databases, experiencing appropriate interactive multimedia programs for subject English, designing hypertexts, experiencing MUDs (multi-user domains), experiencing video conferencing, using digital cameras, and making presentations using Powerpoint and multimedia software - as well as critiquing texts produced in these modes.

An additional issue is that, while the "boys and literacy" agenda has gained prominence recently, not enough attention has been paid to the techno-literacy levels of girls, target equity groups such as Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, and indeed boys from working class backgrounds. The social justice agenda, as it is manifested in subject English, needs to address the emergent "informatic" society and the multiliterate demands of this society.

Finally, there are profound pedagogical changes resulting from new technologies and the networked classroom that need to be considered. Situating students in technology-rich "work stations" (Creely, 1995) focused on interdisciplinary projects will possibly be commonplace in the near future (Lankshear, Snyder and Green, 2000). This should not result in students working in isolated ways. In fact, a number of commentators have noted the collaborative culture encouraged by the use of new technologies through such things as multi-authored
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texts (Creely, 1995; Snyder, 1996; Tweddle, Adams, Clarke, Scrimshaw, and Walton, 1997; Luke, 1997; Barnsley, 1999; Buckingham, 1999). Through the networked classroom, emphasis should be given to both independent and collaborative learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. That the teaching and learning of subject English in Years 7-10 include the development of a technological and multimodal literacy that encompasses the composition of and response to technological texts. Students should consciously reflect upon the social context and implications of technology and literacy practices.

13. That the syllabus stress the importance of communal and collaborative learning, as well as independent learning.

5. English Studies and the "New Work Order".

Amidst the "vocationalising" of contemporary education, it is no surprise that the subject of English and the teaching of literacy are increasingly being expected to address the communication demands of the workplace. Indeed, something that has often been overlooked in passionate debates about which literature texts should be a part of English teaching is that perhaps there is nothing inevitable about the need to teach language arts through the analysis and creation of "literary" texts at all. Thomas (1997) notes that boys favour writing action narratives that are not highly valued by assessment criteria informed by traditional "literary" values. Students should be given the opportunity to study language use (including spoken and visual language) in a wide range of contexts. The learning outcomes of an English curriculum, the authors believe, should focus on the transferable communication skills and multiliterate practices students will acquire.

It is often noted that, while boys are outperformed by the literacy achievements of girls in secondary education, the adult male literate voice dominates contemporary public and workplace communication. Thus, while girls tend to perform well in the literary styles of writing and speaking in the traditional English classroom, it is worth considering whether this actually translates into rhetorical empowerment in the "real" workplace and political world. Pam Gilbert (1994) has questioned whether the forms of literacy that the English classroom has traditionally supported - forms that girls seem to be particularly competent in - are valued in the workplace and wider community. Gilbert argues that students, both girls and boys, should master the genres and speaking positions of real power and influence that are valued and recognised in public sphere life.
It is not unreasonable that the English curriculum should, particularly in this era of rapid change, emergent literacies, multi-literacies and hybrid genres, continually work to establish connections with "real world", mature versions of workplace, civic and cultural communications. In the Curriculum Framework of the ACT, “work education” is a specific context of the curriculum. In relation to workplace communications, a number of researchers point out that the literacy demands are not simply about "neutral" skills but about literacy practices related to the cultures of workplaces and about facilitating awareness and negotiation of workplace values and working identities (Farrell, 1997; Sullivan and Dautermann, 1996; Gee, Hull and Lankshear, 1996). Sullivan and Dautermann (1996) see the electronic multiple literacies required in the contemporary workplace as moving beyond the traditional label of "functional literacy" to include social processes at work, an attitude of adaptability, collaborative writing, visual rhetorics and hypertext design. Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) argue that new socioliteracy and sociotechnical practices and cultures in the workplace are actually about the creation of new social relationships and identities. The culture of the "new work order" is described as a new discourse (i.e. patterns of language use that encode ways of being and thinking in the world) that creates "team workers", "portfolio people", "knowledge workers", "lifelong learners", "global citizens" and "problem solvers".

Nevertheless (as Gee, Hull and Lankshear remind us), a certain scepticism needs to be retained about the claims and the jargon of fast capitalism, and the reality of workers' lives in a globalised environment underwritten by a pervading economic rationalism. Literacy teaching in relation to the workplace must, Farrell (1997) claims, not simply be about learning new (incremental) literacy skills but be fundamentally about facilitating awareness and negotiation of workplace values and cultures. It is in this respect perhaps that the English curriculum can be of most value: not only going some way to providing students with access to the discourses and associated communication practices of contemporary workplaces but heightening awareness of, and aiding negotiation in, the cultures of those workplaces.

The research thus highlights again the importance of combining access with critique and transformative action. Farrell (1997), Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) and Sullivan and Dautermann (1996) insist that literacy teachers have a responsibility to help students engage critically in the socioliteracy practices of workplaces. As with all other areas so far dealt with, students should be encouraged to produce critically literate readings of workplace texts, cultures and identities. Through the study of a range of cultural and workplace texts and discourses, students can address questions such as "What values are promoted in this
workplace culture?" and "What are the persuasive rhetorical techniques adopted in this example of professional communication and what effect are they designed to produce?"

From a cultural studies perspective, cultural and workplace texts can be analysed through an interdisciplinary textual study. The kinds of objects of study used to achieve such analysis can range from actual, "real world" examples of workplace texts and cultures to cultural representations in texts such as television series or films.

**RECOMMENDATION**

14. That as the syllabus takes account of workplace cultures, it does so in a way that goes beyond functional literacy towards a vision of access to, and accompanying ability to negotiate and critique, those cultures.

**6. English and Students in the Middle Years of Schooling.**

Research in the middle years of schooling indicates that students learn at different rates and in different ways. Middle years students can be effectively engaged through an English curriculum which allows students to discover, construct and incorporate new knowledge from the basis of their current understanding. Learning and the acquisition of strategies for learning need to occur in a context of high expectations.

A separate, extensive literature review on "Middle Years" schooling has recently been produced by the NSW Board of Studies (2000). The following comments should be read as complementary to this document, which contains much greater detail.

The learning needs that relate to early adolescent developmental needs identified in the research reviewed here can be uniquely addressed by an English curriculum. In early adolescence, students experience growth towards independence (Cormack, 1991). A number of Syllabuses reviewed stressed the importance of independent learning (ie, independent of total teacher input, not "independent" in the sense of neglecting cooperative learning or peer tutoring). One of the key tools that enables independent learning is research skills. In the Reading/ Language Arts Framework in California, for example, students in the middle years conduct multiple-step information searches and create texts which give credit to supporting references. It would be useful for teachers to explicitly model the research process for learners and to encourage and reward research effort. Students should be given the opportunity to negotiate aspects of the curriculum and initiate individual research projects. This can not only create self-direction in early adolescent learners, but can also
play a key role in developing schooling cultures that produce lifelong learners and "knowledge workers".

Another key learning need identified is a set of curriculum and teaching methodologies focused on learners - their self-esteem, interests and social skills (Hancock and Simpson, 1997). This can be achieved in a number of ways through the English curriculum. Doecke and McClenaghan (1999) claim that a student-centred curriculum in English must affirm the validity of youth culture as a site for debate and interpretation. Hancock and Simpson (1997) argue that through the analysis of images in popular culture and the media, students can learn that knowledge, identity and values are constructed and can be critiqued and resisted. Students should be given the opportunity to study cultural representations of youth and debate the commodification of youth culture in contemporary society. The English classroom can be a site in which both the pleasures of texts of youth culture are acknowledged and the socio-political and commercial dimensions of youth culture texts are analysed and critiqued.

Another means of focusing the curriculum on learners is to embrace the technological and multimodal nature of contemporary literacy practice. As students live in an image-oriented culture and technology-rich society, such an emphasis connects to the "real world" experiences of students. According to Hancock and Simpson (1997), early adolescent learners need a relevant, practical, and inclusive curriculum that applies learning to real life. As stated a number of times already, the English curriculum should thus embrace the teaching of contemporary multiliteracies so as to connect with the life aspirations of students and provide "authentic" contexts for learning in the digital age.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. That the syllabus be designed to allow aspects of its implementation to be based on independent (including individual and group) research projects.

16. That aspects of youth culture be considered as among the contexts to be focused on by the syllabus.
The research indicates the growing awareness of the strong link between the study of language and the study of culture and cultural identity. (Peim, 1993; Luke, Comber, and O'Brien, 1996; Mercer and Swann, 1996; Maybin and Mercer, 1996; Kmart, 1998). For students who speak Aboriginal English, English language teachers are encouraging "code-switching" capacities (Education Department of Western Australia, 1999). The focus of such teaching is on broadening the linguistic repertoire of students and on encouraging awareness of language use that is contextually appropriate rather than on enforcing "correct" usage. Thus schooling can affirm the appropriateness of using Aboriginal English (the "home talk" of many Aboriginal students) in certain contexts and the appropriateness of using Standard Australian English (SAE) in certain contexts. As language use is closely connected to cultural identity and world-views, this means also that different perspectives on the world are also being affirmed.

The case study research of Ashton-Hay and McKay (1997) focuses on the participation of four Aboriginal girls in an urban high school. Their recommendations summarise much of the research in terms of working with Aboriginal students whose first language is not SAE. Pedagogy needs to:

- be aware of cultural differences;
- be supportive in classroom and learning situations;
- encourage students to share aspects of their own culture and value this knowledge and their mother tongue;
- design appropriate tasks to enable students to utilise and draw upon their own heritage as well as to learn more about their own culture through successful role models, songs, poetry, drama, sport, art, stories etc;
- design appropriate tasks and activities to support favoured learning styles - treasure hunts, map exercises: allow time for aesthetic expressions and excursions;
- understand student usage of avoidance strategies;
- provide plenty of time modeling, explaining, giving plenty of examples and activities which enhance understanding of western written cultural genres;
- watch out for successful and engaging learning experiences and try to build on these;
- take time to develop and nurture trust.
In terms of general ESL students, a number of syllabuses foreground cultural and linguistic diversity as a key issue. The New York Curriculum Standards for English Language Arts, for example, favours a "culturally responsive" approach to instruction in which diversity is viewed as an advantage rather than a deficit. Teachers include multicultural texts in the classroom. Students are encouraged to see their home language as a valuable resource and learn about language variety as well as standard English uses and forms. McLean (1999) claims that it is in the area of writing that ESL students experience the greatest difficulty and that thus teachers should explicitly teach about language. The research of Birch (1997) on the teaching of English to ESL students indicates that the explicit teaching of paragraphing and cohesion had positive results on the achievement of learning outcomes.

Both bilingual and bidialectal students are encouraged to see the two languages/ dialects as "different ways of knowing". Clearly, a positive attitude of affirming the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of learners needs to be incorporated into pedagogical models of English teaching. Use and reflection upon language(s) and dialects should be consciously related to the study of cultural ways of knowing and being. Students could consider local/ global connections- how English is a global language, how language use relates to context and cultural identity, global culture and impacts on identity.

Explicit language teaching methods play an important role in the acquisition of Standard English by ESL and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. This should be balanced by the provision of immersive language experiences, critical literacy strategies and the opportunity for transformative meaning-making activities.

In terms of texts studied, the Western Australian Curriculum Framework makes a clear and useful representative statement on selected texts being designed to reflect the diversity of Australia’s population and including texts which address the experiences and achievements of Aboriginal people and people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

RECOMMENDATION

17. While the Stage 6 Syllabus has led the way in constructing separate syllabuses for ESL students, the English teaching community ought to balance this against the advantages of mainstream English classes for ESL students - while at the same time developing culturally responsive pedagogies, including the use of texts which reflect Australia’s culturally diverse population, particularly the heritage of Aboriginal people.
8. The Relationship between English and Contemporary Australian Civic and Cultural Perspectives.

There is a significant connection between a language arts education underpinned by a social view of language and literacy and civics education. All uses of language have been recognised in the research as forms of social action that construct world-views, power relations, values and identities (Luke, Comber, and O'Brien, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Lankshear, Gee, Knobel and Searle, 1997). The middle years of schooling are a time when learners develop a greater sense of the social and political worlds they inhabit (Cormack, 1991) and this, clearly, can be facilitated through the cultural and critical study of language (including spoken and visual language). Lankshear and Knobel (1997), for example, argue for the vital interconnection between critical literacy and civic awareness and participation. Through the teaching of a critical social literacy, students can develop a "sociological imagination" that involves discourse critique and the creation of alternative readings and text productions. Similarly, McLeod (1992) claims that, as writing is a form of social action, English teachers should foster a "critical social imagination" in their writing workshops. "Writing back" and "representing back" activities can be used to create what Macken-Horarik (1998) terms a "critical intertextuality". The subject of English is a significant site for the development of the "sociological imagination" of learners.

With this in mind, it is important to consider how the section on Australian literature in the current English Syllabus can be revised. Australian cultural studies, operating under an expanded postructuralist definition of "text", has shown an interest in exploring how national identity is constructed through cultural mechanisms. Students should be given the opportunity to produce critical readings of a range of cultural texts, images and discourses to represent Australian identities. As stated above, Curriculum Frameworks such as that of Western Australia argue for texts that reflect diverse Australian cultural backgrounds, but the study of Australian texts is balanced by the study of texts from other countries, nationalities and cultures. Texts, both contemporary and from the past, are meant to reflect the interests and values of both men and women and a diversity of viewpoints and perspectives on topics.

Another key issue raised by the research that connects subject English to contemporary Australian civic and cultural perspectives is the role of texts in constructing social understandings of the environment. From a poststructuralist position, the environment is never simply a "natural" thing, because it is viewed by human subjects who bring a range of cultural assumptions to bear upon it. In the recent publication Writing the environment: Ecocriticism and literature, edited by Kerridge and Sammells (1998), representations of
nature in a wide range of texts and discourses are explored in terms of their intersections with questions of gender, race, economics, sustainability, politics and postmodernism. The book brings together a wide variety of environmentalist positions and theorises their contribution to critical theory, literature and popular culture.

A number of syllabuses reviewed made connections between English and "across the curriculum" perspectives, with environmental education a favoured area. The Australian Capital Territory Curriculum Framework for English, for example, states that students of English are encouraged to develop confidence and the communication skills needed to promote ecological sustainability. Students focus on the use of language referring to environmental and ecological issues and respond to literary and media texts that "frame" the environment in certain ways. “Eco-literacy” should be seen as one of the plural social literacies that students acquire in the subject of English. Students should be given the opportunity to produce critical readings of competing discourses and representations of the environment in a range of cultural images and texts.

**RECOMMENDATION**

18. That the syllabus be designed so that English play a key role in teaching the communication skills and cultural and critical understanding required for active and informed citizenship in Australian society within an international context. The subject of English is a significant site for the development of the "sociological imagination" of learners.

19. That the syllabus include the study of a widely defined Australian literature. This study is to be balanced by the study of literature from other countries, times, nationalities and cultures.

**9. English and Gender Issues**

The impact of gender on the subject of English, and on curriculum reform more generally, has been gaining significant attention both within research and syllabus design over the past decade. Within English studies, there has been a shift from the New Critical paradigm that explored the aesthetic effects of language use in literary/artistic contexts to a view of language (including spoken and visual language) as a social semiotic that operates in a range of contexts to construct "subjectivity" (Peim, 1993). Contemporary English/Cultural Studies engages in the social contextualisation of the discursive and signifying practices evident in
texts in a wide range of media (Luke, Comber, and O'Brien, 1996; Goodman and Graddol, 1996; Morgan, 1997; Lankshear, Gee, Knobel, and Searle, 1997; Fuery and Mansfield, 1997; Pope, 1998; Misson, 1999a). Such study involves exploring how texts (written, spoken, visual and multimodal) mediate and construct gendered identities or "subjectivities" (Moss, 1992; Gilbert, 1994; Luke, 1996). Gender is analysed both as something represented within the objects of textual study and as something which influences reading positions and the construction of writer identities.

There has also been a series of criticisms levelled against the construction of an Anglo-Saxon "canon" of literary texts that systematically excludes the cultural expressions of women and ethnic groups (outlined in Fuery and Mansfield, 1997). Gilbert (1994), for example, argues that there is a need to challenge an authorised "canon" for the English classroom. If students are provided with reading material that encodes a conservative gender ideology and encouraged to passively adopt the represented subject-positions, rather than critically engage with them, then the possibility of expanded life choices becomes silenced. For commentators like Gilbert, the methods of critical literacy thus play a key role in negotiating textual constructions of gendered identity. There is also a need to include women’s stories, histories and biographies.

The national and international syllabuses reviewed have integrated gender issues through stating that text selection should reflect the interests of both men and women, that students should explore both male and female main characters in textual study, that students should have the opportunity to analyse the impact of gender on the production and reception of texts, and that students should have the opportunity to critique narrow textual constructions of gender and analyse the role of language in shaping gendered identities.

Gender issues in English tend to highlight the need to move towards a more cultural studies orientation (Luke, 1996) and also to renegotiate the "attitudinal stances" (Beavis, 1997) taken towards all texts. Balsamo (in Balsamo and Greer, 1994), for example, has reflected upon how the cultural insights gained through teaching a course on "Women and Literature" led her, when revising the course, to move beyond the literary to consider the acculturation of gendered identities through a range of texts and discourses in a variety of media. While it is important to include the cultural productions of women in an English curriculum, critically literate analysis can reveal that female-authored texts do not necessarily represent expanded definitions of gendered identity at all, particularly if they were written in past eras. Women writers were often struggling for legitimacy in earlier writing contexts and this arguably influenced the choice of some women writers to adopt a conservative stance in relation to the dominant ideologies of their time. Clearly, gender analysis results not simply
in the inclusion of female-authored texts into a literary canon to then be passively absorbed by students as received wisdom. All objects of study in English should be approached with a critical eye.

In particular, the analysis of the impact of gender on the texts and cultures of the emergent digital age will need to be addressed in English classrooms. Luke (1997), for example, highlights how the discourses associated with electronic environments are generally gendered male and that most participants are currently white, male and aged between seventeen and forty-five. It is important to consider that at the very time when debates have been conducted about revisions to a literary canon, masculine discourses and subjectivities have actually been developing around the technocultures that hold greater cultural capital in an "informatic" society.

In terms of the specific issue of boys' literacy, this area of English is fraught with, if possible, even more controversy than most of the other areas so far considered. The articles reviewed here are typical in falling largely into four areas:

i) those which see boys’ relative “failure” in literacy as a problematic phenomenon – such as a problem of schooling which does not translate into the workplace where it is girls who are relatively disadvantaged (Gilbert, 1994), or as a phenomenon that needs to be seen in a wider context of class, race, culture (Alloway and Gilbert, 1997);
ii) those which see the solution to the problem of boys’ literacy as being in confronting their constructions of masculinity in critically literate classrooms (Alloway and Gilbert, 1997; Martino, 1997); these researchers have also argued that the literacy levels of boys are closely related to the social construction of gender as it intersects with such things as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and rurality;
iii) those which stress catering to boys’ particular interests and needs (Thomas, 1997);
iv) those which see boys’ failure in literacy as a function of teaching that can be solved through good English teaching practice (OFSTED, 1993; Kowaluk, 1999).

Group (i) see dangers for girls in strategy (iii) through “masculinisation” of the classroom, while Group (ii) see traditional English practice (as in Group iv) as failing to address the problem of necessary curriculum change.

The OFSTED Report of 1993, which studied those places where boys were achieving success found schools with:
• clear objectives that the boys understood, well-chosen methodologies – especially high-quality wide reading with high teacher interest;
boys being convinced of the value of what they were doing;
great potential for success in: speaking and listening, use of computers, media, learning about language, and in the use of non-literary texts;
assessment methods that avoided being highly critical of boys’ efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. That the texts selected for study in the English curriculum reflect a variety of perspectives on gendered identity and gender relations.

21. That students in English be given the opportunity to analyse the impact of gender on the response to and composition of cultural texts, images and discourses.

22. That a support document, providing a broader summary of research into the area of gender and success in English, be developed to accompany the syllabus.

10. The Practice of English Teaching

An interest in the pedagogical strategies used in English classrooms can be seen both in current research and, significantly, in the reviewed national and international syllabuses. There has been a general shift away from the "banking model" of education and towards exploring the implications of "constructivism" for English teaching practice. Texts are no longer seen as transmitting a single, "authoritative" meaning and this connects with the constructivist emphasis on the active creation of knowledge by learners. Moore (1997) and Pradl (1996), for example, advocate a pluralistic, dialogic and enriching approach to reading and teaching literature in which teachers enable students to join an ongoing conversation about texts and meanings. Peel and Hargreaves (1995) argue that English teachers should create dialogic classrooms in which different ways of reading- and their implications- are foregrounded and contested. Similarly, Pope (1998) and Williamson and Woodall (1996) claim that dialogic, interactive and interpersonal modes of teaching and learning in English will take precedence over the teacher-led banking model of education.

Such "constructivist" developments have coincided with the new collaborative cultures generated by emergent technologies (Tweddle, 1995; Snyder, 1996;
Barnsley, 1999; Buckingham, 1999) that are changing both textual practice and English teaching. Collaborative learning is advocated by most contemporary English syllabuses and is designed to mirror the team-based problem solving in contemporary workplace (Gee, Hull and Lankshear, 1996). This is balanced by the importance placed on independent learning and research.

There is also a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches to pedagogical practice in English teaching (Kress, 1995; Pope, 1998) related to such developments as Cultural Studies (Moore, 1997) and the impact of new technologies (Luke, 1997; Lankshear, Synder, and Green, 2000). Another interesting development in pedagogical thinking related to English teaching is the increasing validation of the teaching of information management, research and design skills (Kress, 1995; Bianco and Freebody, 1997) rather than just the content of the objects of study. Hence the work on, for example, applying inquiry- and problem-based learning to the English classroom (Locke, 1999/2000).

Specific techniques and activities developed and advocated by the research for English teaching can be categorised under each of the language modes, although, of course, these are integrated in actual practice. For the development of oracy or the language modes of listening and speaking, attention has been given to such things as "in-voicing" (Anderson and Hilton, 1997; Otte, 1995), or the taking on of other voices in society, and "play" with new voices such as academic work which is recast as a chat show or court room drama (Anderson and Hilton, 1997). Greater validation of the explicit study of spoken language is evident in most of the research. For Peim (1993), arguing from a perspective heavily influenced by sociolinguistics, students should have the opportunity to engage in a social analysis of conversational styles (e.g. the connection between gender and casual conversation or the role of pedagogical cultures in establishing classroom oral discourse practices) and explore the link between oral language and cultural and class identity. The ascendancy of the spoken word, along with the visual image, in contemporary culture has been noted by a number of commentators (Kress, 1995). The "secondary orality" of electronic communication practices that sit somewhere between spoken and written communication (Green and Bigum, 1996) and the oral culture of the media suggest the need to give increased attention to the pedagogy of oracy.

For the development of written communication skills, various strategies are proposed. These include context-bound use (Curtis, 1993), use in "authentic" contexts (Street, 1997), process approaches to writing (Atwell, 1998; Doecke and
McClenaghan, 1999), rhetorical problem-solving activities (Freedman and Medway, 1994; Andrews, 1996), the conscious reflection on language in use (Curtis, 1993; Street, 1997), the provision of models and an explicit metalanguage about literacy practices (Mercer and Swann, 1996; Christie and Misson, 1998), explicit teaching of the subject-specific demands of literacy practices in middle years schooling (Bianco and Freebody, 1997), activities focused on the critical-creative "rewritings" of existing texts (Pope, 1998), scaffolded instruction (Christie and Misson, 1998), the teaching of technological literacy, the use of simulations that develop communication skills (Bambrough, 1994) and the teaching of multimodal/multimedia textual creation (Kress, 1995).

Strategies for the teaching of reading practices explored in the research include wide reading (Atwell, 1998; Tucker, 1999), critical literacy techniques (Morgan, 1997; Lankshear, Gee, Knobel and Searle, 1997; Misson, 1999a), the social contextualisation of language practices (Gilbert, 1994; Schirato and Yell, 1996), Cultural Studies approaches (Fuery and Mansfield, 1997; Pope, 1998; Peel, 1999), explicit exploration of the interpretive protocols that are applied in reading contexts (Morgan, 1995; Moore, 1997), imaginative recreation activities that achieve interpretation by recreation (Adams, 1999) and the teaching of reading practices in multimodal (Kress, 1995) and hyperlinked electronic environments (Synder, 1996).

For the development of viewing and representing competencies, suggested strategies include the critique and creation of televisual, filmic and multimedia images. The critique of the visual image is connected with the teaching of critical literacy techniques (Hancock and Simpson, 1997; Stephens, 1999) and creation relates to such things as "representing back" activities that can achieve a "media activism" (O'Shaughnessy, 1999).

Pedagogic techniques that develop thinking skills in the English classroom have also been considered in the research and a number of the syllabuses reviewed actually incorporate "critical thinking" into the integrated language modes, as language and thought are intricately connected. Associative thinking is seen as being encouraged by the use of hypertext and new technologies in the classroom (Synder, 1997). Metacognition, or students thinking about their own reading practices and the learning process, is becoming more important in the teaching of English. Cranny-Francis (1996), for example, argues that students in the secondary English classroom need to have access to the skills that enable them to produce readings as well as to be able to analyse and criticise those readings. Such metacognitive awareness about reading
practices can be achieved, according to Thomson (1999), through journal writing. The journal is a site in which students can deconstruct their own reading and writing practices and reflect upon the learning process itself.

Because of the breadth of this area, it may be worthwhile to focus specifically on the syllabuses reviewed, which attempt to deal with classroom pedagogy and organisation in broad terms, as well as in terms of the specifics of the language modes.

