STAGE 6 ENGLISH FORUM
FORUM PROCEEDINGS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

In its HSC White Paper, *Securing Their Future*, the Government recognises the urgent need to redevelop the Higher School Certificate English curriculum. A key element in the Review and Consultation Phase of the Syllabus Development Process for Stage 6 English was the Stage 6 English Forum. The purpose of the Forum was to seek advice on the future development and directions of Stage 6 English courses, including advice on the merits of the options of offering Literature as a separate course or of offering Extension English that would include Literature.

In the HSC White Paper, the Government announced a course arrangement for Stage 6 English that included:
- a Fundamentals of English course in the Preliminary year;
- an ESL English course;
- differentiated English courses; and
- a Literature course.

Following the release of the HSC White Paper, there have been several developments that have suggested that instead of offering Literature as a subject in parallel with English, additional time could be given to an extended additional course of study of English. In this arrangement Literature would be widely incorporated within the study of English, across all courses.

Another key element is the White Paper requirement that: *The Board of Studies will draw on the outcomes of its recent developmental work for the Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12) syllabus to develop standard and advanced courses in English.*
INTRODUCTION

The endnotes to these summary findings refer to the Forum summary documents, and to the papers of the introductory panel members. The findings were prepared from the workshop summaries which in turn were prepared from workshop transcripts. All three documents have been validated as an accurate record by members of the Syllabus Advisory Committee, who acted as the scribes for each of the workshops.

PERSPECTIVES ON ENGLISH

The Forum expressed strong support for English courses to be inclusive of a range of perspectives that take into account the more traditional theories of English which have guided the existing 7-12 Syllabuses, as well as developments in literary, linguistic and cultural theory. Teachers are already integrating a range of theoretical perspectives of English, and there is clear evidence of and support for practice that exposes students to the variety of texts, modes, media and multimedia that this society offers. The new technologies have provided a stimulus for this.

There was general consensus about the need for Stage 6 English syllabuses to be informed by a critical evaluation of the existing K-12 courses, to ensure the progression from Stage 5 English and to make explicit the continuum of English courses K-12.

NATURE OF STUDENTS

There was clear recognition of the breadth and diversity of students in terms of age, maturity, cultural and economic contexts, goals, interests, motivation and the variety of post-compulsory pathways.

The English Forum agreed that to satisfy the requirements of Stage 6 English, students must be able to show that they are able to:

- demonstrate functional, communicative and critical literacy in speaking, listening, reading, writing and viewing
- create and critique texts intended for a range of occasions and audiences
- communicate in oral and written modes in standard English
- understand and appreciate the various cultural heritages and emerging cultures that influence Australian society as they are represented in the texts students experience in Stage 6 English.

Delegates agreed that Stage 6 English should assist students in becoming active, informed and critical citizens.

COURSE STRUCTURES

Delegates appreciated the need for a range of courses (English as a Second Language, Fundamentals, Standard/Advanced and Extension/Literature) to address the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of students. There was some discussion as to whether students who need additional support in English would undertake two units of Fundamental English in addition to two units of Standard English in the Preliminary year.

There were questions raised about ensuring comparability of the ESL course with the Standard English course and whether there would be a relationship between ESL and the common content of the Standard/Advanced courses, providing the ability to transfer into other courses.

Issues
concerning the eligibility for entry into the ESL course were discussed and some specific suggestions made.\textsuperscript{14}

It was strongly felt that courses should provide flexibility through options and/or elective components to articulate with aspects of their extension or support courses. This would allow for some movement between courses and meet the needs of the diverse range of students and their varying rates of development.\textsuperscript{15}

There was positive response to the concept of an Extension English Course beyond but incorporating literature.\textsuperscript{16} It was felt that the range of content, skills and cognitive expectations would provide for a substantial course of study at the 2 Unit Extension level in both Preliminary and HSC years to meet the needs of talented English students.\textsuperscript{17}

**CONTENT**

Certain principles were seen to be essential to the content of English and should be embedded in all courses. Delegates affirmed that the study of language is central to all courses and must be taught explicitly, in use and in the contexts of situation and culture.\textsuperscript{18} They also gave clear endorsement of the notion that the study of literature be included in all English courses.\textsuperscript{19}

There was a strong desire for a wide and inclusive range of texts and text types\textsuperscript{20} that reflect:

- the diversity and range of our students\textsuperscript{21}
- changing technologies,\textsuperscript{22}
- social and cultural contexts, recognising their dynamic and historical nature\textsuperscript{23}
- a broadening of our understanding of what literature may include.\textsuperscript{24}

There was a demand for the inclusion of wide reading as an element of every English course.\textsuperscript{25} Substantial parts of the curriculum should involve the study of groups of texts in different ways for different purposes.\textsuperscript{26}

Delegates agreed that students should both create and critique texts, using the range of language resources and communication technologies.\textsuperscript{27} Students should analyse and critique products of language in a variety of media.\textsuperscript{28} They should examine the ways in which changing technology effects and affects meaning.\textsuperscript{29}

**COMMON CONTENT**

*Note:* ‘Common content’ of the Standard and Advanced courses is generally referred to by the term ‘Core’ in both the Summaries and the Transcripts of the Forum.

There was consensus about broad aspects of the common content of the Standard and Advanced courses. Delegates agreed that the common content should cater for the full range of students,\textsuperscript{30} should incorporate a balance of the modes of English and should allow students to engage with a wide range of texts.\textsuperscript{31}

There was recognition of the range of material needed to reach the diversity of students. There was some support for contextual study, such as an issue or thematic study in the common content, that would allow for an organising framework that synthesises material drawn from a variety of sources.\textsuperscript{32} A substantial number of delegates thought that communication skills should be incorporated into the common content.\textsuperscript{33} There was also considerable support for a skills development approach to the content.\textsuperscript{34}

**TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

In answer to the questions concerning the kinds of teaching and learning experiences each course should offer, there was a variety of responses suggesting a shared understanding of effective teaching/learning strategies in English. Delegates clearly endorsed the notion that teaching/learning should be active and student-centred\textsuperscript{35}, integrating a balance of the modes of
speaking, listening, reading, writing and viewing. These experiences should provide challenge as well as support for the full range of students. There was strong affirmation for the encouragement of independent learning, including such aspects as the development of research skills, self-directed learning and offering opportunities to negotiate aspects of the curriculum.

The transcripts of the discussion in the individual course workshops give a wealth of varied and valuable suggestions for teaching and learning experiences that would provide access and interest for all students in English.

The purpose of the teaching/learning experiences in English should be to develop students’ abilities to discriminate between, and to critique and evaluate, texts and textual production. They should also aim to develop students’ abilities to articulate their views of the world through speaking and writing in a range of forms.

Delegates expressed the need for syllabuses that incorporate the creation and production of texts in all courses, recognising the interdependence of creating and critiquing. It was thought that a major work should be included in the Extension course providing an opportunity for specialisation in critiquing or creating while drawing upon this interdependence. Syllabuses should allow for a variety of learning experiences such as wide reading, portfolios and modules of focused study, such as the study of specific ideas, genres, the work of particular authors or the texts from a particular historical period.

There was strong and widespread support for the incorporation of the teaching and learning of the key competencies in all courses.

ASSESSMENT

There was clear endorsement for assessment processes that recognise positively what students can do. Furthermore, delegates agreed that there should be opportunities for assessment of the processes of learning in English as well as the products. There was an insistence on the need for a variety of assessment approaches with a requirement that differences between internal and external assessment processes be precisely defined to ensure that together they encompass a range of knowledge, skills and understandings.

Many saw standards referencing as an opportunity for closer integration between curriculum and assessment but wanted to ensure that assessment did not drive the curriculum.

UNIVERSITY SCALING

University scaling affects the final mark of students and there is a perception that this has influenced student choice of courses in English. Concern was widely expressed that scaling procedures will disadvantage students attempting the more difficult courses in English especially when compared with equivalent courses in other subjects.

Delegates were concerned about the comparability of ESL with other English courses as a prerequisite to tertiary study. It was also feared that university scaling of the proposed English as a Second Language course would dissuade students who would benefit from such study from undertaking the course.

CREDENTIALLING

Delegates expressed the need for a strong credential at the end of the Preliminary course and the opportunity for articulation across sectors in the form of equivalent or credit transfer into TAFE and VET courses.
AREAS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AND CLARIFICATION

The following points emerged from the Forum as areas that require further discussion and clarification:

COURSE STRUCTURE

• the opportunities, pathways and timing for changing between courses in the Preliminary and/or in the HSC year
• nomenclature of courses
• the requirement or otherwise of the Preliminary course as a prerequisite to the HSC, especially for adults.
• the nature of the additional course in English as Literature or Extension and the scope and sequence of this course.

COMMON CONTENT

• the extent and parameters of the common content of the Standard and Advanced courses
• the form and content of the common content of the Standard and Advanced courses.