All syllabuses assume that students are at the centre of the learning process, play an active role in constructing knowledge, have prior knowledge and should interact with others. Within this general framework, most take an eclectic approach to pedagogy. Approaches generally advocated include a mix of:

- language immersion in a “language-rich” environment;
- the active use of language by students in whole, meaningful, authentic contexts;
- observational learning;
- discussion in both whole-class and group environments, preferably based on heterogeneous grouping;
- collaborative learning;
- workshop approaches;
- negotiated activities;
- modelling and demonstration;
- direct instruction and explicit teaching;
- guided practice;
- peer tutoring;
- a multimedia environment for both student use and teacher instruction;
- differentiated instruction for different student needs;
- positioning students as both independent and collaborative learners: giving students the opportunity to show independence and initiative and to work with others in self-managing teams;
- encouraging students to reflect critically on the language processes and strategies they use;
- having students engage in close and wide reading;
- developing student awareness of context, audience and purpose;
- having students use new technologies extensively;
- having students research and solve problems.
RECOMMENDATIONS

23. That the syllabus operate within a broadly “constructivist” framework (ie it is assumed that students are at the centre of the learning process, play an active role in constructing knowledge, have prior knowledge and should interact with others), and emphasise interactive and dialogic teaching methods, while nevertheless allowing for eclecticism so that teachers can operate appropriately within their own contexts.

24. That ways of engaging Middle Year students be given explicit place in the syllabus - in particular, the learning of research, design and information processing and management skills, critical thinking, associative thinking, problem solving, and metacognition.

11. Assessment and Evaluation Procedures in English.

Changes in the kinds of tasks and methods used to assess students in English connect to the wider changes within the subject. Pope (1998), for example, notes the shift in assessment in English studies from essayistic analysis to a broader range of new forms of assessment. These include rewriting tasks, cross-genre and cross-media transformations, the creation of generically hybrid texts, collages, script-writing and electronic texts. Such tasks reflect the validation of multiliteracies, transformative cultural practice, and new media in the subject of English. They also reflect the shift from positioning students as passive recipients of a literary canon to positioning students as multiliterate and dialogic persons. As Pope (1998) notes, the "creative" is as important as the "critical" in contemporary English studies and indeed all responses to texts are in part "creative". Hence students are increasingly encouraged in English to engage in critical-creative "rewritings" of texts that foster a "critical intertextuality" (Macken-Horarik, 1998).

The criteria for evaluating student work in English need, under the impact of these changes, to be fundamentally re-thought. Traditional literary assumptions about "good" writing may no longer have relevance for assessing rhetorical prowess and multimodal literacies in the twenty-first century. A rhetorical model of English assumes that people construct texts with a view to achieving a desired result with a particular audience (Locke, 1999/2000). This audience may not be a part of literary/artistic contexts. The poor performance of some students in adopting the communicative styles typical of literary/artistic contexts does not necessarily reflect a lack of literacy skills or rhetorical awareness in other contexts. Thomas (1997), for
example, notes that boys in English tend to produce narratives where action is a virtue. Under traditional "literary" criteria, such narratives are devalued. However, in the context of script-writing for an action-oriented drama or film, such narratives are the norm and are valued in contemporary cinema contexts. It is obvious that interactive multimedia and multimodal texts will need to be assessed by something other than purely "poetic" standards. Russell (1998), for example, claims that hypertexts created by students should be assessed on screen and through an evaluation sheet with categories for such things as use made of hyperlinks.

The assessment of metacognition is another area of interest raised by the research. All Critical Language Awareness (CLA) and critical literacy activities are designed to achieve a meta-level awareness in students about language and discourses. Assessment issues are examined in the report into the teaching of visual texts by Hancock and Simpson (1997), including such things as the use of a range of tasks (written, oral, visual and performance) and explicit criteria. A major finding was that the teachers who were most successful in assessing understanding of the constructed nature of visual texts were those who asked their students to explain the decisions they had made in the process of constructing their own visual texts. Cooper and Odell (1999) are calling for greater class time to be given to students for in-process reflection on their writing. Such metacognitive reflection on the process of textual construction is playing an increasing role in English, as evident from the requirements in the New South Wales Stage 6 English Extension Course 2 for the reflection upon and documentation of the process of composition in a journal.

In terms of methods for assessment, outcomes-based, criteria-referred assessment procedures are the dominant form adopted by the reviewed national and international syllabuses. Some form of criterion-referenced assessment is generally advocated as preferable to norm-referenced assessment, since it based on assumptions of being able to describe achievement in some detail, and allows for some independence of development. Profiling tends to be the favoured method of record-keeping in any kind of descriptive assessment, including criterion-referencing. Criterion-referencing should makes its criteria known to the student, and, ideally, according to Bechervaise (1999) the criteria for assessment should be dependent upon the intention of the work being assessed. Many teachers are attempting to demystify assessment procedures by publishing task specifications that include defined assessment criteria and that produce shared understandings about the features of different levels of performance (Wyatt-Smith, 1997).
The notion of “different levels of performance” raises one of the problems for English teachers in criterion-referenced assessment, viz. that many sets of criteria are impoverished and unable to actually distinguish standards of achievement (“the sparkle which separates capable from great writing, exciting from interesting speaking, breath-taking from tedious negotiation of an art form” – Bechervaise, 1999). **Standards-referencing** assessment makes its criteria and standards known to the student. The most useful assessment is that which specifically assists students in developing their understanding of the processes of composing, responding and reflecting on their learning. The NSW Board of Studies’ use of standards-referencing is one attempt to address this issue, though, admittedly so far operating in Stage 6 as a way of differentiating student achievement in public examination.

Researchers are also arguing that criterion-referenced assessment is creating an over-emphasis on summative assessment procedures. Attention also needs to be paid to diagnostic and formative assessment to support teaching methods, resources selection and achievement profiling. The distinction between **formative and summative assessment** (Watson, 1996; Bechervaise, 1999; Cooper and Odell, 1999) allows the teacher to differentiate between diagnosis and judgement and allows the student to be aware of when they are being “judged” and when “aided”. For Bechervaise, assessment criteria should be made known to the students and be itself dependent upon the intention of the work being assessed. Cooper and Odell (1999) similarly make a case for the importance of evaluation occurring throughout the learning process, as distinct from grading that is purely summative.

The work of Cooper and Odell (1999) reflects a paradigm in which English teachers, most of whom are trained as literary critics rather than as teachers of composition, may make use of their skills in the former in the context of the latter. They argue that the most important skill a teacher can practice in assessment is that of identifying specific passages in a text, explaining how we react to those passages, and to explain what the student-writers have done that is influencing the way readers are responding. Like the feedback described by Atwell (1998), this has the potential to turn assessment into a most valuable learning tool, since it feeds back into class time demonstrating how to achieve particular effects in writing.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

25. That the syllabus make explicit statements about assessment in English Years 7-10 giving equal emphasis to responding and composing and to the imaginative and the critical.
26. That assessment in English address the integrated language modes of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing through requiring students to compose and respond to written, spoken, visual and multimodal texts in a wide range of media. Assessment should be holistic and comprehensive and direct students towards acquiring an ever-widening rhetorical repertoire.

27. That assessment in English involve evaluation of the research, design and information processing, management skills, critical thinking, problem solving and metacognition of students.

28. That assessment in English involve evaluation of students' awareness of the social contexts of texts and the social influences on their own interpretive practices. This may include evaluation of their critical language awareness and critical literacy.

29. That assessment criteria used favour assessing composing and responding in a range of contexts for their rhetorical effectiveness.

30. That assessment in English give greater attention to metacognitive awareness, evidenced in the ability of students to explain their own representational choices, deconstruct their own composing and responding and reflect on their learning processes.

31. That the English Years 7-10 Syllabus provide for diagnostic, formative and summative assessment.

32. That the syllabus advocate the publication by teachers of criteria for assessment in relation to a standard of achievement.

33. That assessment processes be integrated into the curriculum to inform teaching and learning.
Further principles

Finally, the authors would like to state some further principles for inclusion in the Syllabus that come from a range of research and that cut across a number of the areas dealt with above:

A. Wide reading should constitute a large proportion of time spent on reading. This however should be completed by adequate provision of time for the development of close reading techniques.

B. As far as possible, teacher freedom to adopt practices relevant to their contexts should be maximised in the Syllabus.

C. The individual and the personal should not be lost among the concepts of social construction – such practices as the journal can remain sites of reflection and personal expression, allowing consideration of personal and social issues and identities, ways of recording reflections upon learning and for developing metacognition, as well as for considering and deconstructing reading and writing practices.

D. One of the real strengths of the current 7-10 Syllabus is the concept of “pleasure” in the activities of the English classroom. The pleasure in reading, for example, should remain an important rationale in the Syllabus.
Annotated review of significant literature and research

1. Theoretical Perspectives/Theoretical Models


The authors argue that a "talk curriculum" must be framed in such a way that respect is shown for the development of personhood through familial and peer group oral discourses and the oral discourses of popular media. At the same time, students need to be instructed in classroom and educational discourses. Teachers should explicitly model codified forms of speech so that students can eventually enter the dominant discourses of society. Oracy sessions should involve such things as "in-voicing" (or the taking on of other voices in society) and "play" with new voices such as academic work which is recast as a chat show or court room drama.


Andrews finds the emphasis on literature in the teaching of English as inadequate as a model for the late 20thC, partly because it does not contain the "universe of discourse", and partly because the critique of "art" can lead to a neglect of the critique of "life". Andrews postulates that a curriculum for English should ask the question, "what are the best forms of language in the current context?" and he argues that the need is for a conception of language as social practice determined by social structures. But, unlike the critical language study (CLS) of Fairclough and others, a rhetorical perspective is concerned with the arts of discourse, and hence more concerned with production than CLS is. A rhetorical perspective sees as much artistry in everyday language as in literature. Hence, literature becomes an important part of the repertoire of "English", but is no longer its raison d'etre. Questions asked of assignments in a rhetorical perspective include:
• Who is the audience for this communication?
• What is my/our purpose in this communication?
• What do I/we want to say?
• What media are best on this occasion?
• What large-scale forms of language are appropriate?
• What tone/audience orientation is required?
• What stylistic features are appropriate?

Under such a regime, programs in English would revolve around problems to be solved in language, not fixed genres, or themes or exercises.


Steven Connor offers an account of postmodern culture that connects theory and the textual and cultural practices of modernity. Concepts such as the blurring of generic and high culture/low culture boundaries, pastiche and intertextuality are applied to a diverse range of cultural "texts", including literature, television, video, film, popular culture, music, dance, science fiction and social rituals such as shopping, sport and fashion. Connor effectively contributes to the redefinition of "culture" itself.


Cranny-Francis engages with the challenge to the conventional concern with literary texts in English studies by the claims of popular culture. The study of popular texts, according to the author, is not less rigorous or intellectually challenging than studying canonical texts (many of which, incidentally, were the popular texts of their day). The intellectual rigour of the study depends on the theoretical and methodological approaches taken rather than on the texts themselves. Cranny-Francis reads a variety of texts from popular cinema, music, television, fiction and magazines and argues that texts should be analysed for their assumptions and values. The key terms and concepts defined and explored include ideology, narrative, genre, discourse, compliant and resistant reading, polysemy, intertextuality, critical literacy and multigeneric texts. Students should understand the processes by which meanings are constructed in texts and be given the opportunity to challenge dominant discursive practices.

Curtis defines the "vital ingredient" of "English" as "reflection"—reflection on the language itself or on the nature and effectiveness of the communication itself. Attention to the CONTENT/ ISSUES of novels or in thematic studies are not "English". He argues that competence comes only from USING the language—from speaking, listening, reading, writing; but it is only by pausing and reflecting on the language that the students' knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills will benefit (e.g. listening to himself on tape; keeping a readers' journal; and drafting a short story with a critical friend). "This process of reflecting on the language in use is English". English experience must be substantial and continual and the curriculum should include: descriptive, narrative, argumentative and expository language; expressive language; persuasive language; language and power; figurative language; characterisation; dialogue; language acquisition; standard and dialect Englishes; syntactical structures; the effect of purpose and audience; the changing language; making meaning collaboratively; differences between spoken and written Englishes; and spelling patterns. Each of these could be addressed in terms of composition and response; investigative and analytical work; individual and collaborative work; and sharing and evaluation.

Curtis endorses an incorporation of all of the Cox Report's five models of English:

* personal growth;

* cross-curricular;

* adult needs;

* cultural heritage; and

* cultural analysis.

The key ingredient always is the study of language in use. "English...can be the place on the timetable where language competence grows out of a creative generation of language followed by a dispassionate reflection on it, followed by further, modified, generation...In this milieu, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills about the language can be progressively gained".

Davies sets out to postulate a curriculum for English that is both "desirable" and "feasible"— he rejects fantasising about a "heroic, Utopian English" for a curriculum that is "making the best out of English". He shows that, in a simple survey sample of fifteen lessons, English teaching primarily involves the study or production of texts of an imaginative/creative/expressive kind. Davies advocates the importance of separating subject pedagogy (how) from the subject paradigm (what)— concepts English teachers often conflate so that what happens in a lesson is seen as "English" and as contributing to students' learning. The two need to be separated so that English teachers are clear about WHY they do WHAT they do; when broad content and learning aims are mixed into "one grand holistic soup", we end up with a "long-term strategy—a sort of hope, really—that all these different learning events will just somehow build up into some constructive purpose inside the learners over time".

When UK English teachers produced Statements of Aims in the late 70s to early 80s, the key recurring theme was freedom from rigidity, prescription or specificity. English was regarded as special and the most frequent curriculum paradigm was one of personal-development-through-literature.

Davies sees the main curriculum struggles since the 80s as being one of liberal humanists (in which Dixon and Leavis are allied) versus radical/cultural theorists. The differences between these two are represented by Davies as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mainstream liberal/humanist</th>
<th>Radical / cultural theorist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature at the centre of English studies</td>
<td>Questioning the concept of literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English studies for personal growth</td>
<td>The political dimension of language and literature studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a means of educating taste and discrimination</td>
<td>Valuing popular culture and media study in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary standard English as the ideal form of the language (&quot;correctness&quot;)</td>
<td>Acceptance of students' own non-standard language use (&quot;appropriateness&quot;)</td>
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English studies has divided along a fault-line, says Davies—a fault-line that separates two kinds of English: one kind that tries to provide the general skills of language use that students might need in life; another which seeks to introduce pupils to their national literature and, subsequently, to various modes of consciousness and expression related to that literature, and its attendant values. Thus the fault-line consists of:

- literacy, which is about functionality; and
- literature, which is about values and growth.

Davies critiques the Cox models of English (personal growth; cross-curricular; adult needs; cultural heritage; cultural analysis) by arguing that "personal growth"; "adult needs" and "cultural heritage" are all variations on a view that takes for granted the privileged status of English literature; whereas "cultural analysis" could never be reconciled to these because of its rejection of the inherent superiority of particular forms of language and literature. He feels it is meaningless to talk of a "cross-curricular" view of English, since the relationship between subject English and the rest of literacy learning is the very thing that needs to be examined and developed.

Davies "radical" and "realistic" curriculum for English is that the subject should consist of equal thirds of:

* media study;
* knowledge about language; and
* literature.

Moreover, it is argued that English should abandon any notion of unique responsibility for teaching general literacy; instead, media study, knowledge about language and literature study could contribute in appropriate and distinctive ways to aspects of literacy development.

Media studies should look at how meanings are made sustained and contested in all forms of human communication. It should study what those meanings and beliefs are, where they came from, who makes them and why. Its prime focus is analysis.

Literature study should focus on pleasure, appreciation and understanding.
The difference between "literature" and "media" is NOT in the texts themselves, but in the FOCUS (i.e. Davies is idiosyncratically asserting that "literature" and "Media" be defined by the WAY WE APPROACH texts of whatever form, with equal room being given to pleasure ("literature") and analysis ("media")).

**Knowledge about language** for junior secondary should study:

* the history of the language (the development of dialects, language change);

* language structures;

* language variation (dialect and register, attitudes to variation); and

* language and power.

This knowledge will NOT help develop literacy. So (with teaching for "literacy development" defined as: the experience of extended reading; reflection upon language itself; the experience of several forms of writing as reader and writer; and the experience of a variety of spoken language opportunities) what has English to offer the experience of general literacy?

* Extended reading unique to English;

* knowledge about language nearly but not quite unique to English;

* some kinds of writing — poetic, imaginative, self-expressive — likely to be experienced exclusively in English;

* other kinds of writing — descriptive, analytical, argumentative, evaluative — which are important to English and will be shared with other subjects

English has nothing unique to offer oracy development — it simply shares with a number of subjects a crucial role in developing skills and habits of spoken language use.

If English abandons its claims to be unique in teaching transferable skills of general literacy, and concentrates on developing literacy in its particular areas, then it will increase its chance of actively and appropriately helping young people to become properly literate.

Doecke and McClanaghan argue for the importance of "growth" pedagogy, while recognising that this means continually reflecting on practice and scrutinising what it means to place students' experiences at the centre of the curriculum. In this piece, they demonstrate a reconceptualisation of the nature of a student-centred curriculum, through acknowledgement of the validity of youth culture as a legitimate frame of reference. In using aspects of youth culture in the classroom, the primary focus should be less on popular texts themselves than on the processes of interpretation and discrimination in which students engage whenever they talk about their interests and enthusiasms. They demonstrate two case studies — one on research into computer games, and one on the relationships between fascism and Star Wars. Doecke and McClanaghan caution against assuming that students are not already critical consumers of their cultures.


Postmodernist theory, Giroux asserts, can be used by educators in order both to understand the modernist nature of much schooling and to respond to the cultural, social and educational shifts occurring in the present. Schools remain deeply influenced by their history as modernist institutions focused on the culture of the book, certainty, and "master narratives". Postmodernism requires a paradigm shift in educational institutions. There is a need to incorporate popular culture into the curriculum, take account of electronically mediated information, affirm a multiplicity of voices and narratives, and adopt an expanded notion of plural literacies. Giroux advocates the use of a postmodern pedagogy that can educate youth to be the subjects, or agents, of history through active citizenship.


Green argues for a consideration of post-60s debates over English in the light of recent discussions of postmodern curriculum and literacy. What is lacking in existing accounts of
curriculum is a grasp of semiosis in a wider, more inclusive perspective, particularly in light of new technology from television, video and film to email. He posits the concept of image as signifying a potentially decisive shift in English teaching — a movement from an over-investment in the verbal sign, to draw more upon multimedia signs and images of electronic culture.

The "New English" of the "growth model" emphasised experience, social reality and learner-centred paradigms. This potentially links it powerfully to popular culture. The "New English" commitment to process experience, to pleasure, its fluid approach to disciplinary boundaries and its attitudes to concepts of difference and marginality link it strongly to postmodernist culture, and this in turn involves only a more explicit and more rigorously conceived social and political dimension for "New English". This link between the "New English" and a cultural studies orientation is, Green argues, an important pathway into the future for English teaching.


The need for historical sensibility is argued strongly in the Introduction to *Teaching the English Subjects*, a series of localised histories of areas of English curriculum in Australia. Individual chapters in *Teaching the English subjects* deal with: the history of "literature" as a notion in the classrooms of Victoria; the history of NSW secondary English 1959-1965; senior secondary English in Victoria since the 1940s; secondary English in Western Australia 1890—1915; the construction of junior primary teachers through official curriculum documents in South Australia since the 60s; programming primary English teaching; a history of primary reading instruction in Australia; and the topic of grammar in Australian curriculum history.

The collection begins by itself complaining of the Christie Report that it "glosses over the complexities of history, and, in doing so, arguably closes off as many opportunities in research and pedagogy as it opens up." "At the very least," argues the introduction to this volume, the Christie Report "needs to be carefully and critically scrutinised for the manner in which it uses history, in arguing for its own version of both the present and the future directions of the field" (p 9). The editors make a very comprehensive argument about the need for curriculum history. Usefully, they point to areas which need to be addressed in further work: exploration of the theoretical roots of, and distinctions between, "Progressivism" and "Romanticism"; the "Englishness" of English and its teaching; the need for national and region-specific histories and, particularly, the history of English in primary teaching. That primary English has usually been more than one
entity — "literacy", "writing", "reading", "grammar", "language", "literature"— often taught as separate subjects, is some justification for seeing English as something of an umbrella term for a number of areas often with distinct histories and origins and is the explanation of the volume's title. It is also the editors' way of avoiding the simplification of simply parading a series of models of English, as if they represented what English essentially is. In fact the act of defining "English" is something they see as a central preoccupation for curriculum history.

Teaching the English subjects could almost be described as the Australian version of Goodson and Medway's Bringing English to order. The social contexts out of which the two volumes arise show, in fact, a number of similarities. Published in 1990, Goodson and Medway's volume came out at the height of debate over a National Curriculum in which English was such a key strategic component. Its essays concern the very issues that crystallized debate over that curriculum: grammar, the place of literature, and the role of an English curriculum in constructing a national identity. If these seem "perennials" in discussions of English, that was probably the very point of raising them at the time. While the National Curriculum is at best a lame issue in Australia at the moment, the attempts by Kemp in a climate of economic "rationalism" to revive the "falling literacy standards" agenda are being run in exactly the same terms as that of the Thatcherites – highest on the agenda being links to economic decline and the need to create the competitive creature of the market. In such a climate, essays in the present collection such as Green and Hodgens' (on the place that grammar has had in social discipline) and Reeves' (on the uses of reading as moral instruction) become all the more timely.

Though organised around these different places and times, a number of consistent themes run through the collection. Prominent among these is the battle over grammar. Ken Willis shows that even at the turn of the century the aim and necessity for teaching courses in grammatical knowledge was a contested area in Western Australian curriculum. Green and Hodgens' chapter on grammar makes the point that the current debates about grammar are also tied up with concerns about social control, particularly about hierarchical relations of power and authority. Arguments about declining standards of grammar tend to be really about standards in many areas of language usage ("grammar" = "spelling", "usage", "punctuation", and "standard dialect"), which themselves reflect views about standards of behaviour, social relations, "manners", and "morality". Hence, in Green and Hodgens' view, grammar lessons need to be understood as practical training in the formation of "cultured body subjects". "Grammar", in this view, becomes a yardstick of basic social competence. Thus, debates about grammar usually reflect some general sense of social crisis in a culture. Partly for this reason debates about grammar
are an "historically...obsessively recurrent theme". Grammar has also historically been associated with discipline and logic, and Green and Hodgens's specific study of Australia in the so-called "golden age" of the fifties shows all of these themes occurring in that milieu. Talk of an "historically...obsessively recurrent theme" is of course true of many of these themes. Debates about skills-based versus meaning-based pedagogies in reading, about standards, about the relative virtues of language or literature study, about formalism or "creativity" in writing are hardly new, and this collection shows them being argued in precisely the same terms since the beginnings of formal education in this country.


Griffith discusses the relevance of post-structuralist theory for the English teacher. The central issue is that of unpacking the ideology of texts in classrooms — how texts come to be constructed in certain ways, and how readers become "constructed" to read them in certain ways. Griffith advocates making explicit the ways in which readers are positioned by texts so that those positionings can be "resisted". He further discusses the notion of making the classroom itself and its curriculum into the "text" which is explicitly open to discussion and change. The political issues of power that this involves thus become central to his curriculum.


Cultural studies and research into the social foundations of literacy can be brought into productive dialogue, according to the authors: "in both fields...the focal concerns are how texts and everyday textual and language practices materially construct social power and knowledge, cultural, gender and class identity" (p. 32). There is a need for a cultural studies emphasis in the literacy curriculum that involves critical engagement with ideologies and social practices. Literacy teaching, it is argued, is about reading, writing and transforming cultures. Community texts, the authors insist, constitute an important part of critical literacy development. Students should analyse how they work politically to construct and position writers and readers in relations of power and knowledge.

Marenbon asks the question, "What should be the main features of a national curriculum in English?" His answers are based on a presumption of the extent to which governments SHOULD prescribe the actual content of curriculum. He answers that its features should include:

* teaching pupils to read fluently and accurately; and

* teaching pupils to write Standard English correctly using a reasonably wide vocabulary.

He believes the government's right to prescribe does not go beyond these. Marenbon even rejects the idea that speaking and listening should be a compulsory part of an English curriculum. Why?

* Speaking and listening do not necessarily need to be taught at school; and

* the notion of teaching spoken Standard English is a dubious one, since there is no one Standard such a there is in written English.

He further argues that a minimalist curriculum need not go beyond the requirement that literature should be studied in some form, and should not enter into questions about what pupils should read. A more extensive curriculum WOULD give the literary tradition an important place in its requirements.


Mc Cormick postulates three models of reading:

* cognitive — a model which believes readers actively draw on prior knowledge to process texts;

* expressivist — a model that privileges the reader and their life experience and draws on psycholinguistics and reader response, (i.e. on Frank Smith, Rosenblatt, Holland and Bleich); and
McCormick develops a model for representing the reading situation that locates the text and the reader within specific social and historical contexts. She argues that readers can become critically literate, active readers only when they are able to analyse ways in which their own and the text's repertoires (subsets of the culture's discourses, beliefs, values) are embedded within the larger culture. Thus pedagogies must be developed that can engage students in three interconnected areas of study:

* to be able to analyse how they themselves are culturally constructed as subjects-in-history (i.e. the degree to which they are constructs and are autonomous);

* to be able to analyse how texts are produced in particular historical circumstances;

* to be able to use such cultural and historical analysis to develop and defend their own critical positions.

McCormick investigates traditional reading and writing tasks in the academy to show how they often impede critical thinking. She shows how a response statement, a formal essay, a collaborative project and an individual research essay can be constructed in order to require students to read and write in her three key areas. She discusses ways in which her three key issues can become part of a whole English curriculum:

* by canonising it;

* by adding on to already existing courses; and

* (her preferred course) by integrating it into the whole curriculum.


English, argues Morgan, is currently conceptualised in five forms:
- English as a coherent subject focused on language processes and literature, writing and reading, expository essays and textual analysis. For this approach, the future of English is more of the same.

- the rhetoric of crisis, dominated by the disintegration of the liberal humanist paradigm of literary studies

- the new vocationalism — stresses discipline and de-contextualised language skills, learning outcomes and benchmark testing

- those advocating a re-unification of English under the banners of language theory or semiotics or an expanded definition of literacy

- attempts to broaden/pluralise literary values: women's literature, black literature, etc.

The first of Morgan's "unspeakable things" is the notion that "English" itself as a form of curriculum is in question. Post-war, post-Holocaust generations were sceptical of the humanising effects of literature. Electronic media and the problematisation of the superiority of "literature" also threaten the borders of English. "English" WAS a carefully fashioned way of relating to a restricted range of print artifacts — "literary" was a radically historical category, with a culturally exclusionist aspect.

Thus, the second of Morgan's "unspeakable things" is the "Englishness" of English — an historic Englishness embodied in canonical literary texts, but also in the idea that English addresses itself to unique individuals with unitary cultural identities, and the idea that simple exposure to monological literary traditions results in a universal critical consciousness. Morgan's preferred definition of "English" is "an order of discourse which constituted its objects of knowledge and subjects of knowledge in relation to selected print artifacts" (p 21). English must suit a future which is media-saturated, heteroglossic and globalised. We even need interpretive strategies that go against the "institutionally-sustained cultural claustrophobia" (p 22) of close reading — strategies that enable students to read across a whole culture.

Thus, Morgan postulates the need for an approach based on cultural studies — a form of inquiry committed to a historically aware and theoretically informed concrete analysis of contemporary culture, engaging with the whole range of signifying practices as these are embodied in language, institutional structures and the forms of subjectivity of a society.

The third of Morgan's "unspeakable things" is the fact that English is already a vigorous form of cultural politics, though presenting itself as the disinterested knowledge of language and literature. Cultural studies, on the other hand, is self-
reflexive and teachers are conscious of the fact that they are institutionally grounded and finite.

How, then, might English transform itself?

- The need for a more historically informed, theoretically self-conscious understanding of English as an institutional discourse
- Theory is introduced into secondary schooling — not only for texts, but for their interpretive protocols
- renegotiate the terrain around which English addresses itself.


Wendy Morgan's most famous contribution to the classroom practice of a critical literacy was probably the Ned Kelly series (Morgan, 1992; 1994). In this series she shows a literacy practice aimed at allowing students to develop critical tools on how particular texts position readers — without necessarily foregrounding a particular alternative reading. In *Critical literacy in the classroom*, this same sense of inclusiveness permeates.

Critical literacy has taken a number of guises since the late 80s. Morgan sees its chief Australian manifestation in a clustering of:

* "resistant" post-structuralism, a la "Chalkface" materials;

* cultural studies; and

* socioculturally critical analyses of language and image.

Hence, Australian critical literacy has always been overtly engaged with social inequity.

She herself walks the reader through a number of critical literacy units she has used in practice, either alone or with other teacher/researchers. The Ned Kelly material is included, and another particularly interesting unit is that in which a Year 10 class is shown working on texts in the context of the leisure industry — a unit designed explicitly to uncover the ideology behind popular constructions of, among other sites, the Pacific Islands. Morgan's principal underlying ideas in the unit are that:
* any text is a product of a particular social context which influences both its form and ideas;

* any text gives a particular selection of a story, which means aspects are foregrounded, but it also means gaps and silences;

* texts are read by different readers who bring particular meanings to it; and

* texts offer their versions as THE truth, and that truth serves a set of interests.

Such principles are a manifesto of critical textual theory, but this book also has a strong sense of the teaching possibilities inherent in such ideas. Morgan's book stresses just what is possible with critical literacy in the classroom, and also the teaching and learning "art" inherent in those possibilities. She does not confine herself to reading, for example, as the site of critical literacy, but explores "the possible" in a writing-centred unit which aims at examining how "personal" writing "textualises" the personal. Here, in a unit that goes beyond the (unfashionable) alleged progressivism of modern writing pedagogy, simple text-type approaches are seen as sterile.

Two chapters are devoted, respectively, to co-curricular planning between teachers at Park Ridge High School and to classroom talk as a manifestation of critical literacy. The former is about curricular refinement within specific contexts and about "empowering", while the latter is about bringing critical literacy into the most common of classroom forms — talk. Morgan finishes with a hyper-text chapter, albeit confined within the linearity of the book, that highlights the potential for critical literacy in emerging technology (the paperback version contains on its cover a web-page in which students are contributing to an ongoing story).


This book offers a sustained critique of three models of English teaching— basic skills, cultural heritage, and personal growth. Peim exposes the underlying assumptions of such models with the aim of defamiliarizing and de-naturalising the practices of teaching English. Peim's own viewpoint is informed by a wide range of contemporary perspectives, including poststructuralism, sociolinguistics,
phenomenology, semiotics, postmodernism, and discourse analysis. The emphasis throughout is on the political and ideological dimensions of language and textuality.

Peim rejects the view of literacy as as neutral skill/individual competence and the naturalisation of reading practices, insisting that literacy is a social phenomenon and that reading practices are governed institutionally. It is argued that sociolinguistics should have a central role in the redefinition of English, allowing English classrooms to look at ideas about different uses of language, different kinds of language contexts and how these relate to specific social groups and social practices. This, Peim claims, will renovate English for twenty-first century life, as under post-modern conditions "transnational cultural products, produced and distributed in transnational institutional conditions, come into reading contexts that are very specifically local" (p 9).

The subject of English must, according to Peim, consider how it will negotiate and situate itself within the local/global nexus. Peim uncovers the link between the teaching of literature and nationalistic projects, noting that "it’s increasingly difficult to see how the notion of a specifically national cultural identity can be maintained when so much cultural experience is transnational — when the media of cultural experience have tended to intermingle things in a post-modern frenzy of intertextual activity" (pp 181-182). English classrooms need to read the "texts" of global culture and consider their impact on subjectivity.

In Peim's view, speaking and listening in English should be systematically analysed from a sociolinguistic position. Students should have the opportunity to examine social perspectives on conversational styles (e.g. the connection between gender and casual conversation or the role of pedagogical cultures in establishing classroom oral discourse practices) and explore the link between oral language and cultural and class identity. A renovated English should have a both/and rather than either/or approach to the standard English/non-standard dialect debate.


Richardson argues that in an inclusive, multi-ethnic society, the curriculum practices of genre-based pedagogy forged into curriculum and syllabus documents in the various States and Territories promise to deliver commonality, if not narrow conformity, of school-based literacy experiences.
He briefly outlines international developments in *literacy studies* and *genre studies* as a backdrop to an account of the development of a genre-based pedagogy in Australia since the early 1980s.

*New literacy studies* have demonstrated that:

- children progress unequally towards literacy;
- literacies are ‘social practices’; and
- the nature of language is ‘dialogic’;

ie, literacy cannot be defined, understood, learned, studied, or acquired independently of a social context. Moreover, no longer can it be assumed that there are natural or ‘naturalistic’ conditions for learning literacy, or indeed, that literacy naturally follows on from oral language development. The very constructed nature of all literacy practices and the relationship between literacy, personal identity, cultural identity, and ideology undermine claims that all children, in all social and cultural contexts learn literacy in the same way. Equally, this same evidence should have rung alarm bells when it was proposed that language and literacy learning could be explained by a single linguistic theory, at least as it has been manifested in Australian genre theory and pedagogy.

Coincident with developments in literacy studies over the past 15 years or so, have been studies on several continents, from a number of fields and disciplines, which have resulted in a metamorphosis of the concept of *genre*. Differing definitions and analyses of genre with significantly different pedagogical trajectories have resulted in three distinct traditions of genre being delineated:

- Australian systemic functional linguistics;
- English for Specific Purposes [ESP];

ESP and New Rhetoric see genres as dynamic and social texts pragmatically deployed by members of discourse communities. In broad terms, these new theories suggest that genres are typical forms of discourse which evolve in response to recurring rhetorical situations, where they function to address situations and evoke desired responses. In that they place greater emphasis on the explication of the semantic and syntactic features of texts, Australian genre theorists see genres more rigidly and prescriptively.
The Sydney School began their research work with the avowed intention of developing a pedagogical program to destabilise, debase and eventually displace process-writing pedagogy. The Australian systemic-functional model of genre theory privileges language and text as a system, locating meaning in the language as system and in text structure. They insist that meaning is carried in the text structure and in the grammar of individual texts, and that it is through these that language users construct reality. Little explicit attention has been paid to ideology beyond the belief that through the teaching of the powerful genres the powerless and the marginalised in society will gain access to distributed power. The Sydney School developed a typology for a number of identified "school genres" and an interventionist pedagogy.

A number of prominent linguists have argued theoretical cases against the model of genre and language articulated by Martin, Rothery and Christie. Their critiques focus on the disjuncture between the claim that meaning is encapsulated in textual objects, genres as autonomous systems, and the avowal of a social constructionist functional model of language. Hasan has systematically critiqued the model of genre proposed by Martin and seeks to rectify misrepresentations of both Halliday’s and her own work, particularly arguing that the theory of genre he has proposed is adequately accounted for by Halliday’s notion of register.

Nevertheless, the influence and impact of the Sydney genre school in dislodging expressivist process pedagogy in primary and secondary schooling in Australia has been profound. English literacy curriculum documents in all States and Territories in Australia unilaterally treat genres as unproblematic. Classroom literacy experiences for the various grade levels across the primary school years have taken on a conformity and uniformity that might only have been expected to result from a nationally agreed, prescriptive curriculum.

Internationally, new genre studies highlight the fact that genre learning and disciplinary socialisation foreground issues of power and authority in relation to the formation of new subject positions, norms, values and beliefs. Australian genre-based pedagogy has been driven by a neo-liberal agenda of access and participation, to the point where proponents have been untroubled by the technical reductionist model of instruction into which teachers and students have been socialised through teacher workshops, curriculum and syllabus documents, and instructional materials. Genre-based pedagogy with its emphasis on genres as objects, in conjunction with competency frameworks and assessment programs has been susceptible to co-option.
into instrumentalist government policies which promote simplistic notions of literacy and literacy acquisition.


This text examines the theoretical and practical implications of the global spread of the English language for English teaching. The work of theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin (the "heteroglossic" or multi-vocal text) and Michael Halliday (the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions of communication and the "grammar" of visual design) underpin the interpretive strategies of the contributors. The main developments explored include how new communication technologies are shaping the way language is used, the way English is being expanded to express new forms of social relations and hybridized identities, the increasingly multimodal nature of texts in English, the impact of market forces on discursive practices and the relationship between globalisation and the English language.

The key issues raised are the blurring of genres and styles in contemporary uses of English, the importance of visual literacy and the relationship between visual and verbal communication, the role of English in cyberspace for constructing subjectivity and imagined and diasporic communities, the new genres and more fluid texts created through Internet communication, the increasingly informal and marketised use of English in a consumerist culture and the forms of local and regional resistance to English that are changing the English language itself. Both the local and transnational contexts of English language use in a globalising world are considered. The contributors see language (including visual language) as a social semiotic and hence define current uses as being intricately connected to dominant social practices such as consumerism, global marketing, and online interaction.


Fuery and Mansfield outline how cultural studies involves the study of the broad field of cultural practices (which may range from literature and film to dress, food and furniture) as the material for an investigation of socially and politically constructed meanings. The assumptions of a cultural studies model of textual and cultural analysis are that texts are seen as arising from intertexts, the reader-text relation is interactive and the relationship between "high", "popular" and "sub" cultures is fluid and unstable.
In this model, textual analysis is connected to wider questions of culture, ideology and subjectivity. Cultural studies also explores reading practices as social formations which generate and sustain meanings and interpretations. For Fuery and Mansfield, "canons" of selected texts cannot be avoided, as some texts are inevitably chosen for cultural analysis. However, they point to the importance of seeing "canons" as contingent social constructions and of critically evaluating their function in the wider society.


John Noell Moore offers readings of a selection of young adult literature from the perspectives of contemporary literary and cultural theories (including formalism, archetypal theory, structuralism, deconstruction, reader response, feminism, black aesthetics, and cultural studies). Moore assigns value to the very multiplicity of possible readings that can result from an encounter with a text rather than a single authoritative reading.

The order of the chapters reflects the development in English studies from formalism to reader response to the broadly interdisciplinary study of the larger cultural contexts that frame both the text and the reader. Moore advocates a pluralistic, dialogic and enriching approach to reading and teaching literature in which teachers enable students to join an ongoing conversation about texts and meanings.


In response to the globalisation of finance, transport, culture, communication and the media, Kress argues that there is a need to remake the English curriculum. He questions whether "English" is the right name for the subject anymore, since even as a language, it means quite different things in different places, let alone the burdens it carries of ever-expanding definitions of "language" and "literacy".

For Kress, a curriculum is always a design for a social future, creating as it does a certain kind of human/social subjectivity with a particular mode of seeing and being in the world. The social future Kress advocates is a culture of innovation in which young people are confident in the face of difference (cultural, ethnic, and linguistic) and change, both of which can be viewed as productive resources for innovative encounters with problems. Kress envisages a "working future" that is pluricultural, engaged in critique (essential to informed citizenship, public participation and an innovative stance) and flexible.
The move in public communication from language to the visual is a particular interest in the book. Kress notes that subject English needs to give attention to the multimodality of texts and especially to how the visual is increasingly being used to manage information in a knowledge society. The profound shifts that subject English must respond to include:

* the shift from the discrete nature of semiotic modes (i.e. image, text and sound) to the blurring of semiotic modes (e.g. reading and writing practices which treat the page as a visual unit and the "secondary orality" of electronic communication practices that sit somewhere between spoken and written English);

* the shift from the literate subject who engaged with written texts through reflective, detailed modes of analysis to the "multiliterate" subject who possesses a range of literacies (e.g. visual literacy, techno-literacy and Asia literacy), who reads multimodal texts in an integrated fashion (paying attention to the relationship between the different semiotic modes being deployed) and who produces multimodal and multimedia texts with the aim of managing information;

* the shift from the production and dissemination of knowledge through disciplinary formations to an interdisciplinary approach to the assemblage of knowledge in the service of the management of information; and

* the shift in both the English curriculum and the "cultural capital" of contemporary society from the objects of study towards modes of analysis and information management and design skills.

In Kress’s view, "modes of representation" and "subjectivity" are interdependent and hence the English curriculum must address how it will effectively make the social subjectivities and forms of citizenship and society that are enacted in the future. Kress' key message in the book is that the creation of critically literate citizens is not enough if those citizens do not do something with that knowledge — he calls this education for social action: the envisaging, design and making of alternatives. Ultimately Kress emphasises going beyond critique into creation.

In terms of the relevant texts for study in this model, Kress argues for studying all of:

* the culturally salient text (a text which has significance in its own cultural domain);
* the aesthetically valued text (canonical texts — to be studied for the question of why they are valued as much as for their own aesthetics); and

* the mundane text (signs, memos etc).


Lankshear considers the changing literacies required in an era of technological change and flexible workforces, and relates the teaching of those literacies to questions of empowerment and social justice. He draws upon James Paul Gee’s concept of "Discourse" (language uses that encode ways of being, thinking and acting in the world) and sociocultural approaches to texts, language and literacy (which Lankshear terms "socioliteracy studies") to formulate a "Critical Literacy" model of English teaching. This involves the juxtaposition of competing and differently valued Discourses, an analysis of how they frame and re-frame various elements of an issue, an exploration of the interests and goals of these Discourses and a consideration of the power relationships amongst them. Dominant Discourses, for example, reflect the values of dominant groups in society. Why are certain forms of knowledge and certain kinds of reading practices valued? Whose interests are served by this? For Lankshear, all literacies are embedded in socially constructed forms of Discourses. Hence literacy teachers need to prompt students to explore the role of language in establishing social and power relations and encourage them to consider how power relations between Discourses might be transformed.

Lankshear acknowledges his own attempt to establish a critical-liberatory Discourse and pedagogical practices that deepen forms of cultural democracy. Empowerment is connected to having a metacognitive awareness of competing Discourses (and their corresponding "speaking positions" or subject-positions) as distinct from being inculcated into the cognition of a single Discourse. Empowered readers are aware of how texts and associated reading practices are constructing the world and human subjects and feel free to pursue alternative reading and writings and different forms of subject-positioning.

Attention is also given to the emergent literacy practices of the "fast capitalist" world. Critical language awareness is seen as vital for all who participate in these practices. The viable knowledge workers of the information age will, according to Lankshear, engage in social practices based on digital texts. Thus, implementing critical literacy in cyberspace is a major challenge for literacy teachers.

Peel and Hargreaves explore the importance of English curricular history as it relates to questions of class, power, gender and colonialism. They note that a then recent survey of teachers and trainee teachers in New South Wales indicated that English was seen as having a multiplicity of roles, especially related personal growth, cultural analysis and language across the curriculum models. They argue for the need for theory to inform classroom practice in English. Students should be made aware of competing theories about the practice of reading and writing and English teachers should create dialogic classrooms in which different ways of reading—and their implications—are foregrounded and contested. Popular fiction, film and television should be included in the English curriculum.


This practical handbook, combining a critical dictionary, study guide and anthology of primary texts, actually reconfigures the nature of subject English. In Pope’s model, English is an "interdiscipline" that is characterized by diversity. Interdisciplinary studies in Gender, Postcolonialism and the Environment intersect with subject English. Rhetoric and Composition Studies also have a key role to play, as does Journalism, Communications, Cultural Studies, Theatre Studies, Media Studies, Film Studies and Professional Writing. Pope outlines the main changes in the teaching of English:

* there is a shift from a focus on "Literature" to a focus on a wider range of texts and genres. The anthology of sample texts, for example, includes prose fiction, poetry, journals, news stories, diaries, life-writing, scripts and transcripts. Oral, written and visual genres are all valid objects of study;

* there is a shift from studying a text in isolation to studying it in its social context and from a range of contemporary social perspectives (e.g. ecological and feminist criticism);

* emphasis on standardised language use is giving way to the ability to recognize, analyze and negotiate linguistic variety in uses of the English language (e.g. "New Englishes") in local and global contexts;

* as distinct from readers passively receiving the meanings of a literary canon, the
"creative" is as important as the "critical" in contemporary English studies and indeed all responses to texts are in part "creative". Students are encouraged to engage in critical-creative "rewritings" of texts;

* there is a shift from studying the history of "Literature" to studying how literature and other texts are part of historical and social processes;

* there is a shift from literary study to the study of cultural and meaning-making practices in general;

* there is a shift from the formalist analysis of "aesthetic" texts to a cultural analysis of how and why values change over time and how texts are produced and used, evaluated, institutionalized and transformed in social contexts;

* there is a greater emphasis on the materiality of communication practices (i.e. viewing the text as a material object and analyzing the impact of technologies of communication, modes of production and social organizations on its production and reception);

* non-Western-European genres of writing, oral performance and cultural production are being recognized and included in the English curriculum. Texts in translation are more likely to be included as well;

* there is a shift from a monocultural version of cultural heritage to a recognition that students need to be aware of a wide variety of regional, national and global cultures and their associated myths and belief systems. This is especially the case in an era of global learning, transnational work experience and intercultural communication;

* "culture" is no longer seen as something defined from above. Rather, it is part of a continuing conversation;

* dialogic, interactive and interpersonal modes of teaching and learning in English studies take precedence over the teacher-led "banking" model of education; and

* there is a shift from assessment in English studies based on essayistic analysis to a broader range of new forms of assessment. These include rewriting tasks, cross-genre and cross-media transformations, the creation of generically hybrid texts, collages, script-writing and electronic texts.
Key terms in English studies are defined in this book, such as discourse, text, context, intertextuality, genre, rewriting, narrative, rhetoric, speech act, ideological subjects, centres and margins, gaps and silences, self and other, residual, dominant and emergent ideologies, postmodernism, monologue and dialogue, differences and life-writing. Pope posess challenging questions such as "What are the possible subject positions that practitioners of English (i.e. teachers and learners) can take up?" and "Why are some texts valued over others?" The emphasis throughout is on encouraging students to pose new questions in relation to a text and the contexts that frame texts and readers.


Tweddle considers the twenty-first century context that the English curriculum must cater for: a global economy dependent upon technological literacy and "knowledge workers", multimedia textuality for which linear print literacies are inadequate, information and communications technologies generating a collaborative culture, new working and leisure practices, new reading and writing processes, contexts and purposes, and changes in the roles and relationships of teachers and learners.

An English curriculum for the future requires a redefinition of the notion of "text" and the range of activities currently described as reading and writing. Such a curriculum would be driven by textual theory. Students need to learn about the nature of texts and textuality, acquire a metalanguage for exploring the characteristics of all texts, learn how to write collaboratively and across global, cultural and temporal divides, understand the range of choices available in the construction of any text, and read and write in a variety of texts and media. Such a curriculum also needs to ensure consideration is given to the effects of the Internet on transculturalism, subcultures and variants of the English language.


The future of literacy teaching in the context of the rapidly changing English language is the focus of this book that brings together the scholars in the "New London Group" who have advocated a "pedagogy of multiliteracies" (New London Group, 1996). They are interested in the relationship between literacy teaching and such things as technological change, factors of
local diversity and global connectedness, the language and learning demands of "fast capitalist" workplaces, multimodality, contemporary citizenship and the design of social futures.

"Multiliteracies" relates to both the multiplicity of communication channels and media in the contemporary world and the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity being experienced by people as a result of globalization. The multiliteracies argument suggests the necessity of an open-ended and flexible functional grammar which assists language learners to describe language differences and the multimodal channels of meaning. The "pedagogy of multiliteracies" positions language teachers and students as active designers of social futures. It is underpinned by the key concept of "Design"—we inherit systems of meaning while at the same time actively designing meaning (and, as it follows, actively designing social futures). The New London Group have formulated the six design elements of meaning making—linguistic meaning, visual meaning, audio meaning, gestural meaning, spatial meaning, and the multimodal patterns of meaning that relate the first five modes of meaning to each other. They have also outlined the four components of a "pedagogy of multiliteracies":

1. **Situated Practice**: this draws on experience of meaning-making in lifeworlds, the public realm, and workplaces;

2. **Overt Instruction**: this helps students develop an explicit metalanguage of Design;

3. **Critical Framing**: this involves interpreting the social context and purpose of Designs of meaning; and

4. **Transformed Practice**—this involves students, as meaning-makers, becoming designers of social futures.

Literacy education must, according to the New London Group, achieve the twin goals of access and engagement. For example, students need to be able to access new forms of work through learning the new language of work (i.e. user-friendly interfaces and the informal, oral and interpersonal discourses used for effective teamwork). However, they also need to develop the capacity to negotiate and engage critically with the conditions of their working lives.

The social future advocated by the New London Group is one of "Civic Pluralism" or "Productive Diversity" in which diversity is seen as an asset. They believe that students need to learn how to cross linguistic boundaries and code-switch in a globalised world. Comparisons between languages and discourses are part of such a literacy training and this is quite different.
from literacy teaching that is monocultural, monolingual and focused on formalised and standardised forms of language:

When learners juxtapose different languages, discourses, styles, and approaches, they gain substantively in metacognitive and metalinguistic abilities and in their ability to reflect critically on complex systems and their interactions (New London Group, 2000, p. 15).

Developing cross-cultural understanding through literacy education is seen as vital to success in the new global capitalist order. The contributors to this book also believe that schools have a responsibility to produce "portfolio people" who see and present themselves as an ever changing "portfolio" of rearrangeable skills and who can cope with transnational work experiences.


In this essay, Misson attempts to review the main concepts of poststructuralism for teachers. There are two main streams of poststructuralist thought that he concentrates on;

* the reconceptualisation of language that poststructuralism has brought, which has had a powerful effect on the way in which literary texts are read and worked with in classrooms; and

* the theorisation of the relationship between language, ideology and human identity which has been a powerful underpinning of critical literacy.

In relation to poststructuralism and language, Misson uses Derrida to explain that the possibility of a word's meaning goes on and on through the connection of the word with every other word, and so there could be an endless deferral of meaning. This endless process of differentiation and deferral undermines any sense of certainty in meaning. These ideas provide a theorisation of how people produce different meanings out of words and texts, and warn us of the dangers of closing off the possibility of meaning too quickly. Just as we can't reach simple and absolute closure on the meaning of any word, there is no possibility of reaching the certainty of absolute truth outside language for any concept.

Misson also draws on Derrida's concept of logocentrism to argue that Western thought relies on a "metaphysics of presence", a belief that there is a validating reality behind
language that gives it its meaning. But Derrida insists there is nothing outside text. Language is all we can know: there is no ideal transcendent presence behind language that fills its emptiness with meaning. All meaning operates within language, and is subject to the vagaries that the indeterminacy and instability of language inevitably imply—thus Barthes' claim that the author is dead. Thus, in the classroom, we can, if we wish, read "against the grain" (i.e. we can refuse to take the text’s implicit or explicit valuations of what it is showing, and follow through other implications of the material that allow us to produce quite different readings).

In terms of his second major point, Misson explains that "deconstruction" is the analytical process by which the ideology of a text is shown not to be a natural reflection of the world, but a product of certain textual strategies that privilege a particular viewpoint, suppress inconsistent material, or smooth over inherent contradictions.