FUNDAMENTALS OF ENGLISH COURSE

• whether students who need additional support in English would take four units of the subject in the Preliminary year.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE COURSE

• comparability with the Standard English course
• relationship to the common content of the Standard and Advanced courses
• gatekeeping requirements
• the ability to transfer into other courses.

ASSESSMENT

• ways in which appropriate internal assessment methodologies could or should be mandated
• parity of the relationship between Maths and English in relation to course structure, number of hours, and recognition in UAI calculation.

TIMETABLING AND STAFFING

• the difficulty of small schools being able to offer the range of courses to their student population
• the provision of timetabled classes for Extension English.
Endnotes: Please note that page references in the endnotes refer to original Summary page references, not to the pagination in this Executive Summary. These page references can be found at the top of each Summary page.

1 Workshop 1 p.1 {Groups 1,2,3,7,8}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,&8}; Sawyer p.3; Goodall p.10; Byrne p.18; Mitchell p.24
2 Workshop 1 p.1{Groups 1,2,3,4,6,7,8} Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,4,5 & 8}; Sawyer p.6; Grenville p.11; Byrne p.21; Mitchell p.25
3 Workshop 1 p.2 {Groups 2,4,5,7,8}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,5,8}; Sawyer p.4 & p.5; Goodall p.10
4 Workshop 1 p.2 {Groups 2,7,8}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,4,5 & 6}; Workshop 3a p.1 {Groups 2,3 & 5}; Workshop 3b Standard p.2 {Groups 7 & 8}; Sawyer p.2-6; Mitchell p.23.
5 Workshop 2. pp.1-3 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8}; Byrne p.19; Mitchell p.23
6 Workshop 2 pp. 2-3 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,7 & 8}; Sawyer p.6; Grenville p.14; Byrne p.21
7 Workshop 1 pp.2-3 {Groups 1,3,4,5 & 6}; Workshop 2 pp.1-2{Group 2,3,4,5,7 & 8}; Workshop 3a pp.1-2 {Groups 3,4,5,6,7 & 8}; Workshop 3b-ESL p.2 {Group 1}; Workshop 3b-Extension p.2 {Group 2}; Workshop 3b-Literature pp.1-2 {Group 4}; Workshop 3b-Advanced pp.1-2 {Groups 5&6}; Workshop 3b - Standard pp.1-2 {Group 7 & 8}; Sawyer p.6; Grenville p.12; Mitchell p.25.
8 Workshop 2 p.3 {Groups 1,2,3,5,6,7 & 8}; Grenville p.13; Byrne p.18.
9 Workshop 1 pp.1-2 {Groups 2,3,4,5,7 & 8}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,7, & 8}; Workshop 3b - Advanced p.2 {Groups 5&6}; Sawyer p.3; Goodall p.9 & 10; Mitchell p.26
10 Workshop 3 pp.2-3 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,8 & 8}; Byrne p.21; Mitchell p.25
11 Workshop 1 p.3 {Groups 2,7 & 8}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 1,2,3,5, & 8}; Workshop 3b - Extension p.1 {Group 2}; Workshop 3b - ESL p.1 {Group 1}; Workshop 3b - Fundamentals p.1 {Group 3}; Workshop 3b - Literature p.1 {Group 4}.
12 Workshop 1 p.3 {Groups 1 & 2}; Workshop 2 p.3 {Groups 1,2,3,5,7 & 8}; Workshop 3b - Fundamentals p.3 {Group 3}; Byrne p.19
13 Workshop 2 p.3 {Groups 3 & 8}; Workshop 3b p.4 {Group 1}.
14 Workshop 3b - ESL pp.2&4 {Group 1}
15 Workshop 1 p.3 {Groups 2,3&7}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.4 {Groups 2 & 8}; Workshop 3b - Extension p.1 {Group 2}
16 Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 1,2,3 & 4}; Workshop 3a p.3 {Groups 3 & 8}; Workshop 3b pp.1-2 {Group 2}; Workshop 3b-Extension pp.1-4 {Group 2}
17 Workshop 1 p.2 {Groups 2,3,4,5,7 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.4 {Groups 2,5 & 8}; Workshop 3b - Advanced p.2 {Groups 5&6}; Sawyer p.5; Mitchell p.27
18 Workshop 1 pp.1-2 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,7 & 8}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 1,2,3,5,6 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.4 {Groups 2,5 & 8}; Workshop 3b - Fundamentals p.2 {Group 3}; Workshop 3b - ESL p.2 {Group 1}; Sawyer p.5; Grenville p.14; Goodall p.10; Mitchell p.25.
19 Workshop 1 p.1 {Groups 1,2,3,4,6,7 & 8}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,4,5,7 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.1 {Groups 2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8}; Sawyer p.6; Goodall p.10; Grenville p.11; Byrne p.21; Mitchell p.24
20 Workshop 1 p.1 {Groups 1,2,3,4,6,7 & 8}
21 Workshop 1 p.2 {Groups 2,4,5,7 & 8} 
22 Workshop 1 p.2 {Groups 2,3,4,5 & 8}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,5,6 & 8} 
23 Workshop 1 p.1 {Groups 1,2,3,4 & 7}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8}; 
24 Workshop 1 p.3 {Groups 1,2,3,4 & 7}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8}; 
25 Workshop 3 p.1 {Groups 1,2,3,4 & 7}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.2-4 {Groups 2,3,5,6, &, 8}; Sawyer p.7; Mitchell p.26 
26 Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,4 & 8}; Workshop 3b - ESL p.2 {Group 1}; Sawyer p.6; Goodall p.10; Grenville p.11; Byrne p.21; Mitchell p.24. 
27 Workshop 1 pp.2-3 {Groups 1,2,6,7 &8}; Workshop 3a p1 {Groups 4,6,7 & 8}; Sawyer pp.5 & 6; Goodall p.9; Mitchell p.25
28 Workshop 1 p.2 {Groups 1, 2, 6, 7 & 8}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,4,5,7 & 8} 
29 Workshop 1 p.1 {Groups 2,4,5,7 & 8}; Sawyer p.6; Goodall p.9; Mitchell p.25
30 Workshop 2 p.3 {Groups 2,3,4 &6}; Workshop 3a pp.1-2 {Groups 2,5,6,7 & 8} 
31 Workshop 3a pp.1-2 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8} 
32 Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,4,7 &8}; Workshop 3a p.1 {Groups 3,4 & 8}; Sawyer p.6; Byrne p.20; 
33 Workshop 2 p.3 {Groups 2,3,4,5 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.2 {Groups 2,3,4,5&6}; Byrne p.21 
34 Workshop 3a pp.1-2 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 & 8}; Grenville p14; Mitchell p27 
35 Workshop 1 p.3 {Groups 2,3 &8}; Workshop 3b - Advanced pp.1-2 {Groups 5&6}; Workshop 3b - Standard p.2 {Groups 7 & 8}; Workshop 3b - Extension pp.1-2 {Group 2}; Workshop 3b - Fundamentals p.2 {Group 3}. 
36 Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,4,5,6 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.4 {Groups 2,5 & 8}; Workshop 3b - Advanced p.2 {Groups 5&6}; Workshop 3b - Standard p.3 {Groups 7 & 8}; Workshop 3b - ESL p.2 {Group 1}; Sawyer p.4; Byrne p.17; Mitchell p.25 
37 Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,4,5 & 8}; Byrne pp18-20; Mitchell p.25
38 Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 1,2,3,5,7 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.2 {Groups 2,4,5 & 7}; Workshop 3b - Advanced pp.1-2 {Groups 5 & 6}; Workshop 3b - Fundamentals p.2 {Group 4}; Workshop 3b - Extension p.3 {Group 2}; Workshop 3b - Standard p.2 {Groups 7 & 8}; Byrne pp 18 & 21; Mitchell p.25.

39 Workshop 1 pp.2-3 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 &8}; Workshop 3a p.1 {Groups 2,4,5,6 & 8}; Workshop 3b - Advanced pp.1-2 {Groups 5 & 6}; Workshop 3b - Standard p.2 {Groups 7 & 8}; Workshop 3b - Literature pp.1-2 {Group 4}; Sawyer p.5; Goodall p.10; Byrne p.17.

40 Workshop 1 p.2 {Groups 1, 3,4,5,6}; Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,3,4 & 5}; Workshop 3a p.1 {Groups 4 & 7}; Workshop 3b-Standard p.2 {Groups 7 & 8}; Workshop 3b - Advanced p. 1 & 3 {Groups 5 & 6}; Workshop 3b - Literature p.1 {Group 4}; Workshop 3b - Extension p.2 {Group 2}; Sawyer p.5; Grenville p.12

41 Workshop 1 p.2 {Groups 1,2,6,7 &8}; Workshop 2 p.1 {Groups 2,4,5 & 8}; Workshop 3b-Extension p.2,3 &4 {Group 2}; Workshop 3b - Literature p.2 {Group 4}.