Significantly for English teaching, poststructuralism sees the process of the creation of the individual human being and their positioning within ideology as largely happening through language, since it is language which "constructs" us. Poststructuralism argues that there is no self apart from the ways we use language in different discourses. The discourses we partake in are what constitute the self. Therefore the self is a social construct (the constructivist position), rather than being a given essence of a person (the essentialist belief). This provides a strong theory of how we are locked into certain belief systems. Texts put us into a subject position (the way of seeing the world implied by the text), and we become subjects (i.e. experiencing human beings with a particular configuration of attitudes and beliefs) through being positioned in this way.

This theory of the discursive construction of subjectivity (i.e. the construction of our subjective selves through discourse) does, Misson argues, give an urgency to work on examining how texts are positioning us, because these texts may in fact be quite powerfully creating us and our belief systems. We may need to deconstruct the texts in an attempt to defuse their potential power over us. This analysis of textual representations, showing how they are constructing certain ideological messages, has become crucial in many classrooms, and is one of the main thrusts of critical literacy.


Misson argues here for the role of popular culture in the classroom. The two main arguments in favour are:
* that English should be concerned to engage with the textual world of the students and prepare them to read intelligently the central texts of their culture; and

* that these texts have the potential to exert great power, and so it is important to see how they are operating.

The work on popular culture, he argues, is an adjunct to two other areas: cultural studies and critical literacy — both of which are predicated on the sociocultural nature of textuality. He shows that it is almost impossible to define popular texts easily, and argues that work on popular culture ought not to degenerate into "hunt the stereotype", by criticising a text for its limited inclusiveness in terms of class, ethnicity or gender. What does one do to confront the perennial issues of pleasure and value? Misson says that one needs to allow the pleasure and not be simply critical of it, while still realising that it is performing an ideological function by positioning the reader in a particular way, and to be flexible in the criteria for our valuations by doing justice to the positive aspects of a text while being fully aware of both its negative aspects and its limitations.


Misson explores the connection between "fictional" narratives and the ways in which we see ourselves in real life, hence exploring narrative from a poststructuralist and postmodern position in which real and constructed collapse into one another. He argues that texts construct identities from a particular belief system and can thus work to limit our way of seeing. We need to be able to resist the constraints of a certain way of seeing by looking for gaps and silences. However, texts can also enhance our perspectives, so long as they are understood as particular interpretations of reality rather than reality itself.

In teaching about narrative, Misson claims that students should be introduced to the difference between events ("story") and the different ways of relating events ("discourse"). Discourse choices such as sequencing and structure, narrative viewpoint, style and use of generic conventions create, according to Misson, certain effects for the reader and encode distinct values, ideologies and ways of seeing. Students should explore how discourse choices are designed to have powerful ideological effects and imply particular social purposes.

Morgan begins with the idea that what distinguishes critical literacy approaches to teaching from more traditional ways of "doing English" is not just the expanded range of texts considered worthy of serious scrutiny — critical literacy teachers can also be found engaging with canonical works; nor is it its "techniques", such as group work, role play, or activities such as rewriting a text from the viewpoint of a marginal character. The difference lies in the beliefs about society and about language which underpin the work of critical literacy-oriented teachers. This determines the choice of texts and approaches to them; this leads to the asking of different kinds of questions about those texts; this values different kinds of knowledge from that promoted by the literary and cultural establishment; and this is interested in different kinds of outcomes for individuals and society from the shaping of adults with finely tuned aesthetic sensibilities or competencies in using language in ways that society presently rewards. Morgan sees critical literacy teaching resting on four propositions about language and power in society:

1. The dominance of any social group is maintained by persuading people to consent to the belief that the status quo and the dominant ideologies are "natural" and "inevitable". Language is central to such forms of persuasion. But language may instead be used to challenge existing forms of power and cultural dominance;

2. Texts are constructed from a range of possible language options; many of the choices involved are social choices — rules and norms for use, which are a good indication of which group has the power to determine the workings of society. Such rules of use are social conventions, not "given" or "natural", for texts are constructed within a culture or sub-culture and for a society in a particular time and place and with particular relationships of power between people. This context governs what can be said and how;

3. Such texts not only say certain things in certain ways but do not speak of others: they are partial and incomplete; and

4. Readings produce meanings. There is no single "author-ised" meaning behind or prior to a text, which determines how it must be read; instead, readers in specific historical, cultural and discursive contexts can produce different, divergent, and perhaps opposed readings. When readers become aware of the choices of language, subject matter and presentation that have been made in constructing texts they are
enabled to ask critical questions about those choices, including whose interests have been served by such textual constructions.

Morgan makes three suggestions for framing a critical literacy curriculum:

1. *A Freirean Approach: Becoming Ethnographers of the Culture*
   This involves:
   
   * identifying key words / concepts / artifacts and "codifying" these;
   
   * investigating the "reality" and "forms of life" they are implicated in; and
   
   * engaging in social action as a result of this process of "conscientisation".

2. *A Focus on the Nature of Reading and Writing*
   In this approach the following questions are asked:
   
   * What reading practices are characteristic of particular social groups?
   
   * How is reading material produced in a particular society, who produces them, and how do they come to have the salience they do?
   
   * What influences the process of interpreting texts in particular contexts?

3. *A Focus on Intertextuality: Juxtaposing Texts*
   When one text is set alongside another it is easier to see where a particular text is coming from, what its "neighbours" are and what is foregrounded or marginalised. In order to create a productive friction, it is most useful to choose texts which
   
   * offer a range of kinds of information, from different fields and disciplines;
   
   * are grounded in a range of ideological perspectives; and
   
   * come from different historical times and cultural locations.

Regardless of approach, Morgan suggests the following sets of questions to guide teacher planning:

1. *Situating the Text*
   * What is the topic and why is this topic being written about?
   
   * How is the topic being presented? What themes and discourses are being used?
* Who is writing to whom? Whose voices and positions are being expressed, and whose are not?
* How is the text encouraging you to think and respond?
* What other ways are there of writing about the topic?
* What wasn’t said about the topic, and why?

2. *Locating the Text in the World*
* Where does this text come from?
* What kind of text is this?
* What meanings and contexts of meanings are possible from this text?
* What social function does this text serve?
* What kind of reader does this text propose and what position is afforded to him/her?

3. *The Writer, the Reader, and the World in the Text*
* How does this text construct a version of reality and knowledge?
* What is left out of this story?
* How does this text represent the reader and set up a position for reading?
* What other position might there be for reading?
* How does this text set up its authority and encourage your belief?
* How can you deconstruct its authority?


Peel reviews the history of cultural studies partly in terms of attempts to create an interdisciplinary approach to textual study. Any artifact of a culture is suitable for analysis and hence, cultural studies does away with any distinctions between "high" and "popular" culture. He includes examples of "English" units studied within a cultural studies framework. The key question to be asked is whether "cultural studies" includes "English” or vice versa.


In this review of two recent books in issues in English teaching, Prain effectively names what the future of critical literacy should be. He argues against calls for an English curriculum
focused predominantly on innovative multimodal designs for the future. He is opposed to those who claim that "critique" in English is over. For Prain, students need to maintain a sceptical attitude to textual claims to authority. Critical literacy must be applied in relation to reading on the Web. English teachers should, according to Prain, encourage students to evaluate the effects of texts on users as well to participate as "designers".


Locke challenges the marginalisation of argument in early and middle years schooling, particularly as it is an area of writing that students often experience difficulty with. Locke advocates a model of teaching argumentation that has a rhetorical basis for unit planning, defines genre within a rhetorical framework, and uses inquiry-based learning as a pedagogical strategy.

Some of the assumptions implicit in a rhetorical focus on language include the belief that people construct texts with a view to achieving a desired result with a particular audience, that all texts are products of their functions, that texts are generated by contexts and that all texts assume a kind of social complicity between producer and audience that becomes formalized in the conventions of genre. In a rhetorical approach, English language teachers view any text as a purposeful act located in a network of relationships, immediate (context of situation) and general (context of culture).

A rhetorical model allows for a dynamic understanding of genre as something far more adaptable and socially rooted than a series of prescriptive recipes. Oral, written and visual texts can be explored in an integrated fashion using a rhetorical approach. Locke draws on the inquiry-oriented curriculum developed by Gordon Wells (involving the five steps of launch, research, interpretation, presentation and reflection) to facilitate student exploration of argument as a mode of discourse. This is a student-centered approach to learning about language and acquiring a metalanguage through inquiry which is not prescriptive about genre. Students gain in understanding the functions they want their texts to serve, the target audiences they are appealing to and the role of social context in communication.

Thomson reviews the shifts in English teaching in Australia since 1968. He highlights the following issues as marking the key developments:

* the importance of metacognition, of students reflecting on their learning;
* the importance of language as a tool for learning: journals, informal talk, expressive writing;
* the conscious exploration of language and classroom work on textuality and critical literacy;
* widening definitions of "text";
* developing understandings of contemporary cultural and literary theory; and
* developing understandings of multimedia technology.

He advocates a new model of English teaching, which he calls a "Rhetorical, Ethical, Socio-cultural, Political Model". Such a model involves personal growth as well as a full awareness of the relationship between language and power, a familiarity with social practices and their discourses, and an understanding of the political and ideological formation of texts and of matters of value and ethics.


Watson reviews some central tenets of response theory and their connection with psycholinguistic reading theory. Rosenblatt and Iser are the main thinkers reviewed — the former, Watson argues, because her theory of the "transaction" between reader and text is of great use to teachers. It can prove immensely liberating for students, and, he says, ought to be made explicit to them — though response theory in general does need to be supplemented by a theory of text that recognises the cultural construction of readers.


The authors argue for a cultural analysis/ critical literacy/ sociolinguistic model to infuse the entire teaching and learning of English: "active learning, critical thinking and cultural analysis must be at the centre of English teaching because they provide the conceptual and cognitive strategies which enable learners to understand their position in the world in so far as that is influenced by, and mediated through, language" (p 4).
Specific criticisms are leveled against existing models. The mainly Anglo-Saxon canon of literature in the cultural heritage model is inappropriate in a complex and plural society. The voices of people of different ethnic and social backgrounds and gender positionings need to be heard. The personal growth model stresses the personal at the expense of the social and fails to address the politics of culture. Adult needs and cross-curricular models emphasise standard English and ignore the need to understand language in relation to sociolinguistic issues (e.g. variation across social and cultural settings). Also, the focus on functional uses of language for vocational purposes ignores the importance of critical and creative thought.

English needs to be, according to the authors, completely reformulated. The curriculum should rethink the relationship between literary and media texts (i.e. should stop seeing media texts as being of lower status) and give greater attention to the role of language in shaping world-views. Teaching styles also need to change. English should reject the "banking" model of education and instead position students as producers of knowledge. English teachers can encourage students to formulate alternative interpretations of texts using new reading practices and use interactive teaching strategies.
2. The Relationship between English and Literacy Education.


Competing views of language and literacy are outlined in this book, including skills-oriented, whole language, cognitive, strategic, process, genre and sociocultural approaches. In relation to all these theories, the authors advocate a "dynamic option" as an appropriate response for literacy teachers. The use of a theory should be based on teacher selection (i.e. the approach which is appropriate for particular conditions or contexts at the time). The authors are, nonetheless, particularly committed to a sociocultural view of literacy as social practice. Literacy events occur in the everyday worlds of work, home and school. There is a need to build partnerships between the home and school and to study a variety of literacy practices in a range of social contexts. Students should achieve a "social critical literacy" in which they are able to analyse and criticise the texts they read and the ways they attempt to construct reality.


A collection of papers produced by teacher-researchers in South Australia are compiled in this book under three prominent themes in the field of literacy education: (i) teaching and assessing inclusive literacies in diverse communities; (ii) the explicit teaching of reading; and (iii) using systemic functional linguistics in the classroom. Issues raised include the relationship between literacy practices and gendered identities, the use of popular culture in literacy lessons, the relationship between home literacies and school achievement, the explicit teaching of language and literacy processes, and the role of a "metalanguage" in literacy learning.


Gee makes a distinction between "discourse" with a little "d", which refers to connected stretches of language that make sense, and "Discourse" with a capital "D" (of which "discourse" is a part). Discourses are ways of being in the world that integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes. They are ways of displaying membership in a particular social group or social network. Literacy is thus a social practice and literacy teaching involves apprenticeship into Discourses.

The contributors to this book all adhere to some fundamental assumptions about language and literacy. Language is a social semiotic that varies according to time, place, and social function. Literacy practices are therefore social and should be examined in relation to their social contexts and functions. Readers and writers are themselves socially situated subjects.

The implications of these neo-Hallidayan/sociolinguistic assumptions for literacy education are explored throughout the book. Literacy educators need to explicitly describe how and why language (both spoken and written) varies in relation both to groups of users and to uses in social contexts. Teaching metalinguistic knowledge about language must include a discussion of language in the context of situated and social use. The link between lexicogrammatical patterns in texts and ideologies needs to be made explicit to students. A functional literacy must be augmented by a critical literacy designed to enable learners not only to comprehend and produce social discourses, but also to criticise and re-direct them, if necessary. Anne Cranny-Francis, for example, argues that secondary English students need to have access to the skills that enable them to produce readings as well as to be able to analyse and criticise those readings.


Kramsch argues for the reconceptualisation of the study of spoken and written language as the study of culture. Language and language study are viewed as sociocultural activities. Socially and historically situated discourse communities are created and shaped by language. Students of language should study cross-cultural differences in such things as conversational styles, the connection between language choices and cultural identity, the shaping of world-views through language, and the historical and cultural contexts of the production and reception of texts in discourse communities.

Introducing key concepts in cultural studies, communication studies and textual studies, this text draws together a range of theories to explore how situated practices of human communication produce and negotiate meaning. Neo-Hallidayan social semiotics (field, tenor and mode) and concepts derived from Pierre Bourdieu (cultural capital and the cultural field) and Mikhail Bakhtin (dialogism) inform discussion of the contexts of social meaning making.

For Schirato and Yell, "literacy about texts is inextricably tied up with the possession of literacy about contexts" (p. 49). They argue for the need to teach "cultural literacy", which they define as both a knowledge of meaning systems and an ability to negotiate those systems within different cultural contexts. They also claim that visual literacy and literacy in genres and discourses found in the public sphere carry "cultural capital" in the contemporary world.

Examples are chosen to complement the discussion from written, spoken and visual genres. Their relation to questions of ideology, subjectivity and discourse is explored. The authors demonstrate an interest in comparing different modalities and considering how communication modes realize meaning. For example, the lexical density and nominalisation characteristic of many written genres is contrasted to spoken language. Significantly, the properties of spoken English and visual texts are given as much attention as the printed word.


New literacy studies (NLS) treat language and literacy as social practices rather than technical skills to be learned. NLS research studies literacy in different social contexts. NLS means for curriculum design taking account of these contexts for different cultural groups. There are two major tenets to NLS:

"social literacies": literacy is a social practice that varies with social context. Literacy is not a single, essential thing;
- language is "dialogic": we all take possession of language, rather than being passive recipients of it. Language is constantly being remade by its users in response to the demands of their social environment. Thus, Critical Language Awareness (CLA) argues that learners should engage in debates about the nature and meaning of language, rather than be treated as passive victims of its structural properties.

The implications for curriculum policy are:
- literacy is more complex than current curriculum and assessment allow. We need curricula and assessment that are themselves rich and complex;
- curricula and assessment that reduce literacy to a few simple, mechanistic skills fail to do justice to actual literacy practices in people's lives.
The implications for teaching are:

- taking account of varied literacy practices in students' lives;
- an emphasis on "real" uses of literacy;
- emphasis on "appropriateness" rather than "correctness": teachers and students become "ethnographers".


Children’s acquisition of written and spoken English is explored in this book through the lens of a functional approach to language learning. Learners are seen as not simply acquiring linguistic structures, but also reconstructing the linguistic system as they use language to perform social acts. From this social view of language comes the argument that language learning is a collaborative enterprise involving social interaction and active participants. Along with the ability to produce effective social uses of language, this approach also insists on the importance of metalinguistic ability (i.e. the ability to think about and reflect on language itself) in language acquisition and development.

The intricate connection between language and identity is examined. Children and adults take on a set of identities as they learn about the uses of language in social contexts. Hence the emphasis given to the way the form, function and meaning of literacy events differs across cultures, communities, social groups and "literacy domains" (e.g. work and school).

Contributors to the book note how styles of language use arise within specific "discourse communities" (networks of people with shared interests, purposes and ways of using language). Being "literate" within a community means understanding how language is deployed to encode a social mode of thinking within a particular context. For example, the specialised lexis and "impersonal" style of academic writing creates a "detached", reflective and learned social subjectivity. The explicit teaching of genres and their associated lexicogrammatical features is noted as a way of initiating language learners (including speakers of other languages) into discourse communities and this is balanced against the importance of encouraging flexibility and critical language awareness.


The contributors to this text examine how the English language is used for a variety of social purposes across a wide range of contexts, including interpersonal, artistic, everyday
and work contexts. Sociocultural approaches to language and literacy inform the interpretation of how language is context-embedded and hence used to suit particular social settings and cultural practices. Specific varieties of spoken and written English are viewed as being used by people to perform their identities in everyday, cultural, workplace and institutional contexts. We move through different "literacy domains" (e.g. the home, school and workplace) and "discourse communities" that allow us to construct certain identities.

Language is used to establish, maintain and negotiate social relations and is constantly changing through use. It is a form of social action through which people construct identities, cultures and nationalities. This study of language in use is influenced in particular by Michael Halliday’s functional approach (especially the "interpersonal function" of communication), Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogical perspective, conversation analysis, speech act theory and sociolinguistics.

Speech/ writing distinctions, traditionally upheld in language studies, blur in this collection. The connection between language use and identity is another key theme and is related to gender, ethnicity, class, and nationality. The concluding chapters address issues surrounding the teaching of English, such as the "canon", debates about Standard English and poststructuralism. Literary canons are seen as social constructs that serve particular interests and the privileging of certain genres (such as poetry and the novel) is seen as a contextual and value-laden practice. It is noted that the cultural heritage model of English teaching, with its "banking" or transmission version of teaching, is currently out of "sync" with developments in educational psychology such as constructivism. A more poststructuralist and dialogic version of English teaching is advocated, shifting the focus from texts to multiple readings, from print to a blend of oral, visual and printed materials and from a monocultural canon to pluri-cultural textuality.


This book draws together scholars researching in two key frameworks for contemporary literacy teaching: systemic functional linguistics and poststructuralism/ critical literacy. The editors note that both approaches have a sociocultural view of language and literacy. Language and literacy practices structure and shape social life and literacy teaching is itself a social practice that shapes subjectivity or identity. The critical literacy approach considers such things as the reading positions that are constructed in texts and their
ideological implications. The functional grammar approach to teaching language learning and development focuses on

* acquainting students with systems of choices for meaning making;
* making the linguistic structures and features of text types explicit to students;
* exploring such things as the use of register and genre in situational and cultural contexts;
* providing students with a metalanguage for learning about language and analysing how language works. This is designed to encourage the development of metalinguistic ability; and
* using instructional strategies such as modelling and scaffolding.

A number of contributors show an interest in the role of information technology for literacy teaching. The hybridising of genres in cyberspace problematises the teaching of discrete genres (e-mail, for example, is a hybrid of writing and speech). Reading practices in hyperlinked domains are non-linear and navigational and hence quite different to those associated with the reading practices of print culture. The multimodality of electronic texts foregrounds in particular the visual semiotics involved in communication. The need to explore image-language relations in a "hypermediated" literacy education is noted.

Literacy is examined as a material practice involving available technologies for recording and communicating information. A critical literacy practice engaged with electronic texts is advocated as a way of dealing with the emergence of a technological literacy that is socio-culturally located.


This book brings together scholars interested in debating the role of genre in the teaching of writing. The editors, in their introduction, note the shift in thinking about genre from the traditional view in literary criticism that genres are fixed and immutable categories to contemporary re-formulations of genre as typical ways of engaging rhetorically with recurring situations. The contributors are keen to distance themselves from a view of genre teaching that involves teaching the abstracted and decontextualised features of text types. Instead, genres are located as forms of social action in context. Thus, there are political and ideological dimensions involved in the conventional use or subversion of genres.
This "rhetorical" model of genre pays attention to notions of audience, context, purpose and occasion and draws on sociocultural approaches to language and writing, functional grammar and speech-act theory. The implications of this view of genre for a revitalized genre-based literacy pedagogy are that:

* students can be seen as using generic resources to act effectively on a situation through a text, rather than simply imitating the formal features of a text type;
* there is less emphasis on "banking" or transmission pedagogies. In a constructivist view of knowledge and learning, students are able to criticize genres, discern their social functions and evaluate why some genres are assigned greater value than others; and
* students are able to subvert and "rewrite" genres, combine generic resources in inventive ways and invent new discursive forms, especially in the light of new technologies.

The process/genre debate is a particular interest in the collection and there is also an attempt to think beyond this debate. Contributors tend to emphasise the links between whole language and functional models of language. Both are meaning-oriented, aware of social context, audience and purpose and holistic (rather than focused on isolated skills). Richard M. Coe, for example, explores the teaching of genre as process, claiming that genres involve both structures and social processes. Coe counsels literacy educators to not simply teach genres as static structures but to facilitate student abilities in genre analysis (i.e. the ability to think critically about why certain textual and generic strategies have been used to achieve social purposes in a specific context).


English studies, according to Devitt, needs to bring understandings of genre in literary criticism and rhetoric/composition into productive dialogue. Rhetorical notions of genre have drawn upon systemic functional linguistics and the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin and emphasise the social nature of genres. Genres are defined as typified social actions used to accomplish purposes in frequently encountered contexts. They relate less to formal conventions than to purposes, participants and subjects (i.e. to rhetorical actions). Literary scholars have recently been revisiting genres as dynamic and ideological, and remain more likely to value writers who violate generic conventions.
Devitt points to the similarities between these views. Both view texts and textual meanings as dynamic and created through the interaction of the writer, reader and context. For Devitt, English studies teachers need to explore a range of questions associated with genre in their classrooms:

* what is the relation between genres in a system or hierarchy of genres?
* how is a particular text participating in multiple genres simultaneously?
* how do genres serve functions for their users?
* how does the historical and institutional situatedness of a genre inform its ideological function?
* what role do readers play in promoting generic expectations?
* what are the ideological implications of conformity and/ or resistance to generic conventions?

For Devitt, a nuanced and complex understanding of genre that brings together a range of theories can be used to "help students read and write flexibly, with an eye to the rhetorical function of discourse but without becoming fixed in a single set of formal conventions" (p 714).


In this book, Bianco and Freebody synthesize research on literacy, paying attention to the sociocultural and educational context for the development of literacy policy and programs in the 1990s and the complexity of literacy needs in Australia and their implications for teaching and learning.

The authors stress that "pen and paper" notions of literacy and arbitrarily established minimal standards would in the long term prove to be both inadequate and inappropriate for the more complex, technology-saturated and culturally diverse reading and writing practices of the early twenty-first century. Australians need to achieve sophisticated literacy competencies so as to enhance their personal, educational, civic and vocational lives. Hence the plural term "literacies" used in the title.

In a post-industrial society, there is a need for "multiliteracies". This can include an understanding of language and literacy codes, multimodal reading and writing practices, multimedia authoring skills, multimedia critical analysis, internet exploration strategies, internet navigational skills and environmental literacy that ensures an ecologically
sustainable future. Students should be able to apply multiple semiotic modes in communicative processes known as designing and gain control of information-management problems.

These "literacies" are seen as intricately connected to the social, political, economic and technological features of a globalising world. Literacy capabilities are a critical feature of a robust and participatory democracy. They are vital to "post-Fordist" work environments that call for multi-skilling, flexibility, problem-solving, initiative, consultation and negotiation abilities, intercultural awareness and "knowledge workers".

For Bianco and Freebody, the pedagogy of literacy education must therefore be eclectic in its approach and draw upon a range of theoretical perspectives. However, they argue that all literacy teaching should involve explicitness about the socio-cultural and formal features of literacy practices (including the subject-specific demands of literacy practices in middle years schooling), the provision of models and the use of meaningful tasks that foster development through practice in different settings.

3. **English Studies, Media/ Film Studies and Visual Literacy.**


This article describes the development and implementation of a curriculum model that integrates the study of different types of texts from English, Media and Drama in a coherent and meaningful way. This interdisciplinary approach, implemented through team teaching, is underpinned by an expanded, poststructuralist definition of "text" and a focus on active reading. The benefits for students include increased confidence in working with different types of texts, having a broader frame of reference for their investigations and being empowered by the diversity of approaches made available to them through integration.


The blurred interface between literature/ media studies and fiction/ film is explored in this collection of essays. Attention is paid to the contexts of the production and reception of texts, particularly as they are shaped by capitalist structures of exchange. Texts are
viewed as forms of cultural consumption within the marketplace and as being used to further identity formation within social life. Topics such as the relation between high and popular culture, texts and audiences, and texts and marketing strategies are addressed during the analysis of a variety of classic and contemporary narratives.


This book is the final report on a project investigating the teaching practices of middle school teachers' work with visual texts. Key issues raised include the teaching of critical viewing skills and the identification of effective assessment procedures. A number of major findings and recommendations are recorded. Generally, teachers used filmic images rather than televisual or electronic images. The authors recommend that visual texts generated through modern computer technology (video and computer games, CD ROMs and the Internet) should therefore be highlighted in the development of resources and models for teaching viewing skills.