42 Workshop 1 p.3 {Groups 1,2,7 &8}; Workshop 2 pp.1-2 {Groups 2,3,4,5,7 &8}; Workshop 3a pp.1-2 {Groups 2,3,5 & 8}; Workshop 3b- Advanced p.1-2 {Groups 5 & 6}; Workshop 3b- Extension pp.3-4 {Group 2}; Workshop 3b - Literature pp.2-3 {Group 4}; Workshop 3b - Standard pp.3-4 {Groups 7 & 8}; Sawyer pp.4, 6 & 7; Goodall p.10; Mitchell p.25.

43 Workshop 1 p.3 {Groups 1,2,7 & 8}; Workshop 2 p.3 {Groups 2,3,5,7 &8}; Workshop 3a p.4 {Groups 2,3,5 & 8}; Workshop 3b - Extension p.4 {Groups 1,2,3,5,6,7 &8}; Byrne (generally).

44 Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 2,5 &7}; Workshop 3a p.2 {Group 5}; Workshop 3b-ESL p3 {Group 1}; Workshop 3b - Extension p.4 {Group 2}

45 Workshop 3a p.3 {Groups 1,2,3,5,7 & 8}; Workshop 3b-ESL p.3 {Group 1}; Workshop 3b-Extension p.4 {Group 2}; Workshop 3b - Advanced p.4 {Group 5}; Workshop 3b- Standard pp. 4&5 {Group 7}

46 Workshop 1 p.2 {Groups 2,3,5 & 7}; Workshop 3a p.2 {Groups 1,2,5 & 8}; Workshop 3b- Fundamentals p.3 {group 3}; Workshop 3b-Extension p.4 {Group 2}; Workshop 3b- Advanced p.4 {Group 5}; Workshop 3b-ESL p.3 {Group 1}; Mitchell pp.23-4.

47 Workshop 2 p.4 {Groups 3,5 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.3 {Groups 2 & 5}; Mitchell p.24

48 Workshop 1 p.3 {Groups 1,2,6 & 7}; Workshop 3b-ESL p.4 {Group 1}

49 Workshop 2 pp.3-4 {Groups 2}; Workshop 3b-ESL pp2-3 {Group 1}; Workshop 3b-Fundamentals p.3 {Group 3}; Byrne p.17

50 Workshop 1 p.3 {Groups 1, 2 & 7}; Workshop 2 p.2-3 {Groups 2,3,7&8}; Workshop 3a p.5 {Groups 2,3 &8}; Workshop 3b-ESL p.4 {Group 1}; Workshop 3b - Standard p.4 {Groups 7 & 8}; Byrne pp.19-20.

51 Workshop 1 p.3 {Group 7}; Workshop 2 p.4 {Groups 3,5 & 7}; Workshop 3a p.5 {Groups 3,5 & 7}

52 Workshop 2 pp.3&4 {Groups 2 & 7}; Byrne p.17

53 Workshop 2 p.2 {Groups 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8}; Workshop 3a p.4 {Groups 1,3 & 5}; Workshop 3b-Extension pp.1-4 {Group 2}; Workshop 3b-Literature pp1-2 {Group 4}.

54 Workshop 2 p.3 {Groups 2 & 5}; Workshop 3a p.2&3 {Groups 1,2,3,5, &8}

55 Workshop 2 pp.2-3 {Groups 2,3,4,5 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.1-2 {all Groups}

56 Workshop 2 p.3 {Groups 1,2,3,5,7 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.4 {Groups 5 & 8}; Workshop 3b - Fundamentals p.3 {Group 3}

57 Workshop 1 p.3 {Groups 1,2,6 & 7}; Workshop 2 p.3 {Groups 2,3,8}; Workshop 3b - ESL {Group 1}

58 Workshop 1 p.2 {Groups 2,7 & 8}; Workshop 2 p.2 {1,2,3,5, & 8}; Workshop 3a pp.2-3 {Groups 1,2,3,5 & 8}; Workshop 3b-ESL p.3 {Group 1}; Workshop 3b-Extension p.4 {Group 2}; Workshop 3b-Advanced p.4 {Groups 5&6}; Workshop 3b-Standard p.4 {Group 7}.

59 Workshop 2 p.4 {Groups 2,3,5 & 8}; Workshop 3a p.3 {Groups 2 & 5}

60 Workshop 3b - Advanced p.4 {Groups 5 & 6}

61 Workshop 3b - Extension p.2 {Group 2}. 

Stage 6 English Forum Executive Summary Report 

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Workshop Summaries

The Stage 6 English Forum Workshops

WORKSHOP 1 STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE SUMMARY FINDINGS

**Purpose:** To consider how the various perspectives on or aspects of English could help shape Stage 6 English.

**Questions:**

1. What perspectives on or aspects of English would be essential in:
   a) all of the proposed Stage 6 English courses;
   b) each of the proposed Stage 6 English courses?
2. What statements might be made about the nature of English at Stage 6?

**Summary of Group Responses**

**Question 1: What perspectives on or aspects of English would be essential in:**
   a) all of the proposed Stage 6 English courses;
   b) each of the proposed stage 6 English courses?

- **No perspective should be privileged** (1) (2) (3) (7) (8)
  - integration of best parts of all
  - breadth and integrity
  - all perspectives should be represented but some courses are more suited to one than another.
    Eg, no conflict between texts created in a cultural heritage perspective and the kinds of questions asked of those texts in a cultural studies perspective. Some elements of both models should be included
  - Personal growth works side by side with the literary. (5)

- **A strong desire for a wide and inclusive range of texts and text types** (1) (2) (3)(4) (6) (7) [with a balance of what and how many texts (8)] that reflects the nature of our students:
  - adult learners
  - various backgrounds
  - ethnicity
  - gender.

- **recognition of need to broaden our understanding of what literature may include** (1) (2) (3) (4) (7)
• cultural heritages idea emerged including World literature and Australian literature (2) (3) (4) (5) (8)
• recognition of inclusion of literature in most if not all courses. (1) (2) (4) (7)

• **New Technologies**

Awareness that text types and processes are evolving as a result of new technologies eg CD-ROMs; multimedia texts; computer ‘books’. This is not only confined to popular culture but also draws upon Cultural Heritage. (2) (4) (5) (7) (8)

**Question 2: What statements might be made about the nature of English at Stage 6?**

• **Creating texts** (1) (2) (6) (7) (8)

Valuing creating in its own right while recognising the link between creating and critiquing, eg Visual Arts — create major work in context of critiquing.

Some support for notion of major work (refer the afternoon). (2) (7)

Creating text should exist in all courses. (2) (3) (7)

• **Language**

Valuing of oral and written language. (2) (3) (5) (7) (8)

Centrality of language and communication: reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. (2) (3) (4) (5) (7) (8)

Need to be explicit about language and its structures and how it works in social and situational contexts. (1) (7)

Critical analysis of language use should be taught in all courses. (2) (7) (8)

• **Assessment**

Enthusiasm for a variety in assessment processes. (2) (7) (8)

This is an opportunity to have integration between curriculum and assessment (note - something on standards referencing). Assessment should not drive the syllabus. (2)(3) (5) (7)

Stage 6 should be a progression from Stage 5 and K-10. Attention needs to be paid to K-6 and Stage 5. Importance of scope, sequence and continuity. (2) (7) (8)
• Teaching and Learning Experiences

People supported notion of having students able to discriminate and evaluate. (2) (7) (8)

Extended to notions of critical analysis to discriminate between not against Adrian Mitchell. (2)

Need for a variety of learning experiences, particularly active learning experiences, which integrate the modes of reading writing/speaking listening. (2) (3) (8)

This connects to flexibility within the courses to meet the diverse needs, interests and abilities of the students. (2) (3) (7)

Evident from suggested variety of learning experiences such as wide reading, portfolios, modules of focused study. (1) (2) (7) (8)

The syllabus should empower students to develop skills to articulate their views of their world, and also to critique the materials which their world provides them. (2) (7) (8)

Literary texts should extend, not just reflect, students’ life experiences. (2) (7) (8)

• Importance of Practical Literacy

Recognition that there will be students entering Stage 6 with literacy problems. (2) (7) (8)

English may need to take some responsibility for aiding these students but literacy also seen as the responsibility of other faculties. (2)

Recognition of the place of Key Competencies in the syllabuses (1) [all courses should reflect (2)] (7) (8)

Areas for Further Discussion:

• Extension to be available with ALL courses. (1) (2)
• Fundamental English is an excellent idea but will it fall the way of Supplementary English? (1) (2)
• Examination concern: Will the marking process reward those who correctly answer the question? (2)
• Criteria. (2)
• ESL comparability and gatekeeping requirements (1) (2) (6) (7)
• Definitions of ‘Grammar’ needed. (6)
• How far should English be responsible for instrumental English? Report writing can be covered in other subjects. (5)
• How will students be channelled into each course? (2) (7)
Comment from Group 7
Workshop 1 is well summarised. Considerable antagonism towards the idea of naming courses as ‘standard’ and ‘advanced’ — this is not taken as a given within this group.
The Stage 6 English Forum Workshops

WORKSHOP 2  STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE
SUMMARY FINDINGS

**Purpose:** The purpose of this workshop is to evaluate the breadth of the needs and interests of students studying English at Stage 6 and how these needs and interests might be accommodated with in the available structures. It includes consideration of the expectations made of the students.