Another key finding was that rarely did teachers consider who is advantaged or disadvantaged by particular portrayals, omissions, selections and representations, or help their students challenge and resist the constructions identified. The authors recommend that more resources which model and support critical viewing be developed. Critical literacy has an important role to play here. Visual texts need to be seen as selective representations, rather than reflections, of social reality. Students should consider such things as the social and cultural contexts of visual texts, the effects on the audience, preferred and alternative readings and stereotypes. Such critical analysis engages with the politics of representation.

Assessment issues are examined in the report, including such things as the use of a range of tasks (written, oral, visual and performance) and explicit criteria. A major finding was that the teachers who were most successful in assessing understanding of the constructed nature of texts were those who asked their students to explain the decisions they had made in the process of constructing their texts. The authors argue that as visual texts and the visual impact of written texts are having an increasing role in conveying information, students need to create as well as interpret the visual. It was also discovered that several teachers saw that using visual texts opened the way for improvements in written literacy and understanding. As well as increasing confidence, the use of visual texts as a forerunner to a written text on the same subject stopped some students giving up before they'd started. Advantages of using visual texts include accessibility and productive class discussion. Complex issues can
be explored since all the students in the class have experienced the visual texts. Thus the authors argue that reading and viewing should not be separated. Understandings and strategies gained with visual texts can be readily related to understandings and skills with written texts by treating them together.


Kellner proposes a critical media literacy and the development of competencies in reading images critically: "critical literacy in a postmodern image culture requires learning how to read images critically and how to unpack the relations between images, texts, social trends and products in commercial culture" (p 43). Ideological analysis and Derrida's method of deconstruction can be used, the author argues, for reading images critically. Special attention is given to reading advertising images. Kellner claims that advertisements are as interested in selling lifestyles and socially desirable subject positions, which are associated with their products, as with selling the products themselves.


Media literacy, according to Luke, aims to make students critical and selective viewers, able to reflect critically on media messages, and to use those critical skills in the production of their own print and audio-visual texts. It is important that students understand the media's "public pedagogies", the construction of social reality, the way texts position readers/viewers and the social and cultural context of televisual and popular culture texts. From a social justice perspective, media analyses can show how inclusions and exclusions are structured in public discourse. In short, media education "should be a fundamental part of education for responsible citizenship in an age where all communication is increasingly visual, symbolic, polycultural, and, importantly, political" (p 188).

Luke combines microtextual analysis with larger social and political issues when reading the gender ideologies in the media. Issues such as binary oppositions, gendered representational differences, and "masculine" and "feminine" texts are addressed.

The film *Men in Black*, as with many other contemporary films, was released accompanied by a huge variety of back-up and satellite texts in a range of media. Mackey argues for the need to engage in "sophisticated readings" of the commercial apparatus surrounding contemporary texts, especially when the target audience is generally the youth market. There are, according to Mackey, seven forms of reading invitation offered by the satellite texts:

(i) *immersion*: an immersive reading involves a surrender to the story;
(ii) *recapitulation*: the reproduction of the story in a different medium;
(iii) *second-level engagement*: offering "behind the scenes" access;
(iv) *technical analysis*: texts on the making of the movie, looking at such things as special effects;
(v) *commentary*: reviews that offer a framework for viewing and valuing the text;
(vi) *spin-offs*: these draw on the distinctive qualities of a story to fuel a different form of telling;
(vii) *parody*: this involves a knowledge of the original text.

Mackey claims that in these texts there is very little, if any, invitation to critical thinking. Hence classrooms must be the place in which critically literate readings of the film and the satellite texts designed for the selling environment are produced.


Moving image media can, in the view of Oldman, be used to enable secondary students to improve their print literacy standards, as well as such things as oracy and performance skills. In a unit on a novel and various film adaptations, visual images provided a form of access into the written text designed to give students confidence in their ability to make meaning from the text. Film provides a greater sense of narrative chronology, which aided literacy skills such as skimming and scanning the printed text. Future research, according to Oldman, will explore the concept of moving image media as a scaffold for print literacy whereby students' competence in one medium supports their acquisition and development of competence in another medium.

This text outlines the main concepts and approaches in media studies. Three key theoretical concepts run throughout the book: ideology, discourse, and hegemony. A range of media texts, including photographs, advertisements, film and television, are analysed to explore issues such as gender, race, class, subjectivity, and postmodernism. It is assumed that media texts do not reflect but actually construct a partial and selective view of social reality. Students can engage in the ideological analysis of media texts and choose from a range of reading positions—preferred readings, negotiated readings, and alternative/oppositional readings. They can also embrace media activism. This involves the active and creative engagement with media images through creation rather than just critique.

Topics covered include competing discourses, the construction of "media events", the semiotic analysis of images, and the text-audience relationship.


Schooling, according to Sefton-Green, at present institutionalises a version of literacy that ignores the rich and complex literacy practices associated with students’ out-of-school pursuits. Sefton-Green is particularly interested in the way that "edutainment" blurs the domains of formal education, informal learning and leisure time pursuits. Students need to operate across a range of literacies related to graphic, print and moving image texts. Creative uses of the resources of digital media by students should be actively validated in schools as they constitute valuable skills in the labour market.

Media education thus needs to be "curricularised" and incorporated into the teaching of a blend of communicative practices rather than an exclusive attention to print literacy. Students should have both access to equipment and to an education on what can be achieved with new technologies in terms of making meaning. Sefton-Green argues that they will also benefit from being exposed to the varying pedagogic strategies inscribed in different software designs.


Stroupe calls for English studies to embrace the teaching of visual and information design in addition to verbal production amidst the "multiple literacies" required in the digital age. Stroupe considers how in a culture and economy increasingly mediated via Internet
browsers, success in the "new work paradigm" depends upon the coordination of a team whose members practice a variety of complementary technical, visual, verbal and professional discourses.

Addressing concerns about the verbal being replaced by the visual, Stroupe insists that verbal literacy is not replaced or buried so much as layered into a more diverse amalgamation of literacies. Modernist writing practices do not disappear but are reconfigured in postmodern electronic environments. A hybrid approach to teaching the combination of verbal and nonverbal features in electronic texts is advocated. English studies can describe, analyse and evaluate visual discourses (e.g. the popular visual rhetorics of television, advertising and video-game animation) and the relations between words and images while maintaining a critical consciousness of the distinctive literacies of both verbal and visual codes. The social, rhetorical and technological contexts of design must also be taken into account. Stroupe describes this disciplinary process as "visualizing English".


This book offers a systematic account of what the authors term "the grammar of visual design" as a resource for making and communicating meaning. Kress and Leeuwen stress the importance of "visual literacy" in contemporary society and outline the historical marginalisation of its significance under the power structures co-aligned with the hegemony of print literacy. They note the range of semiotic modes and multimodal possibilities available for meaning-making today and declare that, although generally ignored, written texts have themselves always been characterised by multimodality.

Drawing on Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics (especially the insight that language is a social semiotic), the authors seek to explore the visual semiotic mode as something culturally specific, "motivated" in relation to the sign-maker and the context in which the sign is produced, a mode which has its own distinct meaning-making potential and relation to the production of social subjectivities and as a mode that interacts with other modes of representation.

The "grammar of visual design" is analysed in terms of six key means of communicating meaning— narrative representations, conceptual representations, designing the position of the viewer, modality, composition and material inscription. The authors reference a large and diverse range of examples from children’s books, textbook illustrations, advertising
images and photojournalism and frequently draw attention to the differences and similarities between the grammar of language and that of visual communication.

Kress and Leeuwen develop a distinctive critical terminology for the field of visual literacy. They relate the micro/formal/grammatical analysis of images with wider macro/social/contextual perspectives. For example, they explore how vectoral patterns can encode power relations (i.e. the Actor participants have greater agency than the Goal participants), how reactional patterns can encode gender performance (i.e. the man as Phenomena and the woman as Reactor), how the positioning of the viewer and use of angle can create a sense of friendly engagement with the represented participants or work to "other" them as distant objects to be viewed with detachment and how the Given-New structure has a strongly conservative effect.


Stephens' article helps teachers to formulate an approach to the analysis of visual texts, particularly in terms of how such texts construct reality. He uses three photographs — one an ad in *Dolly* magazine — to conduct a detailed analysis in terms of framing, relationship with audience, metonymy, intertextuality and a range of other visual codes. In the course of this analysis, Stephens makes a powerful argument about the centrality of visual imagery to English.


Classrooms mediated by computer technology give rise to different pedagogical practices from those available in the pen-and-paper world. In the electronic text world we can publish ourselves for audiences and purposes in our local communities without having to work through a publisher. We can revise our work without ever having to commit our mistakes to paper. Text composed on computers is 'soft' text: it is infinitely malleable. We can enter our texts at any point to revise, recast and polish before printing. We can even publish on the World Wide Web in electronic form, without committing our publications to paper. The computer-mediated writing workshop is also a promising site for collaborative writing practices, rather than individual ones.

Barnsley offers two case studies of classrooms where interesting changes in teaching practices have been brought about in part by the use of computer technology. The first involves a British comprehensive Year 9 simulating the work of a newspaper office in the development of a front page. Students work in teams and the teacher works alongside them. Students make use of multiple literacies in text production on the computers. The other classroom is a Melbourne Year 7 which produces newsletters for the incoming Year 7 students on the local high school. The newsletters are produced on laptops. Again, working together seems to be a necessary mode of working for these students. Also, the nature of the drafting process is different in this classroom: they do more drafting at the production stage of the writing process. Some are drafting to fix surface feature errors, some to add information for a reader, some to delete information to make their pages fit into the limited space available to them. All these processes can happen at the same time in a writing workshop mediated by technology. Teacher conferencing also changes as students seek ideas rather than surface corrections.

Barnsley quotes Tweddle's (1995) outline of the impact of new and evolving technologies on textual practices in the community and argues that English teachers need to reconstruct the reading and writing curriculum to make it relevant for the future. Some of her recommendations about writing curriculum are:
• that learners read and write a range of texts in a range of media;
• that individual learners might differ in the texts they read and write, the purposes for which they do so and the ways in which they work with their teachers on them;
• that learners would be taught to write as collaborators as well as individuals.


Schools and teachers have a responsibility, according to Buckingham, to ensure that learners have equal access to technological resources and that the full educational and creative potential of those resources are realised. Attention needs to be paid to the social contexts in which technology is used and to the social relationships of which it forms a part. Technology is used to construct social identities in the peer group, family and school and is a part of social processes intertwined with ideologies of, for example, gender and consumerism.

Schools can provide an impetus for learners to use digital technologies to become cultural producers in their own right. Buckingham calls for the creation of "communities of practice" that embed the use of technology in collaborative, social processes: "We need to construct new kinds of public spheres in which children can work collaboratively, share what they produce, and communicate with a wider audience" (p 11).


Creely argues that a new pedagogy is required for computer-based writing classrooms. Such a pedagogical model should integrate software considerations, individual differences, spatial and interactional considerations, genre and the processes of writing, and the grammar of the screen. The interactive and collaborative dimensions of computer environments connect to the Vygotskyan notion of the social nature of cognition and learning and need to be fostered by teachers. "Communities of writers" can be created and a work station structure can be used to encourage interaction.

Responding to the impact of new technologies on literacy practices and hence literacy education, the authors develop the notion of a "postmodern literacy pedagogy". They note that at the level of policy, little attention is given to emergent literacies. Instead the focus is on a print-oriented "functional literacy". There is a need, they argue, to come to terms with a fundamental change in textual culture. The authors endorse a view of literacy as a social and material practice that has three integrated dimensions — the "operational", the "cultural", and the "critical".

In an era of technological literacy, many of the traditional assumptions of print culture are undermined. The speech/writing opposition becomes deconstructed in digital electronic arenas heralded as "secondary orality". New significance is assigned to the image. Visual effects or the pictographic become a new organising principle for textual practice. Postmodernism, the authors contend, is the appropriate frame of reference for literacy-educational theory and practice. Hypertextuality and multimedia represent a new textual culture and the challenge is to develop a critical pedagogy that integrates practice and critique.


The authors aim to project the practices of critical pedagogy and critical literacy into cyberspace. Students can examine the word-world relation in cyberspace through the analysis of Discourses. Questions to pose include "What counts as knowledge in this textual/electronic environment?", "Who stands to benefit and who will be disadvantaged?", "What subject position is encouraged?" and "What partial version of social reality is constructed?" There is also a need to investigate the nature, legitimation, regulation and control of information in electronic environments. The networked classroom should provide students with the opportunity to explore a range of local, national, and global virtual communities and a variety of Discourses and subjectivities.
The achievement of meta-level awareness about the contingent nature of all discursive practices is central, the authors argue, to creating the possibilities for transformative praxis. Students can rewrite digital texts, actively participate in virtual communities, and create new cultural practices.


This book explores the impact of information and communications technologies on literacy education. It is underpinned by a sociocultural view of language and literacy. Literacy is understood to have three interlocking dimensions — the "operational" (which involves reading and writing in a range of contexts), the "cultural" (pertaining to understanding social practices and Discourses) and the "critical" (involving a recognition that all social practices and literacies are socially constructed and "selective" and can thus be actively transformed). The latter dimension plays a vital role in ensuring that learners are not merely socialised into received ways of doing things. The authors advocate a socioculturally informed "three dimensional" view of technological and multimodal literacy.

The 3D model is a holistic, culturally critical view of literacy-technology-learning that takes explicit account of contexts, contextuality and contextualisation.

Learners need to be immersed in social practices in which new technologies are embedded. School-based Discourses and social practices need to connect to the "mature" (i.e. insider) versions of social practice in work, leisure and civic life in the world beyond the school. Students should engage in multiliterate textual practices in digital electronic environments. Teachers and students also need to adopt a socially critical, informed stance toward information and communications technologies in school and society.

The authors note the schism that exists between policy documents that privilege "back to basics" versions of print literacy and performance against benchmarks and research that stresses the importance of new technologies, the social nature of literacy practices, multimodality, the cultural and critical dimensions of literacy and higher-order skills such as problem solving and information processing. Policies on literacy, they argue, need to connect with the "information society", "new work order", and
"communities of practice associated with new information and communications technologies".

Greater attention will be given in the future, according to the authors, to integrated cross-curriculum and theme-based units of work. Language and literacy practices can and should be extended across the curriculum in ways that add value through the appropriate transfer of knowledge and competence.


The technological and information revolution, according to Luke, is changing the way we communicate and interact socially. Through the teaching of a "critical multiliteracy", students can be both proficient users of technology and aware of the larger social contexts and consequences of communication technologies. Students need to be able to navigate in hyperlinked environments, think laterally, create multimodal texts, be critically literate about the texts and social practices in cyberspace, and engage in intercultural communication in global virtual communities.

Luke argues that students should be given the opportunity to produce critically literate readings of representations of information technologies in popular culture texts. Questions to address include "Who are the technology users?", "Why are they predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon, and seemingly middle-class?", and "How are women portrayed as technology users?" Consideration is also given to the pedagogy behind networked classrooms, including group work, collaborative problem-solving, peer tutoring and interdisciplinarity.


Snyder considers the implications of electronic textuality (in particular, hypertext) for how we define and teach literacy practices. For example, hypertextual reading practices are non-linear and involve active readers making their own distinct reading paths and "navigating" in a web of interconnections (an "electronic labyrinth").

Electronic texts are fluid, dynamic and often multi-authored. Snyder asks how this alters our understanding of authorship and composition as formed by print culture. There is a shift from the single-authored and "singular" printed work to the networked, dynamic and open-ended world of electronic textuality. Writing becomes collaborative, "multi-vocal"
and intertextual. The clear distinction between the writer and the reader in print culture dissolves in an ever changing writing-reading online experience.

The pedagogical implications of this are of key concern in Snyder’s study. Electronic textuality calls for nothing less than the rethinking of teaching, learning and pedagogy. In line with developments such as constructivism in educational psychology, new technologies reconfigure the teacher as a facilitator of student discovery, collaboration and research. Students will need to become independent learners and associative thinkers. Greater demands will be placed on them in terms of interdisciplinary projects and the synthesising and design skills required to draw together information from multiple sources and create cognitively complex "conceptual webs".

The teaching of writing will need to give increased emphasis to the multimodal nature of contemporary textuality, the hybridising of genres and the intertextual nature of communication. Snyder predicts that the new discursive form of the "collage" (involving citation, appropriation, juxtaposition and multiple explanations) may start to rival the linear argument of the traditional school essay as the pre-eminent form of written communication and assessment in academic literacy domains.


This collection of essays, edited by Ilana Snyder, addresses the impact of new information technologies and new textual practices and subjectivities associated with information technologies on the teaching and learning of multi-literacies. Gunther Kress argues that the shifts from page to screen and book to image-oriented culture involve the following developments:

(i) the computer screen foregrounds the visual elements of page design, often ignored in the printed text, and hence demands a greater level of visual literacy;
(ii) the printed book represents a coherent, stable world-view and a closed conception of knowledge, whereas hypertext, multimedia texts and the Internet destabilise these assumptions;
(iii) there is a shift from the descriptions and narrations of language to the displays of images and layout;
(iv) there is a shift from the idea of using a stable language to the notion that representational resources are themselves remade and transformed in use; and
(v) there is a need to explore the interactions and integration of different semiotic modes in order to effectively analyse multimodal semiotic objects and understand how we cognitively process multimodal texts.

Snyder, focusing on the pedagogical implications of hypertext, considers the way it can be used for discovery and collaborative learning and the way it encourages associative thinking and border crossing: "Because hypertext easily accommodates interdisciplinary approaches to literary studies, teachers can use it to develop and extend their students' ability to think critically and make connections between discrete bodies of information" (p 135-136).

Catherine Beavis advocates a wide definition of culture and cultural inclusivity for the English curriculum. Beavis also insists that rethinking the English syllabus in contemporary terms should mean more than just the accreditation of the emergent textual forms of postmodernity. What is required is a whole new "attitudinal stance" in relation to texts, one which is willing to consider the politics of representation, to be "critically literate" about all forms of meaning-making and to actively negotiate with the meanings of texts: "More than an expansion of the lexicon of texts, a reorientation towards reading and a text study that engages with issues of representation, context, framing and ideology is required" (p 245). For Beavis, the literacies vital in a multiliterate society are: multimedia authoring skills, multimedia critical analysis, cyberspace exploration strategies, cyberspace navigation skills, and the capacity to negotiate and deconstruct visual and verbal signs.


*English for Tomorrow* is a forward-looking examination of how English teaching prepares students for the workplace. Students need to be critical readers and writers of information technology texts. Teachers need to consider how word processors influence the process of composition and to integrate new technologies into the English classroom by:

* taking advantage of the research opportunities offered by CD-ROM and Internet-based services;

* using electronic sources of information to enhance the process of comparing and synthesising information drawn from different texts;
* using the World Wide Web to extend the possibilities for communicating with, and publishing for, real audiences across the world;

* encouraging students to discern the features of electronic textuality (multimodality, fluidity, interactivity, informality, and non-linearity);

* encouraging collaborative learning through the creation of multi-authored texts;

* teaching students to read texts multimodally, exploring the interaction of different semiotic modes and interpreting the ambiguities created by that interaction;

* building on the often highly developed visual literacy of students by encouraging the creation of informational texts that have a highly visual format and asking students to consider how images have become the basic vehicle for explanatory work;

* allowing students to enter MUDs (multi user domains) where they can adopt virtual personae and interact in a virtual simulated environment. Teachers can ask students to consider the nature of new forms of virtual communities and identities and how text-based MUDs are new forms of collaboratively written literature; and

* encouraging students to be "critically literate" about electronic texts.

The authors outline key changes in English teaching: greater emphasis placed on the patterns and characteristics of spoken English; engagement with a wider set of genres; exploration of how a single text is re-written across national boundaries, genres and languages; exploration of multi-generic textuality; greater emphasis placed on researching the social and discursive contexts (both in terms of production and reception) of texts; recognition of the multimodality of communication practices; accreditation of film, video and electronic texts as objects of study in their own right; greater emphasis on the politics and ideologies of representation and on "writing back" activities; and greater emphasis placed on the explicit teaching of the features of text medium, type and use.


This article explores how technology can be integrated into the English curriculum so as to achieve worthwhile pedagogical goals. Russell claims that students need to be explicitly aware of the differences between non-linear or multi-linear writing and traditional forms of writing.
Hence any lesson or set of lessons focused on discussing and creating multi-authored hypertext should begin by examining narrative form. Modeling and demonstration are important instructional strategies for teaching how to create hypertextual texts.

During the process of composing hypertexts, teachers should make observational records. When the final product is assessed, it should, according to Russell, be assessed on screen and through an evaluation sheet with categories for such things as use made of hyperlinks and content. Students can also present their hypertexts to an audience as a performance. Both the pedagogy and assessment criteria must be suitable for the digital age and thus pay attention to both images and words (and their interaction).

Beavis, C (1998). “Pressing (the right?) buttons: Literacy and technology, crisis and continuity.” In English in Australia, 123, 42-51.

Beavis, who has proposed that computer games be studied alongside other texts as part of the English curriculum, explores the rhetoric of crisis in the media involving claims that computer games damage the literacy development of students. The strong connection between textual consumption and the formation of identity in this rhetoric of crisis is noted by Beavis. For Beavis, new technologies create new texts and, as it follows, new identities or "subjectivities" in society.

The subjectivities of young people can no longer, according to Beavis, be reliably constructed in the interests of certain sections of society by virtue of the texts presented to them in school contexts. What is now required is a "pedagogy of everyday life" that can deal with the texts, technologies and identities of contemporary consumer culture. A critical literacy can be applied to computer games, and students can examine questions of design, narrative, ideology and reader/viewer positioning. Emphasis can be placed on extending literacy practices in a digital world.
5. English Studies and the "New Work Order".


Farrell considers what it might mean to teach literacy for the workplace. The "Workplace Revolution" involving globalised marketplaces and transnational corporations has, according to Farrell, altered the ways in which learning and knowledge are understood in work environments. "High performance" and internationally competitive workplaces are referring to themselves as "learning organisations". Traditional work hierarchies have been superseded by problem-solving teams. These changes are impacting significantly on workplace literacy practices.

Adopting a model of literacy as a socially embedded ideological practice, Farrell insists that the workplace revolution does not call for an increase in the so-called "neutral" literacy skills of individual workers; rather, it involves changing the literacy practices of workplaces and consequently changing the identities of workers and workplace cultures. In fact, Farrell argues that work practices and literacy practices are practically indistinguishable.

James Paul Gee’s concept of Discourse as patterns of language use which reflect ways of being in the world is used by Farrell to explore the "problem solver" of contemporary workplaces. Literacy teaching in relation to the workplace must, Farrell argues, not simply be about learning new (incremental) literacy skills but be fundamentally about facilitating awareness and negotiation of workplace values and working identities. In particular, Farrell believes that literacy educators have a responsibility to help students engage critically in the socio-literacy practices of workplaces.


Effective communication skills and an understanding new workplace cultures are vital for success in the restructured economy. This book explores how the *National Framework of English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Competence* can be applied in training courses. The key themes of the *National Framework* are noted:

* Communication: relating to language, literacy and numeracy;
* **Collaboration:** this is the hallmark of new workplaces that value teamwork, multi-skilling and flexible specialization; and

* **Culture:** new workplace cultures are designed to encourage members of the organization to identify with its image and mission.

In the restructured economy, a new model of "work-as-culture" emerges. The new workplace-of-excellence involves such things as "flattened hierarchies", the valuing of diversity, teamwork, problem-solving and employee participation in decision-making. Ethnic, language and gender differences amongst members of the organisation are embraced as valuable human resources amidst multilingual and multicultural contexts and international competition for differentiated markets.

A partnership between education and workplace training is advocated for the creation of "corporate cultural" individuals. In implementing the competency standards of the National Framework, attention must be paid to capturing the diversity of backgrounds, knowledge and skills of employees and viewing language as social interaction rather than as "form". Learners must be able to shift in and out of the various language demands of the workplace, including procedural, technical, personal, cooperative, systems and public communication for such things as using technology and interacting in groups. The three phases of assisted learning, independent competence and collaborative work structure the learning process and learning should be a dialogue that involves cross-cultural communication.

Learners need to acquire a *repertoire* for meeting the English demands in a workplace, be aware of *complementarity* in terms of the different discourse skills members bring to a team project and achieve *comparability* in terms of the systems of measuring the comparability of outcomes. Competency standards are designed to identify the things a learner can bring to a context, not an individual’s deficits.


Informed by socio-cultural approaches to language and literacy, this book examines the organisational discourses of the new global capitalism that involves new forms of production, a greater focus on the selling environment and the servicing of more differentiated markets. New
workplaces promote flexibility, teamwork, multi-skilling, distributed systems and the involvement of workers in the processes of organisational design and policy development.

The authors of this book perform "critical language awareness" and "critical literacy" by analysing the assumptions underlying the language of the "new work order". The vocabulary accompanying workplace reform, such as "collaboration", "participation" and "empowerment", is suggestive of a commitment to democracy. Yet, as the authors point out, this language is inherently contradictory because, while it preaches organisational democracy and empowerment, it does not really permit workers to question some of the assumptions underlying the new business capitalism.

The authors are particularly interested in how the "new work order" influences the social practices of language, literacy and learning— and they it. New literacy practices and cultures in the workplace are actually about the creation of new social relationships and identities designed to dissolve the separation of lives outside work and lives inside work. The new work culture is described as a new Discourse (i.e. patterns of language use that encode ways of being and thinking in the world) that creates "team workers", "portfolio people", "knowledge workers", "lifelong learners", "global citizens" and "problem solvers".

Changes in workplaces and the emergence of a "knowledge economy" have major implications, according to the authors, for the nature of schools and schooling. Schools will be expected to produce suitable subjects for new-capitalist Discourse. The four educational goals in new capitalism are:

(i) thinking like an "expert-novice";
(ii) technical and communication tools useable on site in the actual contexts of work;
(iii) discourses based on core norms and values of the new capitalism; and
(iv) systems understanding (i.e. holistic awareness).

Education will increasingly be organised not around disciplinary titles but around themes, systems, problems, and/ or sites and the shift from the "banking" model of education to the constructivist classroom will be made complete. What is the role of literacy educators in all this? Literacy education can assist learners to access and engage in the new socioliteracy and sociotechnical practices of the workplace, thereby becoming new working identities. Literacy teachers must also ensure that there is a role for "critique" in literacy learning and work against the erosion of civic spaces concomitant with the decline of the nation state. The authors claim that learners need to be exposed to
a "Discourse map" of their societies which involves the juxtapositioning of different Discourses that enables comparison and critique.


The contributors to this book examine the impact of new technologies on workplaces as literate environments. It is argued that the teaching of workplace communication should not be just about a "functional" literacy that is uncritical. The editors claim in the introduction that the collection is underpinned by a conception of "workplace electronic literacy" that includes dexterity and critical rhetorical skill with texts, as well as flexible use of electronic sources, storage media, and word-processing programs" (p xiii). They see electronic literacy as moving beyond the traditional label of "functional literacy" to include social processes at work, an attitude of adaptability, collaborative writing, visual rhetorics and hypertext design.

Networked classrooms can not only enact theories of postmodern pedagogy. They can simulate the networked communications of contemporary workplaces and "virtual offices". Students need to experience the "authentic" conditions of technological reading and writing in corporate cultures and develop multiple literacies.

**6. English and Middle Years Schooling.**


Cormack draws on a wide range of literature to summarise the nine needs of early adolescence:

(i) adjustment to changes: physical, social, emotional and intellectual;
(ii) growth towards independence (combined with the concomitant need for secure relationships);
(iii) experience in responsible decision making;
(iv) a positive self-confidence achieved through significant success;
(v) a sense of identity, including personal and social values;
(vi) experience of social success;
(vii) thinking in new ways that are more abstract and reflective;
(viii) greater awareness and skill in interacting with the social and political world; and
(ix) the establishment and maintenance of relationships with significant adults.


In this report on investigations into the teaching of visual texts, the authors note the learning needs that relate to adolescent developmental needs that have been identified in the literature on successful educational practices. These are:

(i) a curriculum and teaching methodology that focus on the learners — their self-esteem, interests and social skills;
(ii) a relevant, practical, integrated and inclusive curriculum that applies learning to real life;
(iii) negotiation in all aspects of the curriculum and research projects to develop initiative and independence;
(iv) a safe and supportive environment that allows for experimentation and independence.

The authors believe that systematic efforts must be made to bridge the increasing gap between school curriculum and the aspirations and experiences of many students. Through the analysis of images in popular culture and the media, students can learn that knowledge, identity and values are constructed and can be critiqued and resisted.


Students experiencing early adolescence are, according to the authors, often deeply influenced by the mass media, confused by self-doubt and self-conscious about their appearance. They argue for the need to organise curriculum and activities to help develop a positive self-esteem during these critical years. Middle school students need group work to help them develop social skills, choices of activities to help them explore their many interests, and units of study that help them take responsibility for their own learning. English classrooms should centre on learners and learning, affirm and build upon the prior knowledge of students, and involve such things as cooperative learning, discovery learning and peer tutoring.
7. English and the Diversity of Learners.


McKay's case study research centres on the patterns of participation of four Aboriginal girls in an urban high school/ESL setting and recommends the following:

• being aware of cultural differences;
• being supportive in classroom and learning situations;
• encouraging students to share aspects of their own culture and valuing this knowledge and their mother tongue;
• designing appropriate tasks to enable students to utilise and draw upon their own heritage as well as to learn more about their own culture through successful role models, songs, poetry, drama, sport, art, stories etc;
• designing appropriate tasks and activities to support favoured learning styles — treasure hunts, map exercises, allowing time for aesthetic expressions and excursions;
• understanding student usage of avoidance strategies;
• providing plenty of time modeling, explaining, giving plenty of examples and activities which enhance understanding of western written cultural genres;
• watching out for successful and engaging learning experiences and trying to build on these;
• taking time to develop and nurture trust.


Burridge ranges over a number of important principles in the education of indigenous students. These include firstly the need to involve the local indigenous community and to involve Aboriginal people in the design and teaching of courses and units. Aboriginal educators should be brought in, where possible, when teaching focuses on cultural matters. Aboriginal people should also be consulted on the choice of resources. Other issues canvassed are:

• sensitivity to terminology when teaching Aboriginal perspectives;
• different world views between Western and Aboriginal people, differences which nevertheless need to be seen in the context of differences between Aboriginal communities themselves;
• the importance of being sensitive to, and utilising where possible, Aboriginal English in appropriate contexts.

**Curriculum Corporation (nd/post-1993). Langwij comes to school: promoting literacy among speakers of Aboriginal English and Australian Creoles. Canberra: DEET.**

Though tending to use examples based in primary schools, this booklet covers important general material on the issue of teaching students whose first language is Aboriginal English. It stresses three areas of importance:

• **awareness** — a section which discusses the linguistic features of Aboriginal English, as well as concepts such as pidgin, creole and dalect. The issue of prestige and of Standard Australian English (SAE) is also discussed.

• **acknowledgement** — the key to improving the performance of Aboriginal students is in accepting the language they bring to school and using it to build competence in SAE. Four case study programs are explored.

• **action** — discusses three areas of action:
  
  (i) — bi-lingual education (based on an NT case study);
  
  (ii) — a model of English language acquisition for Aboriginal students (ELA), a model based on negotiation and planning/programming the contextual features BEFORE the content features;
  
  (iii) — planning for Aboriginal literacy based on the experiences of the Early Literacy In-service Course (ELIC), which emphasises, among other things, relevance, particular teaching strategies and family participation.


McLean's article deals with the situation of ESL students within the mainstream classroom. She deals with three main areas: oracy, reading, writing.

**Oracy.** The big issue here is confidence. McLean suggests allowing time for students to write answers before responding verbally. Prepared readings are also recommended: choral readings, jazz chants, readers' theatre.
Reading. Again, confidence is the issue. McLean suggests the use of *Three Level Reading Guides* (Morris and Stewart-Dore, 1984). The importance of cultural knowledge and appropriate pre-reading activities are especially stressed.

Writing. This is where ESL weaknesses are most evident. Explicit teaching about language is recommended, as is frequent conferencing on linguistic issues.


This research centred on five students in Year 12 over six months to document the characteristics of successful ESL learners. The focal point was the plateau level identified in ESL assessment instruments. The findings included:
- successful students had backgrounds of ESL and EFL instruction;
- the plateau level of Band 5 on the ESL Bandscales did not correlate with student success in Year 12: students were successful even without moving beyond this level;
- background knowledge in subject areas may compensate for weak English skills;
- good listening, high motivation and good study habits were common;
- strong work ethic and strong family expectations were characteristic;
- school-based assessment, specifically in the subject English, with close support from ESL teachers, may have been important in their success, since achievement in school-based assessment was higher than in externally administered tests.


This project aimed to develop a model for bilingual education which would assist students with little or no previous formal education to cope with the demands of a secondary education system. It involved the teaching of specific subjects to selected Vietnamese students in both English and Vietnamese. Positive results included:
improvements in student confidence, self-esteem, attitude to school work, and adaptation to Australian classrooms;
- teachers reported enhanced concept development due to being introduced to concepts and processes in L1 before having to cope in English;
- explicit teaching of paragraphing and cohesion in L1 facilitated their teaching in English;
- support and involvement of parents and the wider community is important;
- the development of L1 must be seen as a crucial goal in its own right, not just as a step towards L2;
- the ESL teacher should be complementing bilingual education.


The regular classroom teacher, according to Early, has a responsibility to help ESL learners develop oral fluency as well as literacy. Teachers should create tasks in the light of the sound and established principles of language and content learning:

(i) the background knowledge and abilities learners bring with them provide a foundation for learning;
(ii) language and content should be learned through meaningful interactive experiences in supportive social contexts;
(iii) students should be provided with opportunities to develop language and thinking skills across the fullest range of knowledge structures;
(iv) students should learn language in a way that interrelates listening, speaking, reading and writing. Graphic representations of knowledge can serve to display connections between ideas and experiences, and oral and written language; and
(v) language development should build upon the students' existing language abilities.

Early advocates the use of "key visuals" to help ESL learners understand content. In particular, the use of picture books provides opportunities for eliciting descriptive and problem-solving language: "The wordless picture books afforded opportunities to discuss literary and social studies concepts and themes and to produce sustained discourse" (p 28).
Solid English examines research on the language learning of Aboriginal students in Western Australian schools. The focus of the book is on Aboriginal students who speak Aboriginal English (the "home talk" of many Aboriginal people) and who need to learn Standard Australian English ("school talk") as a second dialect to use in non-Aboriginal contexts. It is noted that Aboriginal English must be seen as a different, rather than deficient, dialect of English: "Instead of trying to erase or ‘correct’ the home talk Aboriginal (and other) students bring to school, teachers need to broaden each student's linguistic repertoire" (p 13).

Teachers should teach and promote the development of code-switching capacities. Students need to recognise the situation, recognise the language required for that situation, and have the linguistic repertoire to switch accordingly. There are a range of instructional strategies recommended. Teachers should explicate the differences between Aboriginal English and Standard Australian English, model conversational uses of Standard Australian English, and appeal to Aboriginal learning styles through such things as observational learning, interactive classrooms, hands-on activities, and practice in "authentic" contexts.
8. The Relationship between English and Contemporary Australian Civic and Cultural Perspectives.

Davies, B (2000). *(In)scribing body/landscape relations*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira.

Analysing a range of cultural texts and discourses, Davies develops a theory of body/landscape relations in which bodies are understood as taking up their material existence within landscapes, and as landscapes. Particular attention is given to how environmental discourses and practices inscribe bodies, landscapes and body/landscape relations.


This book draws together a variety of environmentalist positions and theorises their contribution to critical theory, literature and popular culture. The interpretive paradigm of "ecocriticism" is applied to a wide range of texts and discourses. The aim is to achieve an interdisciplinary "cultural environmentalism" in the humanities. Representations of nature are explored in terms of their intersection with questions of gender, race, economics, sustainability, politics and postmodernism.


Lankshear and Knobel argue for the vital interconnection between critical literacy and active and informed citizenship. The postmodern and globalising logic that challenges the maintenance of informed political and civil involvement must be countered by the teaching of critical social literacy. Critical literacy needs to be applied in particular to the media and to cyberspace. Students can develop a "sociological imagination" through the practice of discourse critique and the creation of alternative readings and text productions. Through the juxtapositioning of different texts and discourses, the contingent nature of the world-views texts promote is foregrounded. From this realisation, students can actively transform texts, cultures and values.

McLeod offers a reconfiguration of writing and the imagination that connects with postmodernist challenges to Romantic conceptions of authorship and the work of art. For McLeod, writing is a social action and imagination itself is produced within a social and cultural context. McLeod critiques the popular belief that imagination springs forth from the inner well of creativity residing in the individual author: "Imagination, like argument, I see growing first as a conversation. Imagination is socially constructed, not something magically generated from within" (p 105). McLeod counsels English teachers to foster a critical social imagination in their writing workshops that is not limited by outmoded notions of personal inspiration.

McLeod's dialogic and intersubjective view of imaginative writing rejects the model of the autonomous and unified self of liberal humanist discourse, instead locating the subject as a nodal point in a network of social relationships. McLeod calls for teachers to allow students to write on topics relevant to their lives and ensure that all writing tasks are contextualised and purposeful.


Moss explores the impact of gender on reading experience, claiming that feminist pedagogy should highlight the social strategies that readers bring to the text and pay attention to the context in which any one reading takes place. The implications of this for the practice of English teaching are considered.

Moss raises doubts about the value of stressing a personal response to texts: to accept that response to texts is socially constructed is to accept that the search for the individual and unique experience is illusory. He wonders whether we should replace the personal response principle with an ethnography of reading? An ethnography of reading would stress the role which diverse social and cultural practices play in shaping how texts get read (p 188).
The poststructuralist/ critical literacy paradigm informs Moss' perspective. This paradigm views language, and the discourses of gender, as that which constructs the very identity or subjectivity of the reader. Reading thus becomes the performance of a social subjectivity. Moss foregrounds the social, cultural and intertextual histories of readers, the critical analysis of the ways texts get mobilised by readers for various social (and inevitably political) purposes and the interrogation of the regimes of value that privilege certain texts.

The characteristics of gendered writing and perceptions, and especially the gaps, silences and excluded terms within them, are of interest to Moss as she reads into them not only the gender ideology of texts, but also into the gendered perceptions that shape the reception of texts and certain genres.


Pradl considers what democracy has to do with the reading and teaching of literature. He argues for the importance of viewing reading as a social act and of encouraging democratic relationships within reading classrooms. Negotiation, dialogue, conversation and listening skills are seen as vital ingredients for creating a learning environment in which meaning(s) are produced in a collaborative enterprise. The macro spheres of participatory democracy and civil society can be both reflected in, and ensured by, the microcosm of the classroom.

Responding to the contemporary experience of multiculturalism and postmodern theories of dialogicality and the construction of the "other", Pradl proposes that teachers should model a welcoming response to alternative realities and the inclusion of voices that are not their own. Pradl notes that those in dominant cultural positions have, throughout history, silenced narratives about transformation, possibility, change and alternative ways of knowing. The responsibility of English teachers is to ensure that silenced voices and narratives are brought out into the open.

The pedagogy underpinning Pradl’s "reading for democracy" model is constructivist. Students are active makers of their own meanings and engage in discovery and cooperative learning. The teacher does not recite a monologue involving the transmission of the "correct" textual interpretation and "Literature" is not placed on a pedestal but seen as part of an ongoing social process. The teacher plays the role of listener and of creator of a facilitative social script. The English curriculum is organized...
democratically in terms of problem solving, active learning, agenda negotiation and interpersonal communication.

9. English and Gender Issues


This book examines the construction of gendered subjectivity through social language practices. Gilbert argues that literacy classrooms should aim to have the link between language, gender and power made explicit and to consider how dominant and narrow textual constructions of femininity and masculinity might be fractured, resisted, parodied and rewritten. Gilbert also claims that literacy educators and students need to interrogate how gender is implicated in classroom pedagogy and discourse.

The kinds of questions that Gilbert counsels literacy teachers to pose include "How is gender constructed at particular historical moments within different cultural groups?" and "How do readers adopt gendered reading formations?" Operating within a critical literacy paradigm, Gilbert assumes that all language practices are social practices, that texts are evidence of the values and social practices of particular cultures and that there is a strong link between texts and the construction of identities and desires. English teachers should prompt students to explore how texts ask us to take up different subject positions, to consider how they may have adopted gendered reading and writing practices and to explore how speech genres activate relationships of unequal power along gender lines.

The link between the gender equity and curriculum reform in English is a key interest throughout the book. Are women’s stories, histories and biographies reflected in the text selection in English? What kind of gender politics is encoded in the reading materials provided to students? Gilbert argues that we need to challenge an authorised "canon" for the English classroom and support the construction of stories and texts that give women alternative lives and futures. Students should be introduced to a range of cross-cultural and historically varied texts in the English classroom. The juxtapositioning and comparison of such texts helps to make visible the different ways that gender is constructed.
Are the forms of literacy that the English classroom supports and endorses — forms that girls seem to be particularly competent in — valued in the workplace and community? Gilbert claims that students, both girls and boys, should master the genres and speaking positions of real power and influence that are valued and recognized in public sphere life. Greater emphasis should thus be placed on expository writing and less on fiction and narrative.


Alloway and Gilbert explore the complexity of issues associated with the "boys and literacy" agenda and insist that there are a number of "dangerous" aspects within the field. There is a danger of seeing the issue as just a matter of gender, rather than something that intersects with race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and rurality. There is a danger of working on boys’ issues at the expense of girls and attempting to "masculinise" the literacy classroom. There is the danger of seeing masculinity as fixed, given and immutable rather than as a social construct and there is a danger of assuming that literacy itself is not a social construct and that thus boys’ literacy "problems" are individual problems rather than social ones.

There is a need to address how masculinity and literacy have been constructed socially as antithetical. Critically literate English classrooms should explore the interplay between gender, class, race, culture and literacy.


Kowaluk claims that too much focus has been given in discussions of the "boys and literacy" issue to the social construction of gender and critically literate readings of gender (as in the work of Nola Alloway and Pam Gilbert). The critical literacy focus on masculinity and gender constructs has ignored the need for individual skills-based remediation and the other determinants of performance, such as biological differences between the sexes. Boys, for example, mature physically and emotionally at a slower rate than girls.

For Kowaluk, there is a need to not focus on boys as a monolithic group but to see a range of individual and social impediments to achievement. There is also a need to teach a "functional" basic literacy, which may involve skills-based remediation, before a critical
literacy program is implemented.


In this article, the influence of particular versions of masculinity on how boys learn to relate and the possibilities for interrogating these kinds of masculinities in the English classroom are explored. Martino is interested in the role of sexuality on the way boys define their masculinity and especially how this impacts on boys’ involvement in studying English.

In a critically literate English classroom, Martino claims, hegemonic masculinities and homophobic discourses can be disrupted. The intersections of class, sexuality and gender in the production of particular readings of texts and the world can also be explored.


This report was based on empirical research by OFSTED into secondary schools where boys were achieving highly. Basically, what the Inspectors found in these schools was good English teaching practice. In general, there were lower expectations of boys in schools, but in the “successful schools”, they found:

• clear objectives that the boys understood, well-chosen methodologies — especially high quality wide reading with high teacher interest;
• boys being convinced of the value of what they were doing;
• greater emphasis on and greater potential for success in speaking and listening, computers, teaching about language, media and the use of non-literary texts;
• assessment methods that avoided being highly critical of boys’ efforts.


Thomas argues that is a mistake to aim for equality of performance in English. Boys and girls are differently literate. He uses the analogy of driving — boys like gizmos like cars, they drive too fast, they like too much the power and the command and control situation. Thomas says they drive narrative like this, too, always producing narratives where action is virtue. Teachers need to guide their Motive, Manner, Mood and Morality by making
effective prompts — to guide them away from replicating restrictive narrative modes. Thomson supplies examples of student work and teacher prompts in each of the four Ms.

10. Strategies for the Practice of English Teaching.


Adams in this article attempts to get the concept of the "imaginative recreation" of literature "back to its roots" in the original conception of Stratta, Dixon and Wilkinson in their 1973 book Patterns of Language. He reminds us that Stratta, Dixon and Wilkinson discuss "imaginative re–creation" only in relation to the shared novel and recommend it as a way of helping students to read and interpret novels which they would have difficulty reading alone. As defined by Stratta, Dixon and Wilkinson, imaginative re–creation asked students to "imaginatively re–create for [themselves] the experience of the novelist".

Despite the "grab bag" of activities that imaginative re-creation has become, Adams reminds us that the original formulation and the original activities required students to focus on both form and meaning. Adams feels that what has been lost in the popularization of imaginative re-creation is a controlling sense of purpose. He argues, for example, that imaginative re-creation should not be thought of as going beyond the bounds of the text, as in adding a chapter to a novel, for example. Imaginative re–creation activities, he argues, are perhaps best thought of as exercises in translation, in which both form and meaning are key in the exploration. At the heart of all imaginative re–creation activities, as Stratta, Dixon and Wilkinson observed twenty five years ago, are the complementary and inter–dependent processes of "interpretation by re–creation" and "re–creation by interpretation".


Atwell is a well-known teacher of 7th/ 8th grade classes. This book gives great detail about her approaches to writing and reading "workshop" classes. In relation to reading, her program works around:

* wide reading, supplemented by the teacher's own experience and interests widening the students' repertoire;
* reading conferences between student and teacher;
* written conversations between students and teacher on student reading;
* mini-lessons; and
* detailed record keeping.

In relation to writing, her program includes:
* large amounts of time devoted to writing;
* a conducive environment;
* set daily routines;
* mini-lessons on: procedures/ writing as craft (techniques, style, genre)/ writing as skills (spelling, punctuation, grammar, editing). Mini-lessons can range from ten minute lectures to twenty minute interaction, but each lesson contains an element of teacher input on one of the three areas;
* helping students develop their own ideas;
* daily conferences with students;
* detailed record keeping, including status-of-the-class records on where every student "is" on their pieces;
* modelling and demonstrating writing; and
* helping students to become self-editors.


This book considers how simulations can be applied to the English classroom to enable students to explore language use in social contexts and enter constructed worlds. Participants engage in role-play in simulated environments. The roles adopted function within a structure, created by the simulation designer, which represents a real or actual situation. Bambrough insists on the significance of the "debrief" in which students reflect on such things as the roles, communicative processes and problem-solving strategies adopted during the simulation. Simulations, Bambrough argues, provide students with engaging and "authentic" contexts for learning and develop skills in communication, management, decision-making and interaction.


Beavis communicates the findings of a three year study of changing teacher attitudes and practices in response to the revisions in the English curriculum in Victoria. Key
developments such as the shift from literature to text, poststructuralist literary theory, and expanded forms of assessment are examined in terms of their impact on classroom practice.

Beavis recorded nine teachers’ experience of the new course. Most were initially operating under Leavisite and New Critical versions of the subject and found that poststructuralism disrupted assumptions about canonical texts and the privileging of certain genres and revealed texts to be partial and ideological. Most teachers continued to include classic texts for reasons such as cultural heritage and cultural capital. However, there was concomitantly a trend towards using less canonical texts.

There were also changed understandings of reading from "personal response" to reading the ideology of texts and the way texts position readers. Teachers adopted the principles that all readings are contextual and that a text should be analysed in terms of its social context. Concepts such as intertextuality, gendered representations and the juxtapositioning of texts were also taken up by some teachers.


The authors feel that "process pedagogy" has only ever been partially implemented, and in some schools it has had little or no impact beyond the lip service paid to "drafting". They draw on their own experience to discuss aspects of "process" and of the "growth" model generally. Their experience was that students were not short of ideas for writing. And then, having negotiated a topic or focus for their writing they were prepared to write a first draft, and to "conference" it in groups. These conferences sometimes included the teacher, sometimes not. Brian Johnston's three step approach to responding to first drafts (English in Australia, 62) provided a useful framework for both teachers and students to discuss their writing. The authors found that after modeling how to apply Johnston's approach, students were able to follow the three steps independently when discussing each other's writing.

After "conferencing" their writing, students then went through the process of "revising and editing", "product and publication", "reader response", and "writer’s attitude" — the stages of the "writing process" as set out by R. D. Walshe in his article in English in Australia 62. Doecke and McClenaghan argue that it was perhaps the activity of reflection and evaluation in which students (and teachers) engaged at the end of the process that represented the most significant departure from traditional school practices.
The necessity for group work also changed their classrooms into something radically different from what their colleagues were doing in other classes.

Critics have objected to process writing as a personalist discourse that prevents students gaining any sense of themselves as social actors, or understanding the social character of language and literacy — a discourse that posits individual "experience" as somehow existing apart from what schooling and society tell us we are, and as prior to language. Critics of "process" (and "growth") argue that in attempting to explore this elusive dimension of individual sensibility and values, teachers have deluded both themselves and their students about the nature of schooling and society. They have, in short, been engaged in an ideological game, to the benefit of middle-class children (the ones who already speak the language of "experience") and to the continuing detriment of other social and cultural groups.

Doecke and McClenaghan argue that teachers DO need to be responsive to the needs of students as individuals and to attend to what they think and feel — this response, in itself, opens up the possibility of a critical perspective on language and schooling. Moreover, they found their students reveling in the linguistic possibilities of a range of genres, few of which could be termed "personal", displaying a subtle sense of audience and purpose, and displaying their already acute knowledge of genres or text types.

The authors argue that their classroom practices implied a very sophisticated understanding of the linguistic nature of experience and the lives of our students as "textual beings" — a far more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between language and experience than is reflected in the work of critics of "process pedagogy". That sophistication is shown by the way "process pedagogy" encourages students to explore questions about language and experience. The classroom thereby becomes a site for the joint construction of knowledges about language and literacy, rather than "dummy runs" that reduce students to parroting pre-existing (and officially sanctioned) genres. Their approach also goes against the grain of much current thinking about curriculum, especially the focus on "outcomes".


Thomson sees one of the biggest advantages to keeping a journal is that it is so comfortable for the students that they can focus all their attention on what they are saying rather than on their ways of saying it.

Why keep a journal?
• The only way that any of us comes to understand new information, concepts and our own experience is by talking and writing about them in our own comfortable, "expressive" language, either or both to ourselves or/and to interested and trusted others.
• For concept formation, for real understanding of abstract ideas to take place, children need to make explicit their thinking to themselves and verbalise their conclusions in their own comfortable, "expressive" language, in talk and/or writing.
• It overcomes issues of peer-group pressure in class discussion.
• It helps students to reflect on their learning so they are able to articulate for themselves what they have learnt and how they have learnt it.

Thomson believes students should be assessed on what they have learnt from writing the journal, and this can be done through an interview. He lists different types of journals and their differing functions:

• *learning logs* — to make preparation notes for work in class; make their first responses to activities in class; monitor the stages and processes of their own learning; reflect on and evaluate work that they have done in class;
• *writing logs* — to record ideas for writing activities; for word banks and drafts for pieces of writing; for reflections on specific aspects of the writing process both during and after the construction of texts;
• *reading journals* — to record immediate responses to completed texts, as well as responses to texts during the process of reading them, and metacognitive reflections at the completion of a text.