**Questions:**

1. What are the interests and needs of the students at Stage 6?

2. How could the breadth of their interests and needs be accommodated by English at Stage 6?

3. What do post-school interest groups expect of the HSC candidature in English?

**Summary of Workshop 2**

**Question 1: What are the interests and needs of the students at Stage 6?**

There is a wide range of:

- interests (7) (8)
- abilities (1) (2) (3) (5) (6) (7) (8)
- maturity/adult learners (1) (2) (3) (5) (7) (8)
- social advantage (1) (2) (3) (6) (7) (8)
- cultural background, experience and knowledge (2) (3) (5) (6) (7) (8)
- goals for post schooling (1) (2) (3) (5) (6) (7) (8)
- interests and skills in technology. (2) (3) (6) (8)
- motivation and reasons for being at school (1) (2) (3) (5) (6) (7) (8)

**Question 2: How could the breadth of their interests and needs be accommodated by English at Stage 6?**

These require different modes of accommodating students through the design of broad based syllabuses (8) and flexible pathways. (1) (4). [The group supports a balanced mix of growth model for personal development and a cultural studies model for social development. As a result they argue strongly for inclusion of creative and critical elements at senior levels (7)]. Some of these might include:
• creative forms of student response and assessment (8) to support diversity, including the use of portfolios; (2) (3) (5) (7)

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• criterion-based assessment (2) (5) [Measure what students CAN do, not what they cannot - means differentiated courses] [but not nomenclature debate and its implications for equality and access (7)]
• authentic assessment accessing community resources (2) (5);
• use of real audience (2) (5);
• ongoing assessment of outcomes (2) (5);
• inclusion of major works for wider skill range and personal satisfaction in product; (2) (4) (5) (8)
• personal interest project (2) (5) (8) [a school — assessed personal interest project should be an integral part of any Stage 6 English course - the project should be school assessed but exam moderated. (7)]
• access to information technology (2) (3) (5) (8)
• negotiated learning and assessment tasks and development of skills in learning how to learn/reflective process (1) (2) (3) (4) (8) [include students in curriculum development and text selection (from wide range to be listed). Some students interests may never be met (7)]
• oral and written skill development for a range of social and cultural purposes. A balance across the learning modes of reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (8)
• reflection of their own and other cultures in their English courses (2) (3) (5) (8)
• incorporating differing gender perspectives while deconstructing notions of gender itself (2) (4)
• comprehensive range and variety of texts/genres including factual and media and different approaches, tools and techniques (2) (3) (4) (5) (8) [there must be a broad and broadly defined text list (7)] [establish a core list of text types to be included and add list of extension texts for wide reading and for advanced and lit/extension (7)]
• variety of well-selected study options within each course/differentiated courses (1) (2) (3) (5) (6) (8)
• issues-based units/thematic cultural study in the core (2) (3) (4) (7) (8)
• Literature to be valued by its inclusion in all courses. (1) (2) (3) (5) (6) (8)
• Literature/extension course should be available to less academic students as well as the talented (1) (2)
• Extension course should not be wholly literature based. (1) (2) (3) (4)
• Literature should include a wider canon (1) (2) (3) (5) (6) (7) (8)
• courses should include popular and media texts (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (7) (8)
• wide and independent reading (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)
• contextual study (2) (3) (5) (7)
• opportunities for personal growth in all courses (2) (3) (8) [empower students in language competence and ways of understanding their world (7)]
• opportunities for text creation (2) (3) (4) (5) (8)
• providing a continuum from Stage 5 to Stage 6 (2) (3) (4) (5)
• providing teaching and learning experiences for students who need challenge as well as for those students who need support (2) (3) (4) (5) (8) [there must be flexibility in the available pathways through English at senior levels because of wide ability and interest range of students, but more importantly because of the wide range of uses to which the developed competencies will be put (7)]

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• all students have access to a degree of achievement in the Core; that the Core is the notion of ‘the essence’; that the Core is skills/language driven; Core is linked to English 7-10 (2) (3) (4) (6)
• In all courses opportunities for practical English, vocational literacy (3) (4) (5), communication skills (2) (4) (8)
• integrate activities with other subject demands - there is too much duplication of demand for particular competencies (eg genre writing) (7)

**Question 3: What do post-school interest groups expect of the HSC candidature in English?**

• Literacy (including functional, communicative, critical technological/multimedia). Competent users of standard English (1) (2) (3) (5) (7) (8) [canonical cultural literacy/familiar with canonical references (7)]
• critical analytical thinkers (1) (2) (3) (5) (8)
• capable of problem solving and lateral thinking (2) (3) (5)
• prepared for academic writing demands (1) (2) (8)
• key competencies: cooperation, teamwork, communication skills, research skills; problem solving (2) (3) (5) (7) (8)
• transferable skills (2) (3) (7)
• active, informed, critical citizenry (1) (2) (3) (8 — but think this point may have to be spelt out)
• to understand student performance vis a vis the performance of others for the purpose of tertiary entrance (2) (3)
• social/interpersonal competence (1) (2) (3) (8)
• ability to deal with change — be flexible (1) (2) (3) (5) (7)
• appreciation and knowledge of cultural heritage (1) (2) (3-some agree) (8)
• creativity and discrimination (2) (8)
• high TER — this stifles and almost precludes further discussion, even when its public continuance and purpose are contested. Parity/definition of rigour vis-a-vis maths (7)

**Areas for further discussion:**

• ESL as a separate course as opposed to mainstream English with ESL support through additional work. (3)
• Why not have ESL students moving between ESL and Standard for specific purposes?
  Modular structure for ESL and Standard — some common modules. (3) (8)
• doing ESL and Standard cuts students out of another subject that they may need post-HSC
  (2) (3)
• Is there a possibility for transfer from a preliminary ESL to HSC standard? Do ESL
  students do common core? (2) (3)
• Aspects of current contemporary course needs to be maintained. In the core? (7)
• Will those students who need Fundamentals but don’t like English be prepared to enrol in
  the additional course? In what ways can Fundamentals support the Core. Does it need a
  literature component? (1) (2) (3) (5) (7) (8)
• students should be consulted about their needs (3)
• credit transfer to TAFE and provision of Stage 6 in one year (2) (7)
• need for a significant credential for students exiting after Preliminary course (5)
• perceived conflict between success in public exam compared with personal and intellectual
  fulfilment (2) (3) (7) (8)
• rewards in calculation of UAI for attempting more difficult courses (2) (3) (5) (8)
• nomenclature of courses, eg current confusion between the course name Standard English
  and the establishment form of the language standard English (3) (5) (7)
• system of grammar
• How will students who achieve below acceptable minimal standards be described/reported?
  (3) (6) (8)
• provision for professional development to assist in implementation of change (3) (5)
• credit transfer. The relationship between the study of English in TAFE and secondary
  schools and workplace experience (2) (7)
• parameters of the core (2) (5) (7)
• community awareness and understanding of changes to English curriculum (3) (7) (8)
• a proactive media strategy to ensure community receptiveness and support for the kinds
  of changes proposed by professionals. (2) (3) (7)
GROUP 1

**Purpose:** To outline the broad content of each Stage 6 English course and map its place in the Senior English curriculum.

**Questions**

1. What should constitute the common core of the Standard and Advanced courses?

2. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for the core? Consider both internal and external assessment approaches.

3. What are the features that distinguish this course from the others?

4. What should be common across the courses? What should be the differences?

**Summary of Workshop 3a**

**Question 1: What should constitute the common core of the Standard and Advanced courses?**

**Range of suggestions for common core**

- centrality of the core is language development (4) (7)
- creating and critiquing — these skills could organise all other skills and content areas (4) (6) (7)
- the core should cater for all students (2) (3) (5) (6) (7) (8)
- its workload should reflect its ‘percentage value’ in the course (3) (7)(8)
- balance of 5 learning modes. Tasks should involve an integration of all these (2) (3) (6) (7) (8)
- wide range of texts (including poetry, drama, novel and prose, oral, popular culture, film study, media, visual, multimedia etc) to build on knowledge of types of texts, purpose and features (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)
- a range of set texts (including visual, media and some literature) with diverse cultural contexts with generic question (2) (5) (8)
- critiquing a wide range of texts. Range of texts should reflect the diversity of life experiences and Australian society, challenge existing ideas, understandings and beliefs of students (2) (4) (8)
- thematic study as organising framework synthesising material drawn from a variety of sources (3) (4) (8)
- issues approach (3) (4) (8)
- skill development approach (2) (3) (4) (8)
• Prelim core to demonstrate a continuum between Stage 5 and HSC course (2) (3) (5)
  • variety of language use in context — analysis of structures and features — explicit language teaching including the teaching of a system of grammar (1) (2) (6) (8)

• creation of a range of texts in a range of registers including imaginative and vocational writing (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)
• developing oracy skills — speaking and listening in a range of contexts (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)
• communication skills (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)
• opportunity for student text choice (2) (5) (7)
• wide reading (2) (3) (5) (6) (7) (8)
• personal growth (1) (2) (6) (8)
• literacy skills development particularly for ESL students who do not meet criteria to do ESL course (2) (6) (8)
• popular culture component to allow responses from a broader range of students (2) (8)
• Learning to Learn component (4)

Areas for Further Discussion:
• How will core relate to Fundamentals course? (1) (2) (3)
• How big will it be? (5)
• Inclusion of literature in the core. Some believe that finding suitable texts for wide range of students would be very difficult. Others that literature should be included as evidence of ‘the balance of texts’ in the core. A suggestion was that literature in the core should allow for personal response rather than lit/crit. (3) (8)

Question 2: What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for the core? Consider both internal and external assessment approaches.

Assessment suggestions
• criteria should be detailed (1) (2) (and clear - (8))
• standards referenced (1) (2) (5) (8)
• common assessment for core (1) (2) (5) (8)
• negotiated forms of assessment (1)
• variety of assessment tools (1) (2) (5) (6) (8)
• only common core should be externally assessed[ CC…..only. (8)] (5)
• school assessment moderated by exam but final mark is in 60:40 ratio - school 60%, exam40% (6)
• skill-based assessment — components: writing, speaking, listening (3) (8)
• assess process rather than products (1) (5)
• opportunity to include wide reading by the assessment process (2) (3) (5)
• outcomes should drive assessment (5)
• we should assess the best students can do. (5)

External
• issues based (cf Topic Area) (2) (3)
• generic question on range of set texts (8) (5)
• must include extended writing — creating texts in a variety of forms (5) (6)
• unseen reading (interpreting) task to assess understanding of language use in context (6)
• communication skills (3) (5)
• key competencies (2) (5) (7)
• portfolio (with oral component to panel of examiners) (1) (2)
• verification panels like TAFE model could be considered (8)

Internal
• portfolio of range of created texts including multimedia (2) (3) (5)
• more assessment of oral tasks (1) (3) (5) (7) (8)
• assessment tasks that focus on the process of creating and producing (1) (5) (8) (7)
• non-exam types of assessment should be mandated (2) (7) (8)
• more creative methods such as process diaries, group work (2) (3) (5) (6)
• internal assessment should be complementary to and not mimic external assessment (2) (5) (8)
• should reflect the process and include several components such as research, writing and oral presentation (2) (3) (7) (8)
• components of self-assessment to develop critiquing skills (5) (6)
• external verification should apply to internal assessment (2) (7) (8)
• oral tasks to include group work participation (7)

Areas for Further Discussion re: assessment
• How can assessment practices reward creativity and originality rather than move towards standardised responses (5)
• Is the core to be examined separately? (5) (8)
• Scaling has historically failed to reward harder courses in English. How can students be assured that attempting these courses will be beneficial to their UAI? (2) (5)
• Will the move from norm to standards-based marking encourage students to do more demanding courses? (2)
• How can a mark in an exam be translated into a description? (8)
• listening skills assessed (3) (7) (8)
• achievement of students achieving below 50% needs to be acknowledged (2) (6)
• oral component to be assessed (7)
• removal of time constraints on essay work in exams (5) (6)
• Will core of Yr11 be assessed as well as Yr12? (8)
• How will internal and external assessment correlate? If school receive a certain number of As (Top 10% HSC) this implies a correlation between internal and external. (5) (8)
• Will the standards referencing be derived from external or internal assessment or a combination of both? (2)

Question 3: What are the features that distinguish this course from the others?

Feature of Standard/Advanced courses
• literacy, communication, oral skills (3) (5) (7)
• wide reading (3) (5) (6) (7)
• creative writing (3) (5) (6) (7)
• text analysis (3) (6)
• range of texts to allow for transfer between courses (3) (5) (7)

Features of Standard Course
• personal growth - fostering of independent study skills (3)
• topic area approach (3)
• pre-20\textsuperscript{th} century options (1)
• cultural study (1)

• media options (1) (3)
• may be extracts of texts rather than complete work (3) (8)

Features of Advanced Course
• In-depth study of literary genres (cf 3 unit) (1) (3) (5)
• media options (1) (3) (5)
• demanding texts and responses requiring higher level of language and ideas (1) (3-some agree) (5)
• pre-20\textsuperscript{th} century options (1) (3)
• cultural study (1) (3) (5)

• Advanced course should not be defined by more complex literary texts but by more sophisticated evaluation and response to a variety of texts including literature. (1) (3-some agree) (8)
• student-centred learning — students need to demonstrate that they are undertaking increased responsibility for their own learning. This might involve group work/team approaches, problem solving, research skills (3) (5) (8)

Extension
• focus on creating a significant text — major work/project/research focus (8)
• open to Standard as well as Advanced students (3) (7) (8)
• student choice/negotiation (8)
• to allow students to pursue in greater depth and at greater length and with greater areas of interest generated from within existing studies
• need not be higher ability — can be extension of interest area or interdisciplinary study (3) (7)

Fundamentals
• could be more time rather than a specific course, ie twice as long to complete Preliminary Standard course (8)

Areas for Further Discussion
• students who perceive themselves as failures will not choose to do another 2 units of failure (5) (8)

**Question 4: What should be common across the courses? What should be the differences?**

**What should be common across courses?**
- Literature (however defined) (2) (5) (8)
- centrality of language — its use in context and analysis of how meaning is created. Explicit description of language to provide common metalanguage (2) (5)
- learning how to learn. How they are learning and what they are learning need to be seen as equally important.
- teaching and development of research skills, skills of selection, discrimination and critiquing is required
- key competencies need to be incorporated (2) (3) (5) (8)
- wide reading (2) (3) (5) (8)

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• balance of all learning modes (2) (5) (8)

**Differences between courses**
- Core offers multiplicity of approaches. Advanced will offer reason for the different approaches
- analysis of how meaning is made is higher order thinking and is more prominent in Advanced/Extension (7).
- depth of responses will establish Advanced course. (5)

**Structural suggestions**
- Organise non core-material through electives (2) (3) (5) (8)
- there needs to be flexibility to allow students to move from one course to another particularly in Yr 11 to Yr 12. (2) (8)

**Areas for Further Discussion**
- nomenclature - ‘Standard/Advanced’ etc. (3) (5) (7)
- concern that a ‘Fundamentals’ approach not dominate Standard course — need for creativity and Literature (3)
- What will happen to 2UC students?
- Should students in standard course have access to extension? (3) (7)
- What does ‘higher level’ mean? (2) (3)
WORKSHOP 3b

THE ESL STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE

SUMMARY

GROUP 1

Purpose: To provide detailed advice on the nature of the ESL course.

Questions:

1. What could be the rationale of this course? What could be the ‘strict eligibility requirements’ (Securing their Future) for this course?

2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?

3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?

4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?

5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?

7. How can this course be ensured of commensurate status with other English courses in the eyes of community, employers etc?

8. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP 3b

AREAS OF CONSENSUS

Question 1: What could be the rationale of this course? What could be the ‘strict eligibility requirements’ (Securing their Future) for this course?

Rationale

- Course should be designed for students whose home language is not English, to give them access to the language of the Australian community and the language of schooling and improve educational opportunities and outcomes.
- Course should provide access to all possible tertiary pathways.
- Methods of assessment and entry requirements should be equitable, not comparing ESL students with native speakers.
What could be the ‘strict eligibility’ requirements?

- Should be available to students who have been no more than two years in Australia or the equivalent, or up to four years if schooling was interrupted in their home country.
- Should be available to students meeting the above criterion whose English language proficiency level is generally between ESL scales levels 3-7 but could be lower.

Question 2: What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?

- Teaching and learning experiences and course competencies should be determined by course outcomes.
- Teaching should be explicit.

Question 3: How might this course incorporate the key competencies?

- Teaching and learning experiences should build on and value students’ home cultures and Australian culture.
- Correlation between ESL scales and Key Competencies applies particularly in communication outcomes.
- The 8th Key Competency [cultural understanding] should be included, with emphasis on personal and domestic values.

Question 4: What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?