Tucker refers to wide reading as "one of the most obvious advances and one of the more accessible teaching methods advocated by the post-Dartmouth 'new English'". He regrets that wide reading did not flourish in practice. When reading is set, the one novel shared by the whole class is still the predominant activity, which he calls "death by a thousand worksheets". When reading is seen as a social activity which students enjoy when they select their own texts, the pleasure principle, he argues, works in the teacher's favour. When students use methods such as the reader's journal for private responses and
the varieties of classroom talk for more public thinking, teachers can demonstrate how students progress as readers and by keeping simple records, know where their students have gone and need to go in the future. This way, instead of the teacher wrestling with the impossible task of individualising the program, the students are doing it. Teachers can still balance student selected wide reading with one or two carefully selected whole class texts, book boxes of their own selection and their reading aloud of novellas or short stories. This is obviously important in giving all students access to genres that they are uncertain about or prejudiced against.


Watson advocates the use of picture books in secondary classrooms. He sees at least two good reasons for using picture books in the secondary school. Since the format is large and the text short, a single copy of a picture book is often all that is needed for a stimulating lesson. Further, words and pictures in combination are the most common form of communication used today, and hence warrant close attention in the classroom. And because the best modern picture books marry the two most skillfully, they are an ideal vehicle for exploring this medium of communication. ESL students also benefit from the use of visual content. Older students creating picture books for younger students means they are acquiring knowledge about many aspects of story structure.

Picture books are also often ideal models for register, parody, irony and satire and for studying such concepts as intertextuality, visual literacy and ideology. Watson himself has edited a text with John Stephens (From picture book to literary theory) which explains the newer literary theories to English teachers and suggests ways of using particular picture books in the classroom so that students could grasp those concepts which the teachers felt were worth passing on.


Watson reviews the research into reading in order to review what's known about the reading process and about comprehension. He argues for miscue analysis as a way of judging proficient readers from the less proficient, and reminds us that all readers, no matter how proficient, make errors when they read ordinary prose — which suggests that reading is not an exact process, but he also reminds us that the miscues of good readers differ from those of weak readers.
Theories of the reading process are of two basic kinds: "bottom up" and "top down" — with the former seeing reading as beginning with letter-sound combinations, then the combining of the sounds into words, while the latter seeing the reader’s prior knowledge of the language and of the world in general as at least as important as letter recognition, and the extraction of meaning from the text as the essence of reading rather than the decoding of words into sound. In keeping with virtually all current models of reading (though the terminology may differ slightly) Watson reminds the reader that written language contains three kinds of information:

(i) semantic information (word and sentence meanings);
(ii) syntactic information (information about word order and sentence structure); and
(iii) grapho-phonic information (information about the relationship between the graphemes (letters) and the phonemes (sounds)).

Students have a great deal of tacit knowledge about (i) and (ii); unfortunately, many reading schemes fail to recognise this fact and hence do not encourage children to make use of this knowledge when they are confronted with the task of getting meaning from the written word. While Watson sees the value of phonics in the total scheme of reading teaching, he argues that secondary "remedial" readers rely, in the vast majority of cases, on grapho-phonic cues only, and that it is often a question of redressing this imbalance in the high school. Watson's favoured methods of reading instruction in general are the use of Lunzer and Gardner's DARTS (Directed Activities Related to Texts): prediction; cloze; text sequencing; and labeling texts.

In addressing the question of helping the weak reader in class, Watson advocates:
* properly run, whole-school programs like SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) and DEAR (Drop Everything And Read);
* drawing on the students' interests and using their transcribed story telling as reading material;
* using everyday print, such as advertisements;
* cloze activities;
* miscue analysis to isolate particular problems;
* reading aloud together with genuinely slow readers (Neurological Impress Method); and
* readers following along with taped stories.
11. Assessment and Evaluation Procedures in English.


Bechervaise states that traditional summative assessment procedures leading to oversimplification in the reporting process have reduced the credibility of English teachers in the public perception. Political and media-driven campaigns to identify and apparently improve literacy levels from unstated base levels have provided apparent support for this view.

As schools continue their move toward outcomes-based, criterion-referenced assessment, the need to emphasise diagnostic and formative assessment to support teaching methods, resources selection and achievement profiling becomes more urgent. Bechervaise identifies a range of assessment and reporting procedures available to English teachers and argues that their implementation is an essential support for current practice.

In the context of increasing government control over large-scale assessment procedures, he argues that while the purpose of school education is seen to be the passing of formal tests and examinations, the control of assessment will remain tantamount to the control of curriculum. The key issue is, "What is the purpose of assessment?" Is it intended to measure student performance, teacher performance, learning appropriateness, public desire or National Security priorities?

Assessment fulfils three major functions:

- *diagnosis* of problems needing remedy or shortcomings needing to be addressed;
- *formative feedback* which can be used to improve, modify or extend the initial work;
- *summative feedback* which establishes the quality of the product presented.

Bechervaise implies the most useful assessment is that which has the student self-assess by reflecting on the specific qualities of his/her work. He also favours assessment which makes its criteria known to the student, and where the criteria for assessment become dependent upon the intention of the work being assessed. Yet, most "public" criterion-based schemes fail to acknowledge the sparkle which
separates capable from great writing, exciting from interesting speaking, breath-taking from tedious negotiation of an art form.

In terms of reporting, Bechervaise favours a profiling method, based on computer-housed records of commentary built up over the year.

Cooper, Charles R and Odell, L (1999)."Introduction: evaluating student writing – what can we do, and what should we do?” In Cooper, Charles R and Odell, L (Eds) Evaluating writing: the role of teacher’s knowledge about text, learning and culture. Urbana, Ill: NCTE.

This essay introduces the principles which govern all the contributions to this book. All articles assume that we need to:

• **distinguish between evaluation and grading.** The latter represents a summative judgement at the end of a process, the former entails questions like: what is strong about this student’s work? what is not strong? how can he/she progress? — all questions that can be asked at any point in a writing process.

• **develop our ability to describe student writing**, especially the ability to identify specific passages in a text and explain how we react to those passages, and to explain what they have done that is influencing the way readers are responding.

• **connect teaching and evaluation.** This means class time on showing them how to achieve particular effects in writing; it means class time for in-process reflection on their writing; it means class time on teaching editing.

• **examine the assumptions and practices that guide evaluation of student writing.** Different genres make different demands on writers — one size does not fit all. We need to help students understand those differences by the way we teach and evaluate their writing.


This article details examples of integrated reading and writing tasks for New Standards – a partnership of states and urban school districts that has developed national education standards and a multifaceted assessment system directly correlated
with those standards. Tasks include group discussion of responses. Claggett also shows how tasks are scored.


Watson details a model for assessment developed by him and Brian Johnston. The model argues that in the space of a unit of work, teachers undergo four distinct roles:

- **monitoring and describing** to help students overcome difficulties
- **reflecting on progress** – have students perceived content, audience etc?
- **appreciating or judging** the quality of students’ products
- **determining**, in the light of student achievement, **what should be done next**.

It is central to the model that students know when monitoring and describing and reflecting on progress are going on, and appreciating or judging is not – so that students do not feel they are being judged on every contribution or piece of work.

Watson also describes Johnston’s model of "work-required assessment" which operates on the assumption that if tasks are designed for learning, then simply recording "successful completion" is enough. The negotiation in the classroom of what "successful completion" means makes the assessment process a feature of classroom discussion.


This article outlines genre-based pedagogy as it has developed in Australia. It also outlines the argument by Macken and others that assessment should be based on explicit criteria for evaluating language performance — criteria that are tied systematically to key grammatical features. Effectively, this purports to align the systemic functional model of language with objective, analytical assessments. Wyatt-Smith argues that the link between systemic functional models and objectivity is debatable. Genre theorists have not researched the ways in which teachers and students produce readings of school writing. She uses an example of an assessment task based on the current Queensland assessment context to show how teachers are attempting to demystify assessment procedures by publishing task specifications that include defined
assessment criteria and that produce shared understandings about the features of different levels of performance.
Annotated literature review:

Australian Syllabuses and Curriculum Frameworks for English.

Victorian Curriculum and Standards Framework
Available as CDROM: curriculum@work through the Victorian Board of Studies

The cornerstone of the Victorian Curriculum and Standards Framework is the mandating of reporting against outcomes. At the same time, it is emphasised by the Department that schools and teachers choose the materials by which students will be given the opportunity to achieve the outcomes. That is, schools and teachers select texts and decide what kinds of teaching methods are appropriate for their students.

The CSF sets six levels for student achievement over eleven years of schooling. Relevant levels to this review are levels 5 (Years 7-8) and 6 (Years 9-10).

Curriculum focus statements are provided at each level for each strand. They outline the major content to be covered and describe appropriate contexts for course development.

The Curriculum focus must be used in conjunction with the learning outcomes and indicators to assist in the planning of teaching and learning. Assessment is based on outcomes and indicators.

The "Strands" of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening are each divided into four sub-strands of "Texts", "Contextual Understanding", "Linguistic structures and features" and "Strategies" (the latter three grouped as "Aspects of language"). Each of the three Strands contains outcomes which deal with equivalent "production" and "response" outcomes.

The Speaking and Listening strand refers to all ways of communicating through oral language. The focus is on producing and listening to spoken texts ranging from
informal conversations, storytelling or personal accounts for small groups to more formal and complex texts for the purpose of interpreting, evaluating, analysing or entertaining. The Reading strand refers to all ways of constructing meaning from print and non-print texts. This includes reading texts such as books, magazines, posters, charts, CD-ROMs and Internet sites, and viewing texts such as films, videos, television programs and graphic materials. The Writing strand refers to all ways of creating, composing, editing and publishing texts, including the use of word processing and multimedia software.

"Texts" are to be drawn from: literature; everyday texts; media texts; and workplace texts.

"Aspects of language" deals with developing in students an awareness of the importance of context— who creates texts; the meanings audiences will make of them; the expectations people bring to texts and text types; and the importance of time, place and social setting in the making and interpreting of texts. Students are also explicitly taught the structures and features of language, including all the key elements of Standard Australian English, from sounds, letters and accurately spelled words, through sentence structure, grammar and punctuation, paragraphing and other structural elements, to discourse structures. This will include learning terminology, or "metalanguage", for describing and discussing conventions of language use.

English in Years 5-8 expands the range and complexity of the texts students read, write, speak and listen to. Emphasis is placed on teaching students to compose, comprehend and respond to some more challenging literary and media texts, including multimedia, in more considered and critical ways. Students are expected to engage with more complex and unfamiliar ideas and justify their views and interpretations of texts. Teachers teach students to use informational texts and assist them to develop research and reporting skills. There is an emphasis on developing students' use of expository texts; on teaching students to plan, prepare and present spoken and written texts with a more critical awareness of context, audience and purpose; and on teaching students group discussion and problem-solving skills. There is a recognition that students in the middle years need to make sense of themselves and develop an understanding of the social and political world around them. They continue to develop higher-order communication, thinking and problem-solving skills and consolidate independent learning skills. Particular pedagogical approaches encouraged are establishing learning environments that promote cooperative learning, and emphasising goal setting, self-evaluation and reflection on learning styles.
Incorporating technology into the teaching and learning program will address some of the important needs in early adolescent education. Also encouraged are practical, relevant and active learning opportunities derived from authentic contexts; the use of student initiative; and reflective and abstract thinking.

In Years 9-10, students are guided to explore and interpret different perspectives on increasingly complex issues and to construct spoken and written responses relating these perspectives to a personal understanding of the contemporary world. Students are expected to develop a critical awareness of language and how it both shapes and is reflected in texts, and to use this knowledge as the foundation for more structured critical appreciation and analysis in their VCE English studies. The focus of the English curriculum in the later years is a closer examination of the critical and sociocultural dimensions of language. Students are to continue to develop an understanding of how texts are constructed and the emphasis is on helping them to find ways to understand and interpret a range of texts dealing with more complex or abstract themes and issues. Students are to develop a critical understanding of the contextual factors involved in the construction and interpretation of texts, especially the role of the audience in making meaning. Teachers should foster in students a developing critical understanding of the media and the differences between various media text types. Students are taught how to write appropriately and effectively in a range of text types for a variety of purposes, and to write expressively and in detail about their thoughts, feelings, opinions and ideas. Teaching and learning activities continue to develop students' skills in working in different kinds of groups, including unstructured, teacher-selected or outcome-orientated groups where considerable self-management is required. Students are encouraged to speak appropriately and with confidence in formal situations, both within the school and in the wider community. The curriculum for these years takes into account the need for students to gain exposure to the world of work, the range of communicative conventions and language practices that apply in different workplaces, and the ways in which workplace communication is affected by the purpose and organisational function of the people communicating. The kinds of information to be exchanged and the forms commonly used for conveying information and presenting ideas are explored in more detail during these years, drawing on students' experience in work placements, part-time employment and other work-related contexts.

Victoria has a related, but separate CSF for ESL.
Western Australian Curriculum Framework For English.


In the English learning area in Western Australian schools, students learn about the English language: how it works and how to use it effectively. The interrelated languages processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing are seen as connected to social processes. “Text” is defined as any form of written, spoken or visual communication involving language. The study of specific texts is viewed as the means by which students achieve the desired outcomes of English, rather than an end in itself. Students learn to create texts of their own and to engage with texts produced by other people.

Students are trained in both functional and critical literacy. They are encouraged to understand and master the conventions of Standard Australian English that are valued and rewarded by society. They are also encouraged to develop critical language awareness and critical literacy by recognizing and analyzing how language use reflects and shapes social values and beliefs. The relationship between language and power, especially in terms of the structuring and negotiation of social relations, is a critical feature of learning in English as defined by this statement. Functional and critical literacy are viewed as interdependent.

The strands studied are speaking and listening, viewing, and reading and writing. The sub-strands are: (1) use of texts — responding and creating spoken, written and visual texts; (2) contextual understanding— considering how language varies according to context and forms identity and world-views; (3) conventions— the use and interpretation of conventions in oral, visual and written texts; and (4) processes and strategies — reflecting and acting upon understandings of the way language works. English learning outcomes include the following:

students understand

- the way that language is influenced by both situational and sociocultural contexts;
- the way that language use creates certain world-views and ways of thinking that serve certain interests;
• the conventions associated with Standard Australian English;
• different language strategies and apply these, and develop information processing skills;
• a speaker’s purpose and interests and critically evaluate the use of persuasive techniques;
• the role of speaking in collaborative problem-solving and public forums;
• how to offer critically literate readings of visual texts and recognize and interpret the use of visual conventions;
• how to read actively, using background knowledge, personal experience and experience of other texts, as well as knowledge of language, to make meaning from texts and how to identify values and assumptions in texts and ways in which a text promotes a particular response from readers; and
• how to use a range of techniques for producing texts, such as keyboarding and word processing, as well as how to combine writing with other forms of language (oral and visual) to design, produce and present a wide range of texts, including multi-media texts.

The texts studied include mass media, literature, everyday and informational texts. Selected texts are designed to reflect the diversity of Australia’s population and include texts which address the experiences and achievements of Aboriginal people and people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The study of Australian texts is balanced by the study of texts from other countries, nationalities and cultures. Texts, both contemporary and from the past, are meant to reflect the interests and values of both men and women and a diversity of viewpoints and perspectives on topics.

Critical literacy infuses this statement on English. Students are encouraged to identify preferred and resistant readings, the multiple ways a text can be read, the impact of such things as gender, race and class on the production and reception of texts, the social values reflected in texts and the ideological nature of texts.

Students are positioned as both independent and collaborative learners. In the middle years, they are given opportunities to show independent initiative and work with others in self-managing teams. They are encouraged to reflect critically on the language processes and strategies they use. Learning experiences include immersion, observational learning, modelling and direct instruction, authentic assessment, and explicit teaching. Teachers are asked to create a “language-rich environment” for the language development of learners.
Assessment is based on a wide range of tasks each with explicit assessment criteria for success. Assessment is designed to be valid, educative, fair, explicit and comprehensive. A number of links between the English statement and the Overarching Curriculum statement are made. These address issues such as information processing and evaluation skills, language and literacy development, social justice, environmental responsibility and informed and active citizenship.

**Key Terminology, Concepts and Phrases:**

**Content:**

**Understanding of Language:** language as a social process; integrated language modes of listening, speaking, viewing, reading and writing; variety of forms and situations; functional literacy; critical literacy; interdependence of functional and critical literacy; Standard Australian English; textual and generic conventions; link between language and social “ways of thinking”; language as dynamic; language as a tool for thinking.

**Definition of “Text” and Choice of Texts:** types of text; mass media, literature, everyday and informational texts; “text” as any form of written, spoken and visual communication; Australian texts and identity; texts from diverse countries, nationalities and cultures; texts reflect interests of both men and women; texts present diversity of perspectives on topics; “range of views and perspectives”; “texts reflect the diversity of Australia’s population”; constructed nature of texts.

**Understanding of Context:** sociocultural diversity; context, purpose and audience; language and power; situational and sociocultural context; different perspectives; target audience; persuasive techniques; identify values and assumptions; positioning of the reader/viewer; resistant reading; contexts of production and reception.

**Skills and Knowledge:** information processing and management skills; keyboarding and word processing skills; design and presentation; critical awareness.

**Learning Processes:** English learning outcomes; K-12 approach; developmental phases; processes and strategies; collaborative problem solving; cooperative learning; self-directed and independent learning; talk and social interaction; modelling and joint construction of texts; teamwork; negotiation skills; observational learning; “language-rich
environment”; “meaningful context”; “authentic purposes”; peer conferencing and tutoring; connection with students’ existing knowledge.

**Assessment:** holistic; peer assessment; valid, educative, fair and comprehensive assessment; explicit assessment criteria.

**Links Across the Curriculum:** information processing and evaluation skills; multiculturalism; citizenship; thinking skills; use of technology; environmental responsibility.
Tasmanian Syllabuses in English.


In years nine and ten, students study English at one of three different levels of difficulty. There is also an “Everyday Language” course for students with special language learning difficulties. The focus is on the interrelated processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing. Students are encouraged to use Standard Australian English in appropriate contexts. “Text” is defined as any communication, written, spoken or visual, involving language. Students study literature (divided into the three areas of classic, contemporary and popular), mass media and everyday texts.

The texts chosen for study are designed to reflect the diversity of sociocultural groups. The selection of texts is based on providing students with a range of forms and genres, a range of world views and values, visual and spoken texts along with written texts, as many female main characters as male, texts produced by students, texts from different periods and cultures, and texts written by Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

There are two main areas of learning: (1) language and learning processes — students use language to interact constructively with others and engage in the processes of negotiation, reflection and collaboration; and (2) areas of experience — students draw on experience, including experience of other texts, when using language. Learning objectives include the following:

students will be able to

- recognize that *contextual factors* are involved in the construction and interpretation of texts;
- critically analyse texts and language and see them as *socially constructed* and *ideologically framed*;
- compose and craft a range of texts, including spoken, written and visual texts;
- understand and use the linguistic structures and features of spoken, written and visual texts;
- work constructively with others;
- assume increasing responsibility for their own learning; and
- use established and emerging technologies for accessing information, communicating with others and creating their own texts.
A social/interactive model of language development underpins these syllabuses. Negotiation, collaboration and problem-solving are given high priority in the English classroom. This is balanced by the equal emphasis placed on independent learning. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own learning, be involved in a self-selected wide reading program and even engage in a “negotiated study” that entails the student selecting an appropriate area for independent intensive study.

Critical literacy also plays a key role in these syllabuses. Students are expected to be aware of texts as constructions and investigate the ideologies encoded by different texts. Issues such as reader positioning and divergent or resistant readings are addressed.

Assessment is achieved through a range of tasks, such as negotiated work contracts, folios and journals. Less traditional forms of assessment are also acknowledged, such as self-assessment and peer-assessment. In terms of teaching methodology, a workshop approach in which cooperative learning and negotiated activities are features of the classroom is advocated. The effective school environment for language learning is described as the “heterogeneous classroom” in which a wide variety of resources, activities and teaching methods is used, with emphasis on small group work and collaborative learning.

**Key Terminology, Phrases and Concepts:**

**Content:**

**Understanding of Language:** linguistic structures and features; variety of writing styles; interrelated language processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing.

**Definition of “Text” and Choice of Texts:** expanded definition of “text”; literary, mass media and everyday texts; spoken, written and visual texts; wide range of texts of different genres and styles, from different periods and cultures and from authors of different ages, gender and life experiences; constructed nature of texts.

**Understanding of Context:** audience, purpose and context; community of writers; impact of social and cultural context on construction and interpretation of texts; ideologies; reader and viewer positioning; preferred and resistant readings.
**Skills and Knowledge:** areas of experience — personal, local and textual; expanding sense of audience; use technology — word processing and desk top publishing; investigation.

**Learning Processes:** learning objectives; collaborative learning; problem-solving; independent and self-regulated learning; reflection; negotiation; teacher as model writer and facilitator; reflective journal; explicit teaching of linguistic structures and features; modelling; workshop approach; heterogeneous classroom.

**Assessment:** pre-determined criteria; range of tasks; self- and peer-assessment.

**Links Across the Curriculum:** technology; selection of texts to include texts written by Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

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**South Australian Curriculum Framework for English.**


The learning of English involves reflecting upon and using the integrated language modes of speaking, listening, reading, viewing and writing in three interrelated strands — texts and contexts, language and strategies. Students develop both functional and critical literacy skills in relation to spoken, written, visual and multi-media texts. Fictional, factual, non-print and media texts are studied and meant to reflect diverse cultural perspectives. "Text" is defined as any communication involving language and may be spoken, written or visual. Critical literacy approaches to textual study pervade this curriculum. Reference is made to such things as the analysis of the situational and social contexts of texts, identification of whose interests are served and whose are silenced in particular texts and contexts, investigation into how dominant ways of knowing have positioned people and groups in society, and understanding the impact of race, class and gender on the production and reception of texts.

Students learn how language works and is used to shape identity, meaning and reality and are encouraged to become critical users of the English language. "Critical awareness"
appears frequently in the curriculum standard. Students gain knowledge of the diverse varieties of English, including Standard Australian English. They also develop "multiple literacies" that ensure that they can manage such things as burgeoning information and communication technologies and communicate in a range of modalities.

There are essential learnings identified as being achieved through the study of English relating to identity (as it connects with language), thinking (as it is enabled by language), interdependence (as it is enabled by language), futures (as they are conceivable within and communicable through language) and communications (as it relates to the shaping of values and world-views). Students develop the capacity to envisage multiple perspectives, suggest possible solutions and develop reasoned arguments. Both independent and collaborative learning are valued.

**Key Terminology, Phrases and Concepts:**

**Content:**

**Understanding of Language:** functional literacy; critical literacy; language shapes identity and social values; language is dynamic; language is used to carry out particular functions or purposes; text structures and language features; study of diverse varieties of English, including Standard Australian English; range of modalities.

**Definition of “Text” and Choice of Texts:** "text" as spoken, written and visual communication; diverse cultural perspectives; texts as social constructions.

**Understanding of Context:** situational and socio-cultural contexts of texts; texts serve certain interests and silence others; dominant ways of knowing; influence of race, class and gender on the production and reception of texts.

**Skills and Knowledge:** proficient and critical users of text and language; research; use of information and communications technology.

**Learning Processes:** teachers acknowledge, value and build upon diverse cultural experiences and linguistic backgrounds; independent and cooperative learning.

**Assessment:** range of tasks.

**Links Across the Curriculum:** ecological sustainability; local and global issues.
Queensland Curriculum Framework for English.


This design brief shows an interest in the changing conditions of language and literacy learning, in particular the emergence of the “information age” and new technologies. The Design Brief draws on curriculum frameworks, syllabuses and support materials developed in other states and countries. It offers a review of the current trends in contemporary curriculum documents related to English on a national and international level. Ideally, the Design Brief should be read in conjunction with the Queensland Director General’s Office’s guidelines on the “New Basics” – the latter being a set of principles and curricular strategies across the curriculum which involve what have been labelled “rich tasks”.

The English Design Brief’s own summary of international trends includes a greater emphasis on the focused study of language (i.e. analysing language and studying the relationship between texts and cultural understandings, contexts and practices), English learning outcomes predominantly organised by modes (such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, presenting or shaping), outcomes generally organised into broad bands, stages, phases, levels or grades, writing outcomes requiring the use of information and communications technologies, the notion of “text” broadened to include those that require the decoding and interpreting of language, image and sound, and an emerging trend to give greater specificity with regards to the development of the technical aspects of language use (e.g. grammar, punctuation and spelling). There is also an emerging trend related to diversity. The advancement of multilingualism is being valued in some contexts such as South Africa, where learners are given the opportunity to develop and value their home languages, cultures and literacies; other languages, cultures, and literacies; and a shared understanding of a common South African culture.

The Design Brief effectively redefines the nature of the subject English. This redefinition is related to wider developments such as the diversification of the student body in post-colonial Australia. English must be “(re)projected” in a multicultural, multilingual and multiliterate society increasingly characterised by the movement of people, capital, labour and communications and a variety of “Englishes”. Students will become more critical users and interpreters of the English language through critical language study, and
demonstrate an awareness of and potentially a resistance to the ideological work done through written, spoken, or visual texts.

English involves the study of the English language and literacy through texts from the past and present and from Australia and other English-speaking cultures. Texts are designed to reflect a diversity of cultures and a multiplicity of “Englishes” and include texts translated into English. Literacy learning is understood to have three interlocking dimensions — the operational, the cultural, and the critical. In years nine through to twelve, the focus is meant to be on the cultural and critical dimensions of literacy, as well as such things as research skills and mastery in an expanding range of text types and genres.