- Language skills taught should articulate with TAFE courses for students who do not complete years 11 and 12.
- Skills taught should include language, communication, key competencies, oral language, creating and critiquing texts and research skills.
- Should include close study of texts, including in year 11.
- Knowledge taught should be based on social view of language, ie text types, making meaning, social and situational contexts. It should incorporate oral language skills and modelling language skills. It should include media texts, including everyday texts, advertising etc. It should include literature from a range of cultures. It should include knowledge about language as well as practice in using it.
- Values taught should include the value of the individual in relation to society, respecting the views of others and appreciation of diversity.
- Attitudes taught should include positive attitude to critiquing texts, confidence in taking risks, enjoyment of [language and literature].
- Should develop students’ English language competence, ie pragmatic, organisational and strategic competence.
Question 5: What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

• Aspects of the course could qualify for recognition of prior learning in TAFE.
• Course could include aspects of existing 2 Unit Contemporary, Certificate in Spoken and Written English and TAFE ESP courses
• Texts could focus on an issue or theme common with other courses but use appropriate teaching practices to access texts.

Question 6: What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?

• Assessment strategies should be both internal and external. Internal strategies could include portfolios, audio tapes, multimedia. External strategies could include written responses.
• Strategies should allow for the full range of intelligence, abilities, levels of motivation, learning styles and home languages and cultures.
• Avoid decontextualised, checklist strategies.
• Assessment strategies should be criterion-referenced, school-based, consistent with ESL scales.
• Assessment strategies should provide opportunities to demonstrate progress and success. They should be distinguished from teaching strategies. They should be equivalent to those in other courses, for the sake of parity of status.
• External assessment strategies should include examinations with essays and extended forms of writing. These should be determined by the course outcomes, with clear published criteria. They should include speaking skills, with clear published criteria.
• Reading assessment could be linked with writing.
• Internal assessment strategies should be varied, and should assess the process as well as the product.

Question 7: How can this course be ensured of commensurate status with other English courses in the eyes of community, employers etc?

• Ensure ability to move into other pathways.
• Address key competencies that meet the needs of employers and tertiary institutions.

Matters for Further Discussion

1. What could be the rationale of this course? What could be the ‘strict eligibility requirements’ (Securing their Future) for this course?

Entry criteria
• What other criteria should apply, other than English language proficiency as determined by the ESL scales and length of time in Australia?
4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?

- The kinds of literary texts studies, particularly their length.
- How to take account of different literacy practices in students’ home languages and cultures.

5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

- Relationship of ESL course with Standard and Advanced courses.
- How to handle ‘common core’?
- What would be the course’s exit points?
- The nature of teacher qualifications and professional development for teaching this course.
- How will the need for ESL support in other subject areas be addressed?
- How to allow for the needs of students with language proficiency lower than the IEC exit standard.
- How to ensure that the course is valued by the universities
- What sort of support should be available to students in assessment tasks, eg dictionaries, time, pre-reading, audio tapes, group activities, technology.
- The nature of ESL support that should be provided in other courses?

7. How can this course be ensured of commensurate status with other English courses in the eyes of community, employers etc.?

- Unsure whether ESL course will have commensurate status, because its candidates are perceived to be studying a foreign language.
- Eligibility of this course and comparable ESL courses, for Commonwealth funding?
- This course might not be taken by all students who need it. Many will take the Standard and Fundamentals courses if equivalent status is not given and if students cannot access all possible pathways from this course.

Appendix: Note from facilitators

Owing to the small number of participants in this workshop the responses to some questions are not as specific and detailed as they need to be. In particular, questions 1, 2, 5 and 7 require more consultation and discussion with all sectors in order to provide greater clarity about expectations of the course.

The group did not have a balance of representatives from across sectors. The government schools sector was underrepresented in this workshop particularly.
WORKSHOP 3b - THE EXTENSION STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE
SUMMARY
GROUP 2

Purpose: To provide detailed advice on the nature of the Extension English course.

Questions:

1. What are the interests and specific needs of students who would be attracted to the extension course/s in English?; How might students not traditionally undertaking advanced English be attracted to an extension course in English?; What could be the rationale of this course?

2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?

3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?

4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?

5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?

7. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?

Question 1: What are the interests and specific needs of students who would be attracted to the extension course/s in English?; How might students not traditionally undertaking advanced English be attracted to an extension course in English?; What could be the rationale of this course?

Who will enter?

- Students will be skilled and passionate so self-motivated — rigour is in process rather than product.
- The Extension is from aspects of the syllabus which cannot be fulfilled within Standard or Advanced.
- The students need not be of higher ‘ability’ but their interest will promote the parameters for the Extension.
• It will encourage students to an in-depth engagement involving independent research and development that will be self-selected but guided to encourage risk-taking, collaboration, independence based on set of issues/touchstones (parameters) that must be engaged with to show selection processes, limits and critique of what is established and how it is achieved.

Rationale for extension

• To allow students to pursue in greater depth and at greater length and with greater rigour, areas of interest generated from within existing studies. What they are learning and how they are learning are equally important.
• To produce people who know how to learn — as reflective learners they will have faced and articulated both the joys and the problems of the ways they works to solve and resolve problems/issues of importance to them.
• The admission of cognate studies to allow students to build from an area onto another.

Entry - to all students is possible but minimum standards are published

• Consider possibility of opening up the unit to students who are doing ‘advanced’ units in English and/or one of a nominated range of cognate disciplines, eg Mod Hist, Art, Drama, Ancient History etc
• Understanding of how student’s identity is linked to their creative text.

Question 2: What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?
[SA - strong agreement; GA - general agreement; D - some support for the idea]

• Creating and critiquing very strongly supported.
• Cannot be referenced to the scaled Standard/Advanced course. (SA)
• Extension course should focus on the process rather than on a series of products so that it should be aimed towards self-directed learning
  - set goals
  - manage time
  - take responsibility for own learning.

Structure

• There needs to be a core element in which the skills needed to do an independent project will be established [these could be examinable]. (SA)
• Ideal place to introduce wide range of theoretical orientations (usually beyond Standard/Advanced approach). (SA)
• Course must establish Analysis (Core); Research/Creativity (Options) — create and/or critique. (SA)
• **Range of options** will be wider than any teacher’s expertise in content but not in **process**. (SA)
• Must be **part of the timetable routine** (these are usually busy students anyway). (SA)
• Should include **research skills development; a project; an examinable set of outcomes**. (GA)
• Can be 1 (expandable to 2) or 2 Unit at both 11/12. (GA)
• Face-to-face teaching needed to establish process and skills. (GA)

**Question 3:** How might this course incorporate the key competencies?

(incorporated into next question)

**Question 4:** What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?

**Key Skills**

• Independent learning — following process → **product** (SA)
• Ability to structure own learning (SA)
• Logging process/self-evaluation (to be taught) (SA)
• Active commitment (SA)
• Flexibility (SA)
• Research skills (SA)
• Discrimination skills — ability to identify quality as outcome of critical ability (GA)
• Understanding conventions and theory of genre studied (GA)
• Ability to critique (ie to understand and use, analyse independently a body of work) (GA)
• Precision in use of language and presentation of critique (GA)

Points for further discussion - debated

• Cultural contexts and personal contexts as integral to each other (D)

**Question 5:** What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

The transcript details an individual brainstorming but indicates a wealth of exciting, interesting and worthwhile projects to provide access and interest for all students wishing to extend their English studies.

There was strong support for the analysis/research/project model though the exact structure was debated.

There was also strong support for the creative component to be significant.

The developed concept was:
• Preliminary study would establish analytical and research skills which lead to a guided research project that would be creative/critical or a balance of these — depending on the project. Project design would be largely dependent on student interest but would be negotiated to demonstrate clearly the outcomes of the course. HSC would extend the research and analytical skills and generate a more independently developed, more focused, more sophisticated research project.

• The content suggestions divided into several discrete but overlapping foci:
  - Creative work that might be presented in folio form, might include performance or media/multi media product and logbooks mapping development
  - Literary studies focusing on transformational studies where students work from a corpus of identified interest to the critique and creation of a second corpus - of student developed work.
  - Literary studies focusing on generic and inter-generic language features of literature types.
  - Language studies including genre studies and resulting in products which demonstrate the capacity to utilise knowledge for a range of communicative intentions.
  - Research projects focusing on film critique, comparison and creation should consciously identify cultural as well as semantic aspects of the corpus researched.

**Question 6: What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?**

• Extension should not be assessed on a reference basis from Standard / Advanced.
• If it is to be examined externally then the research and analytical skills should be the core material for assessment rather than any attempt to create assessment tasks.
• An outcomes-based assessment was seen to be central to framing the course and assessing it.
• An oral component was seen to be very important as these students should be able to express their findings in a range of modes.
• Process rather than product assessment was seen to be essential to the integrity of the course so process diaries/log books/journals/visiting examining panels were seen to be important.
• A mix of formative and summative assessment was accepted as useful.
• The five modes of transmission/reception of communication should all be assessed necessarily to fulfil the expected outcomes of the course proposed.
Purpose: To provide detailed advice on the nature of the Fundamentals course.