The study of English addresses itself to written and spoken texts, as well as other meaning-making systems such as those used to represent pictorial, televised, internetted and multi-media information. Students are taught both the powerful forms of English usage (i.e. the conventions of Standard Australian English) as well as particular forms of English usage by groups whose cultures and languages contribute to Australia’s diversity. Teachers employ forms of assessment that systematically provide opportunities for success for the full range of students. English classrooms are designed to respond to the technological advances of post-industrialism and the escalating demands for technological literacy.

Students achieve a broad repertoire of language use and literacy practices in English, a deep and high degree of control in any given language and literacy activity, and an innovative, creative, and enterprising attitude. This is achieved through the study of three aligned components:

- **Textual studies** — the study of various print, spoken, visual and multimedia texts including the **domains of texts** such as classical texts, contemporary texts, drama texts, popular culture texts, media, mass media and multimedia texts, hypermedia and spoken and written everyday texts of work, family and community life **for purposes** such as entertaining, informing, persuading and negotiating. The study of texts draws on understandings derived from linguistics, social semiotics, cultural studies and literary theory in terms of understandings they make available about textual practices;

- **Language as a meaning-making system in social and cultural contexts** — this is based on a functional view of language. Language is studied as a meaning-making system, especially as it relates to social and cultural contexts. It includes
the use of terminology derived from Hallidayan functional linguistics, such as genre, register, field, tenor and mode; and

- **Literacy as a social practice** — it is assumed that literacy is a social practice that uses language for thinking, making meaning and to get things done. The literate practices of reading and writing are studied in a range of contexts, integrated with speaking and listening, viewing and shaping and the critical thinking involved in these practices.

**Northern Territory English Syllabus.**


The study of English involves three areas:

- **Learning English** — comprehending English, using English for a range of purposes, and using a range of text types;

- **Learning About English** — how context impacts on the production and reception of texts, the structures and language features of text types, the conventions of oral and written expressions and learning about literature; and

- **Learning Through English** — using language to learn about interpersonal communication, citizenship and literary texts. Consideration is given to the changing nature of the English language in the Rationale. English is the major language of school learning and is now also a major world language of commerce, learning and entertainment across national borders and on the internet.

"Text" is defined very broadly as oral, written and visual texts. The integrated language modes are reading, writing, viewing, speaking and listening. Students study everyday texts, literature (with the sub-divisions of classic, contemporary and popular) and media texts. Emphasis is placed on studying texts mainly of Australian origin. The structures and language features typical of the many different types of text and the conventions of oral and written expressions form part of learning about English, as does the issue of how context influences the way texts are created and understood. Critical literacy themes such as the ability to discern sociocultural values in texts and interpretations of texts, the freedom to challenge stereotypes in texts, the constructed nature of all texts, reader positioning and the detection of omissions all play a part in this statement on learning English.
Pedagogically, group discussion, problem solving activities and research are advocated. Along with this, such things as explicit teaching and modelling are also seen as relevant, especially to the teaching of the conventions of Standard Australian English.

Between Years Eight and Ten, students experience a greater social orientation in English. They analyse contemporary public discourse, are taught how to compose essays and other expository texts in order to explore an expanding range of social and political issues and learn ways to gather, manage, and interpret large amounts of often complex information.

In terms of wider connections across the curriculum, importance is placed on the civics and citizenship agenda and its connection to language and literacy learning. Through language and the development of interpersonal skills and understanding in the classroom, students are seen as being enabled to participate as active and informed citizens in Australian society within an international context.

**Key Terminology, Phrases and Concepts:**

**Content:**

**Understanding of Language:** types of text; using English for a range of purposes; linguistic structures and features of text; conventions of oral and written expressions; modern Australian English usage; language linked with thought; English as a world language of commerce, learning and entertainment; critical literacy; “text construction”; subject-specific literacy demands; linguistic features of Standard Australian English; rhetorical devices.

**Definition of “Text” and Choice of Texts:** “text” as oral, written and visual texts; everyday and informational texts, media texts and literature; literature — classic, contemporary and popular; literature — mainly of Australian origin.

**Understanding of Context:** context affects the way texts are created and understood; purpose and audience; production and reception; sociocultural values; understand why readers’ interpretations may vary; stereotypes; target audience; situational and sociocultural context; language use and power relationships; positioning of reader and viewer; recognize emphases and omissions.
Skills and Knowledge: research skills; critical literacy; information management and evaluation; write complex multi-generic and multi-voiced texts; “repertoire of text types”.

Learning Processes: comprehending and composing; group discussion and problem solving; collaborative learning; explicit teaching; modelling.

Assessment: explicit criteria for assessment.

Links Across the Curriculum: active and informed citizens in Australian society within an international context.

Australian Capital Territory Curriculum Framework for English.


The English Curriculum is organised through two interrelated content strands of learning:

- Texts — including literature texts (sub-divided into the three categories of classic, contemporary and popular), mass media texts and everyday texts; and
- Language — this involves the three areas of contextual understanding, linguistic structures and features, and strategies. English involves the study of English language and literature (including literature translated into English) and development in the integrated language modes of speaking, listening, reading, viewing and writing. "Text" is seen to include all spoken, written and visual forms of communication. Students learn Standard Australian English as a vital part of an ever-widening language repertoire.

The learning outcomes of English include such things as understanding how language varies according to sociocultural and situational context, purpose, audience and content, using a variety of suitable strategies to compose and comprehend texts, demonstrating a
knowledge of the ways textual interpretation may vary according to cultural, social and personal differences, understanding the linguistic features and structures of texts, and recognizing the connection between language and power.

Language development is related to learning about the structures and purposes of language and critically analysing and shaping the knowledge and values of the culture. Specifications are made in relation to the optimal context for development. Learners should be active in the learning process, language tasks should be authentic in purpose, teachers should acknowledge, value and extend students’ existing knowledge, the home, school and community should work in partnership and assessment should be an integral part of learning and teaching.

Language growth and development is seen as most effective when the conditions of learning to talk prevail in the teaching and learning environment. Teaching strategies include encouraging both independent and cooperative learning, modelling, peer tutoring and journal writing. Teachers ensure that all language activities are "real", meaningful and purposeful, share their own language processes and products and negotiate aspects of the program with their students.

The selection of texts is designed to include Australian and non-Australian perspectives, translations and texts written in English, a range of forms and styles, and texts from the past and the present. Selection is meant to reflect across curriculum perspectives, which are given particular attention by this curriculum framework. The connection between these perspectives and learning in English is made explicit.

(1) **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders** — are to be given the opportunity to experience their cultural and natural heritage through the exploration of such things as Aboriginal oral traditions. In English, Aboriginal writing and writers are studied beside other Australian writers.

(2) **Australian Perspectives** — students are given the opportunity to study and reflect upon the diversity of Australian life. Australia’s interdependence with the nations of Asia and the Pacific and the rest of the world is explored through textual study and discussion of regional and global issues. Students are also to be given the opportunity to use the local environment to stimulate writing.

(3) **Environmental Education** — students are encouraged in English to develop confidence and the communication skills to promote ecological sustainability. Students
focus in English on the use of language referring to environmental and ecological issues and respond to literary and media texts that "frame" the environment in certain ways.

(4) **Gender Equity** — students are given the opportunity to critique dominant and narrow constructions of gender. Analysing the role of language in constructing gendered identities assists students to see the connections between language and power. The English curriculum is designed to value the interests and experiences of women and girls.

(5) **Information Technology** — students in English learn how to find, manage and present information using new technologies. They engage in word processing and desktop publishing and are asked to consider the political, social and ethical implications of using information technology and the changing nature of the way texts are constructed and read as a result of new technologies.

(6) **Language for Understanding** — teachers provide models and scaffolds for students to develop their language skills. All genres and language structures are understood as processes occurring within a context. Students are encouraged to critically examine the ways language is used to socially construct and position groups and cultures.

(7) **Multicultural Education** — students are encouraged to value cultural diversity and consider the impact of multiculturalism on Australian society. They develop the skills to examine and challenge social constructions that are detrimental to individuals and groups, and work to promote intercultural harmony.

(8) **Special Needs Education** — students are encouraged to value difference. Teachers cater for the needs of all students. In English, teachers communicate high expectations, provide for different rates of learning, and scaffold language acquisition.

(9) **Work Education** — explicit links are made between the school curriculum and the world of work. Teamwork, information management and experience in using a wide variety of written, oral and visual texts that relate to the communications demands of the workplace are ways that the English curriculum connects to the world of work. A Work Education perspective in English also involves challenging the social constructions of work, including gender issues, paid and unpaid work and access for people with disabilities. This assists students with decision making and critical literacy.
Annotated literature review:

International Syllabuses and Curriculum Frameworks for English.

British Columbia Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts.


English Language Arts involves creating, understanding and responding to communications. "Communication" is defined as any written, spoken or visual representation using language. Students study literary communications (sub-divided into the categories of classic, contemporary and popular), informational communications (sub-divided into everyday texts and technical information) and mass media communications. There are three themes which organize the curriculum and which contain a number of sub-sections

(1) **Comprehend and Respond** — this involves strategies and skills (such as reading and viewing strategies and research strategies and skills), comprehension (relating to demonstrating comprehension of communications and describing the purpose of texts), engagement and personal response (this involves students making connections between their own experiences and texts from various cultural communities, constructing imaginative and creative responses and comparing a variety of texts, genres and media), and critical analysis (this involves such things as discussing persuasive strategies and identifying stereotypes);

(2) **Communicate Ideas and Information** — this entails a knowledge of language (such as a knowledge of the conventions of language use and an ability to use an appropriate subject-specific terminology to talk about language), composing and creating (relating to the capacity to employ a variety of effective processes and strategies to gather, generate
and organise information and ideas), improving communication, and presenting and valuing (involving the ability to create a variety of technical, academic and personal communications); and

(3) **Self and Society** — this relates to personal awareness, working together (involving using language to interact and collaborate with others and using various strategies to resolve conflicts, solve problems and build consensus), and building community (involving using language to establish and maintain relationships, valuing diversity and demonstrating an awareness of the relationship of language to group and community membership).

Language is linked in the Rationale to thinking, learning, communicating and engaging in education, work and social interaction. Students are encouraged to understand linguistic diversity, think critically, creatively and reflectively, manage and present information using new technologies, and be independent and lifelong learners. They are meant to demonstrate openness to divergent language, ideas, and opinions from a variety of cultural communities. Teachers are expected to use a mixture of teacher-centred and student-centred instructional strategies, create a resource-rich learning environment for students, increasingly adopt a multimedia approach, provide "authentic" contexts for language development and use criterion-referenced assessment procedures.

Cross-curricular outlines and their connection to English Language Arts are given particular attention so as to ensure equity and access for all learners. These are: (1) **Applied Focus in Curriculum** (linking school curriculum and the workplace through the development of teamwork and language skills in English Language Arts that are transferable to the workplace); (2) **Career Development** (learners consider career and lifestyle choices and understand through English Language Arts such things as the role of technology in the workplace and the cultural, economic and political dynamics of the working world); (3) **ESL** (English Language Arts teachers show sensitivity towards different cultural backgrounds, learning needs and learning styles); (4) **Environmental Education** (through textual study, students in English Language Arts consider how humans are a part of and influence the environment and the nature of complex systems); (5) **Aboriginal Education** (students in English Language Arts consider Aboriginal cultures and languages and analyse portrayals of Aboriginal peoples in various texts); (6) **Gender Equity**; (7) **Information Technology** (English Language Arts acquaints students with the techno-literate demands of the workplace and students are given the opportunity to apply the principles of design in the presentation of information); (8) **Media Education** (English Language Arts participates in the interdisciplinary study of media products and audience interpretation); (9) **Multiculturalism and Anti Racism**
Education (the English Language Arts curriculum affirms that all ethnocultural groups are of equal value within society and promotes cross-cultural understanding and interaction); (10) Science-Technology-Society (in English Language Arts, science and technology are explored as expressions of history and culture and consideration is given to the influence of recent technologies on the language modes); and (11) Special Needs (English Language Arts teachers demonstrate awareness of the range of language learning needs of students).

California Curriculum Framework for Reading/ Language Arts.


Reading/ Language Arts is organised into the sections reading, writing, listening and speaking, and written and oral English-language conventions. Students study literary and informational texts. Language is viewed as a tool for thinking, learning, and communicating and highly developed literacy abilities are seen as vital to becoming an independent, lifelong learner and competitive knowledge worker in an "information economy".

The Content Standards and Instructional Practices for Grades Four through Eight demonstrate how serious the California Department of Education is about producing "knowledge workers". Students write clear, coherent and focused essays and engage in multiple-step information searches. They present detailed evidence, examples, and reasoning to support arguments and engage with complex informational texts in print and electronic form. Teachers ensure that students have access to outstanding, age-appropriate multicultural literature and assist struggling readers through explicit instruction.

The Seventh Grade signals the complete transition from learning to read to reading to learn. Students learn about genres and their characteristics, analyse consumer, workplace
and public documents, and discern point of view. They analyse differences in structure and purpose between various categories of informational texts. In writing, there is an increased emphasis on the documentation of supporting references (e.g. the use of specific examples and quotes from sources). Students create materials in which credit for quoted and paraphrased information in a bibliography is given and a consistent and sanctioned format and methodology are used for citations. Less time is spent on narrative writing and more on multiparagraph expository compositions.

Research and technology figure prominently in the Reading/ Language Arts Framework. Students create documents by using word processing skills and desktop publishing programs and include evidence in research presentations generated through the formal research process. They also analyse the effect on the viewer of images, text, and sound in electronic journalism.

In the Eighth Grade, there is an increased focus on informational materials, especially consumer texts. Instruction in business-related documents is designed to go beyond the mechanics and conventional forms of such writing to include important rhetorical considerations such as audience, purpose and cohesion. Students are required to compose expository texts with a controlling thesis well supported by textual evidence and displaying sophisticated features such as transitions, parallelism and a consistent point of view.

In the Content Standards and Instructional Practices for Grades Nine through Twelve, teachers work to reinforce independent reading habits. There is a strong emphasis on research-based (expository) discourse, including reading research discourse critically and writing research-based compositions. Greater importance is placed on incorporating technology into the Language Arts classroom as a tool for conducting research and creating finished manuscripts and multimedia presentations. In relation to reading, the focus is on analytically critiquing a variety of media. More time is given to applying language arts to work and careers.

In the Ninth and Tenth Grades, students are expected to be able to synthesise the content and ideas from several sources focused on a single issue and to extend ideas presented in primary and/or secondary sources through original analysis, evaluation, and elaboration. Students are encouraged to identify complexities, discrepancies, and differing perspectives in the researched information and embed quotations and citations skillfully in their own extended prose. Greater emphasis is placed in these grades on workplace documents.
The Reading/ Language Arts Curriculum Framework in California addresses itself specifically to the civic, economic and technological challenges of the twenty-first century and the emergence of an "information society". The alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment and organization is highlighted as an important teaching and learning goal. A range of teaching strategies and procedures are advocated, including modelling, demonstrations, teacher "think alouds", reinforcement, guided practice, peer-mediated instruction, differentiated instruction (designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners and advanced learners), explicit and systematic teaching, heterogeneous grouping, instructional discussions, curriculum-based assessment, and diagnostic, formative and summative assessment.

Hawaii Content and Performance Standards for Language Arts.


Language Arts in Hawaii is organised around the three interconnected areas of Reading and Literature, Writing, and Oral Communication. Assumptions relating to language which inform the Content and Performance Standards include that language is functional and purposeful, governed by conventions and a part of meaning-making processes. Emphasis is placed in the study of literacy and language on the importance of communicating high and challenging literacy expectations. The three areas of learning are each related to six strands:

(1) **Range** — including reading a range of texts for a variety of purposes, writing using various forms to communicate for a different audiences and purposes, and communicating orally using various forms (interpersonal, group and public);

(2) **Processes** — including the use of strategies within the reading process to construct meaning, the use of writing processes and strategies to communicate effectively, and the use of strategies within speaking and listening processes;

(3) **Conventions and Skills** — involving applying knowledge of the conventions of language and texts to construct meaning and applying knowledge of verbal and non-verbal language to communicate effectively;
(4) **Response and Rhetoric** — involving the ability to respond to texts from a range of stances and to use rhetorical devices to craft writing appropriate to audience and purpose;

(5) **Attitudes and Engagement** — involving the demonstration of confidence as a reader, writer and communicator and satisfaction in the sharing of ideas;

(6) **Diversity** — involving the ability to interact thoughtfully with texts that respect diversity in language, perspective, and/or culture and the ability to craft texts that represent diverse thinking and expression.

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**Arizona Curriculum Framework for Language Arts.**


The study of Language Arts involves learning how to communicate effectively through the interdependent language modes of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and presenting. Emphasis is placed on the role of language and literacy learning for learners, citizens, workers, and individuals in the twenty-first century. There are four standards outlined that relate to the language modes:

* **Standard One: Reading** — students acquire strategies to comprehend, interpret, and evaluate texts, including fictional, nonfiction, classic and contemporary texts. In grades four to eight, students achieve the “Essentials” such as using context clues, making inferences and predictions, identifying point of view, and comparing and contrasting texts. In grades nine through to twelve, students are expected to reach “Proficiency”. This involves summarizing and interpreting, supporting assertions with evidence, analyzing the use of literary devices, and evaluating persuasive techniques;

* **Standard Two: Writing** — students learn to use written language for a variety of purposes and with a variety of audiences. In the “Essentials” phase of development, students utilise the writing process (i.e. drafting, revising and editing), write expository essays, state a position that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative, or reflective, and demonstrate research skills. In the “Proficiency” phase, students use transitional devices and parallel structures in their persuasive essays, develop a point
of view with convincing support, and produce cohesive research documents containing comprehensive, supporting information from a variety of credible and cited resources;

* **Standard Three: Listening and Speaking** — students learn to listen and speak in situations that serve different purposes and involve a variety of audiences. In the “Essentials” phase, students produce oral reports that convey information through verbal and nonverbal means to a specific audience, role-play in the interview scenario, and clarify, analyse and critique a speaker’s information and point of view. In the “Proficiency” phase, students produce both polished and impromptu speeches and offer oral interpretations of literary works; and

* **Standard Four: Viewing and Presenting** — students learn to use a variety of visual media and resources to gather, evaluate, and synthesise information and to communicate with others. In the “Essentials” phase, students analyse visual media for language, subject matter and visual techniques used to influence opinions, decision making and cultural perceptions, they plan, develop and produce visual presentations, using a variety of media such as videos, film, newspapers, magazines and computer images, and they establish criteria for evaluating the purpose and effectiveness of visual media. In the “Proficiency” phase, students plan, organise, develop, and produce an effective multimedia presentation and analyse and evaluate the impact of visual media on intended audiences.

**South African Curriculum Framework for Language, Literacy and Communication.**


Language is seen as important to lifelong learning and the empowerment of people to make meaning, access information and literacies, interact and participate socially, communicate in different contexts by using a range of registers and language varieties, use standard forms of language where appropriate, understand the
relationship between language and power, and influence relationships through this understanding. Multi-lingualism is advocated as a major resource that affords learners the opportunity to develop and value their home languages, cultures and literacies; other languages, cultures and literacies in both multicultural South Africa and in international contexts; and a shared understanding of a common South African culture.

"Text" is defined as referring to a unit of spoken, written or visual communication. Credence is given to both "literacy" traditionally defined (i.e. reading, writing and numeracy) and to "literacies" (i.e. the multiple capacities suggested by terms such as cultural literacy, critical literacy, visual literacy, media literacy and computer literacy). Importance is also placed on the contextual nature of communication. It is specified that texts should always be interpreted within a context or contexts. The learning outcomes are achieved through the integrated use of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and include the following:

(1) **Learners make and negotiate meaning and understanding** — through engagement with a wide range of texts and contexts, learners identify the ways in which the construction of meaning varies according to cultural, social and personal differences;

(2) **Learners show critical awareness of language usage** — learners explore the ways in which language is used to transmit and shape sociocultural values, social "reality" and social relations in contexts such as civil, media and institutional contexts. They also become aware of the dynamic nature of language and the influences on language change;

(3) **Learners respond to the aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in texts** — learners explore values in linguistic, visual, auditory and multimedia texts;

(4) **Learners access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations** — learners develop the information skills necessary for lifelong learning. They compare and evaluate viewpoints and use different formats for presentation;

(5) **Learners understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context** — learners become aware of the "correct" uses of language according to context. Similar grammatical structures and conventions are recognised across languages and applied in interpretation, translation and code-switching;
(6) **Learners use language for learning** — language is seen as a tool for learning in all learning areas. Learners acquire transferable learning strategies related to language use; and

(7) **Learners use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations** — learners apply communication skills to specific purposes and in defined situations.

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**New York Curriculum Standards for English Language Arts.**


English involves the study and use of language. Language is understood as dynamic, social and playing a crucial role in helping individuals become thoughtful, informed, and responsive citizens. The four functions of language are described as being informational, literary, critical, and social. Emphasis is placed on the importance of purposeful, context-bound use and immersion for growth in language achievement. Learners apply the integrated language modes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (including viewing) to four learning standards:

(1) **Language for Information and Understanding** — learners gather, process, evaluate, and synthesise information using new technologies, write expository texts, use standard written English skillfully and deliver oral reports;

(2) **Language for Literary Response and Expression** — learners explore a variety of literary genres from different places and periods (i.e. classic and contemporary texts from a range of cultures). Importance is placed on hearing multiple viewpoints and diverse voices;
(3) **Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation** — learners analyse and evaluate complex texts and issues. In critical analysis, they consider divergent perspectives. They form positions, present well-developed arguments, supported with sound evidence and identify gaps and inadequacies in texts; and

(4) **Language for Social Interaction** — learners use language for social interaction. They discover and use conventions for speaking in social situations. They consider such things as linguistic variation and realise that reading and writing are social acts.

This framework is influenced by "whole language", process writing, the growth model and "real books" approaches to English teaching, as well as by some more recent developments such as critical literacy, poststructuralism and new technologies. Growth is understood as growth in language ability and is seen as happening when learners engage in the meaningful use of language. This is balanced by the claim that teachers need to use direct instruction and demonstrations as appropriate to the language learning needs of students. It is assumed that learners express their ideas when the content matters to them.

Literature is understood as a representation of a specifically cultural way of knowing and students study literary texts as well as adolescent fiction, nonfiction, journals, students’ own writing, and electronically produced texts. Cultural and linguistic diversity is foregrounded as a key issue in New York classrooms. A "culturally responsive" approach to instruction is advocated in which diversity is viewed as an advantage rather than a deficit. Teachers incorporate multicultural texts into the classroom. Students are encouraged to see their home language as a valuable resource and learn about language variety as well as standard English uses and forms. Bilingual and bidialectal students are encouraged to see the two languages/ dialects as "different ways of knowing".

Assessment is holistic and based on multiple strands of evidence. Teachers assess student performance over time and in varied "authentic" contexts through such things as a portfolio and observation. They use explicit performance criteria related to

(i) range — in subjects, genres and strategies;
(ii) flexibility — in adapting to purpose, audience and context;
(iii) independence — in terms of becoming less reliant on models and direction;
(iv) connections — made across disciplines, topics, texts and contexts; and
(v) conventions — used to indicate a knowledge of the etiquette of discourse.
New Zealand Curriculum Statement for English.

New Zealand Ministry of Education, *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Available at: 

English is included in *Language and Languages*, one of the seven essential learning areas of *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework*. Students use the integrated language modes of speaking, listening, reading and writing and also learn to discern critically messages from television, film and other visual media. "Text" is defined as any piece of spoken, written or visual communication that constitutes a coherent, identifiable unit. There are three strands involved in studying English, each with two sub-strands and two types of achievement objectives (language functions and processes):

(1) **Oral Language** (with the sub-strands of listening and speaking) — this involves interpersonal oral language, listening to texts and using texts;

(2) **Written Language** (with the sub-strands of reading and writing) — this involves such things as the personal and close reading functions of reading, the poetic, expressive and transactional functions of writing, reading processes such as scanning and writing processes such as revision and drafting; and

(3) **Visual Language** (with the sub-strands of viewing and presenting) — this involves studying visual language and analysing the interaction of words and images.

The oral, written and visual strands are meant to be treated in an integrated way. The study of English aims to have students engage with and enjoy language in all its varieties and to understand, respond to, and use oral, written, and visual language effectively in a range of contexts. It is assumed that language and knowledge about language develop principally through use in authentic contexts. The three strands relate to three areas of learning in the study of English:
(1) **Responding to Text** — students explore how texts reflect particular viewpoints and ways of knowing which are shaped by their social and historical contexts. They think critically by comparing the text’s view of the world with their own;

(2) **Exploring and Learning about Language** — students learn how language varies over time and according to context. An explicit metalanguage is acquired by students to enable them to talk about texts in an informed way and make conscious choices when using language; and

(3) **Understanding and Using Technology** — students develop information processing skills used in the processes of learning.

Constructivist approaches to teaching and learning are evident in this curriculum. It is assumed that students are at the centre of the learning process, play an active role in constructing knowledge, have prior knowledge and should interact with others. They are encouraged to be both independent and cooperative learners. They learn to solve problems, work in teams, use new technologies and make decisions. Students also develop information processing and critical thinking skills. Assessment is understood as the evaluation of students in the process of learning and involves such things as diagnostic, self- and peer-assessment.

English programs are designed to reflect the New Zealand context. It is noted that attention should be given to New Zealand varieties of English and New Zealand’s own literature, as well as international resources in the English language. The curriculum is inclusive in that it responds to the wide diversity of perspectives and linguistic backgrounds in New Zealand, analyses the link between language and the construction of gender, and affirms Maori knowledge through both the inclusion of Maori perspectives in the selection of texts and bilingual programs.
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