Questions:

1. What could be the rationale of this course? What are the interests and specific needs of students who would be attracted to the Fundamentals of English course?

2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?

3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?

4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes that students should acquire from this course?

5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?

7. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?

Question 1: What could be the rationale of this course? What are the interests and specific needs of students who would be attracted to the Fundamentals of English course?

Rationale

Students — needs
- Students with large need for support can be met in this model, ie support to achieve outcomes of the core study
- NESB - ATSI - other
- (1) early leavers, (2) those remaining to HSC
- Students who have not met Stage 5 outcomes — for a range of reasons (equity)
- To support students to better achieve outcomes of ‘Standard’ English
- A Fundamentals course will contradict a satisfactory definition of core experience/practice for Standard and Advanced
- More than 2 units of English competes with other course/subject choices.

Students — interests
- Sense of achievement for students leaving school before qualifying for the HSC credential
• Interests — ie to promote, stimulate, inspire a desire to persevere with Stage 6 English and other courses

Matters for Further Discussion
• Cannot exist as a separate subject, but will fit in a core and options structure.

**Question 2**: What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?

**Teaching/Learning**
- Enabling/resource — explicit teaching of grammar/language features — in context of creating texts — use of models - with clearly defined and described features.
- Texts inclusive of ‘literature’ to popular — poetry — same range of genre, authentic, sustained reading
- Develop a personal voice — spoken/written
- Critical literacy — must have access to full range of skills
- Credential — confirms — recognises achievement
- ‘Team’ or group approach to learning — enabling method to permit outcomes to be achieved.

**Question 3**: How might this course incorporate the Key Competencies?

**Key Competencies**
- Knowledge/skills/attributes/values/understandings
- Valuing of student — sense of self worth
- Skills — reflect on learning; achievement of outcomes
- Links to standard/advanced course core must be transparent
- Roles in groups - projects with explicit division of work into tasks — explicit responsibilities
- Project-based course — sharing skills
- Contracts — look at knowledge; understanding to work in this context
- speaking; listening; negotiating; agreement; note-taking; recording; research; evaluation; product
- Managing yourself in group contexts — interpersonal skills
- Time-planning skills
- Action/activity based
- Course — topics clearly defined at syllabus — mandated level
- Assumes tasks are creative
- Media/electronic technology — must serve English, ie meaning in social and technical contexts
- See rationale for ESL students who do not have access to the stand-alone ESL course. This course has access to Standard English
Question 5: What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

Course structure and content

- Student choice
- Structure difficult in relation to Standard
- Cannot work as ‘add-on’ 2 units — parallel to Standard, ie Standard is co-requisite study for this course — like Supplementary but 2 units
- Fundamentals course cannot be written until outcomes of the standard course are known
- Does Fundamentals have its own outcomes?
- Diverse students/diverse weaknesses — that prevent achievement of standard outcomes.
  (A deficit model of the student)

Matters for Further Discussion

- Links to Standard - especially the Core

Question 6: What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?

- Link to assessment — diagnostic only — with no certification?
- Content — issues and texts — teacher choice of texts and assessment instruments
  Preliminary only
- Summative assessment as basis of credential to demonstrate achievement of outcomes in Fundamentals course
- Student-centred — negotiate which outcomes at Standard level were achieved with extra study.
- Only the outcomes needing extra support
- NOTE: Reporting on achievement within the course will not fit easily with format for reporting outcomes for Standard English

Question 7: Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?

Overall Concern:

The comments for the Fundamentals group seems clear. The overriding view was that few students who need Fundamentals would do it. The other overall concern was that the writers of the separate courses be aware of the other English courses.
WORKSHOP 3b  THE LITERATURE STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE
SUMMARY
GROUP 4

**Purpose:** To provide detailed advice on the nature of the Literature English course.

1. What are the interests and specific needs of students who would be attracted to the Literature course/s in English? How might students not traditionally undertaking advanced English be attracted to a Literature course in English? What could be the rationale of this course?

2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?

3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?

4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?

5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?

7. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?

**Question 1:** What are the interests and specific needs of students who would be attracted to the Literature course/s in English? How might students not traditionally undertaking advanced English be attracted to a Literature course in English? What could be the rationale of this course?

- The achievement of personal growth (including reader-response notions of engagement with texts) through the study of literary texts.
- The attractiveness of studying high-quality literary texts. Young people want to be challenged by ideas. The devising of a bridge between secondary and tertiary study of English.
- Self-expression through creating texts (gaining writing skills/confidence through study of texts as models for one’s own writing). To extend the voracious reader.
- The naming of the course needs to be considered/reconsidered in light of attracting students to it.

An example of a working title: ‘Creating and Studying Texts.’
The rationale is to provide an opportunity for students to engage with and be extended by a range of challenging texts, giving students the opportunity to create and refine a sustained original creative or critical work. It will give students the opportunity to engage with a wide range of texts from different cultural sources.

The aim of the course is to balance critiquing and creativity. It will aim to balance textual with contextual study — wide-ranging and cross-cultural — as exemplified respectively by single author study (Yeats) and study of a topic area (Utopian texts): synthesis rather than discreteness.

**Question 2: What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?**

*Learning experiences*
This should include:
- an appreciation of the contexts of a range of texts;
- promotions of confidence in expressing personal response (including notions of oracy?);
- promotion of critical thinking;
- promoting a cross-cultural sensitivity, beginning from an Australian perspective;
- crafting a sustained text/body of texts - over a period of time as evidenced by the process journal.

*Australian identity* (the notion as a point of departure):
Literature conceived of and taught/experienced as a way of understanding culture in the context(s) of contemporary Australian society now. The category ‘literature’ would include texts by / about indigenous people(s).

In the Preliminary year, students still engage in a thematic study, which will comprise a thematic study (Australian identity). This will involve: literature conceived of ... etc. as above. Knowledge and skills developed would include: Study of context(s); application of critical thought; development of personal response and cross-cultural sensitivity, leading to the crafting of sustained text.

‘Australian identity(ies)’ is a thematic area that should be outward looking - focusing diversely rather than exclusively, enabling students to develop a personal interest study area such as; author study; historical study; multi/cross-cultural study; world literature (including literature in translation); thematic study; genre study; comparative (cross-media) study; linguistic study (including oral history??); theatre studies; youth culture (including music lyrics); indigenous studies.

Such a study would reflect students’ demonstrated understandings of context(s), critical thought, personal response, cross-cultural sensitivity and lead to the critiquing and creating of an original work.
Question 5: What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

Structure
There should be: a theoretical, a practical and an experiential component. How should they be individually weighted?

Creating and critiquing shouldn’t be separated. Varieties of reading opportunities should be offered: the possibility of exploring different domains of literary experience. For example, the current 3 unit model, which would not limit students to a single author but involve them in genre study/mode study and in study beyond the boundaries of genre.

In the production of major work, the process, as well as the product, is to be valued — involving a process diary used to refine and craft the major work (both process and product to be assessed).

The major work could be, for example, an extended critique. That could include genre study, author study, or study of a topic area as the point of focus.
WORKSHOP 3b THE ADVANCED STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE SUMMARY FINDINGS GROUPS 5 AND 6

**Purpose:** To provide detailed advice on the nature of the Advanced English course.

**Questions:**

1. What could be the rationale of this course?

2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?

3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?

4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?

5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?

7. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?

**Summary 3(b)**

**Advanced Course**

**Question 1:** What could be the rationale of this course?

**Rationale**

- more challenging course for students with capacity and interest (5) (6)
- appeal to wide group of students with innovative activities and wide range of texts (5) (6)
- contextual and close study of variety of texts from different periods and cultures (5) (6)
- creating and critiquing (5)
- opportunities for self direction and self assessment (5)
- should reward those who choose the course (5) (6)
- should build on 7 - 10 (5) (6)

**Question 2:** What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?

**Teaching / Learning Experiences**
• student centred approach/empowering experiences/student drive learning/teacher facilitator (5) (6)

• reflection and self-evaluation by student (5) (6)
• speaking and listening — group dynamics — performance (5) (6)
• analysis of spoken texts (5) (6)
• creating a wide range and texts in different media for different audiences and purposes and self-expressive; re-creating texts - portfolio (5) (6)
• critiquing texts (5) (6)
• wide reading — to appreciate cultural difference — genre variety — different historical periods (5) (6)
• emphasis on process and on life-long independent learning (6)
• possible negotiated curriculum (5) (6)
• Prelim /HSC division to allow range of experiences in senior English which are not assessable (5) (6)
• explore themes/comparative study (5)
• critical literacy
• analysis of media and popular culture (5) (6)
• major area study

**Question 3: How might this course incorporate the key competencies?**

**Key Competencies**

- All the key competencies can (should?) be touched on by this course (6)
- The question needs to be asked: How is/are this/these going to be assessed? (6)
- Must be observable and valued (6)
- Must be reported (6)
- Must be taught specifically and explicitly (6)
- Multimedia in the process (6)

**KC1**

- self-directed work (6)
- portfolio? (6)
- collect, analyse and organise information (6)
- research skills (6)

**KC2**

- reading, viewing, writing, listening and speaking (6)
- understanding of common process (6)

**KC3**

- student-centred learning approaches (6)

**KC4**

- student-centred learning approaches (6)
- self-evident (6)
Question 4: What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?

Key skills
- Analysis, deconstruction and evaluation of what they read, hear and see (5) (6)
- The ability to manipulate language, and to write and speak with artistry, originality and flair (5) (6)
- Synthesising, imagining, responding (5) (6)
- Ability to write in different forms (5) (6)
- Research and summarising skills (5) (6)
- Ability to reflect on the process of learning (5) (6)

Knowledge and understandings
- The conventions of language features and forms in various genres and texts (5) (6)
- Sophisticated understanding of how language constructs our world (5) (6)
- Understanding how language structures work in context of both critiquing and creating modes (5) (6)
- Theoretical underpinnings of different approaches to English (6)
- Metalanguage to discuss text (6)

Values and attitudes
- Value a range of texts including those from other periods and cultures (6)
- Value initiative, innovation and self-motivation (5) (6)

Question 5: What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

Course structure
- Core content in both Preliminary and Yr12 — options (5) (6)
- Modules grouped to allow balance of a variety of teaching/learning experiences and cover a specified range of skills (5)
- Course should articulate with extension (5)
- A range of texts to be available for each option (5) (6)
- No compulsory prescribed texts in Yr 11. Broad approach. (5) (6)
- Core +2 to 4 modules to be studied in Prelim. (this refers to the common core) or Core + 2x40 hr modules for Prelim and Core + 3x40 hr modules in HSC course—please explain) or Core + compulsory advanced module + 2 options. [Core 3 modules (6)] [ Prelim = common core + 2 * 40 hour modules; HSC year = common core + 3*40 hour modules (5)]
• some modules to require breadth of study, others depth (5)
• creating/critiquing and language to be a part of the study of each module (5)

and Content
• Yr 11 modules to be school developed (5) (6)
• creating electives: writing, journalism, biography, non-fiction (5) (6)
• research electives (5) (6)
• cross-media electives (5) (6)
• author study (5) (6)
• language elective (5) (6)

• Engage with a broad range of texts such as books, plays, novels, poetry, non-fiction, multi-media, film (5) (6)
• An organising principle of all courses that students engage with a wide range of texts drawn from broad historical periods and a range of cultural contexts including texts in translation (6)
• Literature - broader definition (include other text types/new technology) - including ‘canon’ (5) (6)

Question 6: What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?

Assessment
Internal
• Internal should be markedly different from external methods/ outcomes. (5) (6)
• Yr 11 could contain self-assessment components. (5)
• Internal assessments should assess outcomes. (5)
• Some elective modules could be wholly internally assessed (while others are external). (5)

External
• Want to see ‘creating’ assessed. Board could assess product and process. (5)
• Need more than one exam paper. (5)
• English exams need to be more flexible and complex eg writing task drafted - break - final draft. (5)
• Open book? Open time frames? Pre-announced topic for creative writing? (5)

Question 7: Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students?  Are there aspects not included?  Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?

Matters for discussion
• advanced in relation to what? Standard or core? (5)
• is a separate desirable? Possible? Should rationale be common but include separate description of nature of courses? (5) (6)
• Do we need to go beyond the modes? Where does multimedia fit in? (5)
• small schools have difficulty in implementing multiple courses (5) (6)
• balance between internal and external assessment is a problem given different natures (5)
WORKSHOP 3b  THE STANDARD STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE
SUMMARY FINDINGS
GROUPS 7 AND 8

Purpose: To provide detailed advice on the nature of the Standard English course.

Questions:

1. What could be the rationale of this course?

2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?

3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?

4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?

5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?

6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?

7. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?

SUMMARY 3(B)

STANDARD COURSE

Question 1: What could be the rationale of this course?

Rationale.

- to further develop personal excellence in language as defined in 7-10 syllabus (7) (8)
- rework rationales from 2UG, broad based or 2UC and K-6. However, require more explicit teaching of grammar. (7) (8)
- ‘skills’ and ‘doing’ from 2UG (7) (8)
- rationale should be reflected in the way the course is examined (7) (8)
- include technology (7) (8)
- multiple approaches to texts to account for individual learning styles (7) (8)
- broad base of texts and approaches to expand social/cultural awareness, self understanding, world view (7) (8)
- opportunities for creating and critiquing a range of text types (7) (8)
- incorporate key competencies (7) (8)
• balance of 4 learning modes and viewing (7) (8)
• development of critical reading (7) (8)

• love of literature in its broadest sense (8)
• organising perspectives should be stated in the rationale (theoretical underpinnings) (8)
• definition of text to be broad enough to accommodate changing technologies and the diverse needs of the candidature. Need to push students beyond the known and familiar to broaden their experience. (7) (8)
• English has a fundamental role in the learning process itself as well as in personal and social discourse and in the production and reception of meaning (8)
• articulation with K-6 and 7-10 (7) (8)
• include student outcomes, pathways, possible indication that fundamentals may be recommended for some students (7) (8)

**Question 2: What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?**

What kinds of teaching/learning experiences?
• active engagement - student centred learning (7) (8)
• explore, engage, initiate, negotiate, research (7) (8)
• learning experiences should have opportunities for practical/real life applications - publication of work - literacy will be an aspect of the course. (8)
• include options for creating and critiquing, including textual analysis, ensuring students do both (7) (8)
• option for major work in which process would be monitored (7) (8)
• cater for all learning styles / learning how to learn (7) (8)
• inclusion of a wide range of texts broadly defined (7) (8)
• inclusion of the five modes (7) (8)

**Question 3: How might this course incorporate the key competencies?**

Key competencies (8)
• linked to accreditation at TAFE (7) (Note from Group 7: there were many comments from Group 7 made in reference to Key Competencies and having structured and published descriptors to be used by Stage 6 teachers.)
• KC1
  • independent learning module
  • construction of portfolio material
  • in issues -collecting, organising and analysing information (7)
  • may form basis for interpretive or performance tasks
  • range of text types
  • using technology
  • summarising and note taking skills
Question 4: What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?

Skills, knowledge, understandings

Skills

- understand the logic and language features of texts — manipulation of language (7) (8)
- read, write speak listen view in/of a range of purposes/contexts for different audiences (7) (8)
- refine personal responses through the 4 modes (7) (8)
- discrimination between fact and opinion (7) (8)
- purpose/audience/position of reader (7) (8)
- reflect critically on their own work and the work of others (8)
- create texts in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes indifferent contexts (8)
- listening to understand tone (7) (8)
- deconstruction of genres as part of the creating process (7) (8)
- ability to analyse visual texts (8)
- analysing (7), substantiating, synthesising, appreciating (8)
- learning how to learn (7) (8)

Knowledge and understandings

- understand the tools and conventions of language (7) (8)
- understand the structure/language of text types (7) (8)
- understand tone, gesture, body language etc (7) (8)
- understand purpose and audience, features register of a range of spoken, written and visual texts (7) (8)
- understand that texts can be approached from different perspectives (8)
- understand sequencing (8)
- understand that language allows us to make sense of ourselves and the world in which we live (7) (8)
- understand the applications of technology (8)
• understand the process of creating text — deconstruct, model, draft, edit, publish, evaluate (8)

Values and attitudes
• enjoy reading across a range of genres (8)
• appreciate opinion of others (7) (8)
• value the mandatory perspectives (8)
• value a variety of experiences (8)
• value the changing nature of English because of changing social conventions and technology (8)
• develop confidence in dealing with the language stimulus in a range of experiences and contexts (8)

**Question 5: What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?**

Structure

• could have extended options available to either standard or advanced students (7) (8)
• great enthusiasm for core and small range of options - allow for parallel running of courses(8) {(7) - but not taught in the same classroom}
• another structure involves thematic studies where the core is a series of issues and Content (8)
• all options must include creating/critiquing, responding but emphasis may differ according to nature of the option (7) (8)
• listening and speaking as components (7) (8)
• thematic approach (7) (8)
• literary study (7) (8)
• focus on functional literacy and everyday texts (7) (8)

**Question 6: What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?**

Assessment

• KCs should be reflected and/or emphasised in assessment criteria (7) (8)
• projects: process assessed in school but product external (8)
• a variety of tasks including video assessments (7) (8)
• speaking and listening task — internal (7) (8)
• responding to media — internal (7) (8)
• external exam— reading and writing tasks with range of texts and response types especially sustained response. No multiple choice. (7) (8)
• group research and presentation (8)

**Question 7: Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?**
Matters for Further Discussion

- one group requested parity of options in the elective components of the course whereas the other suggested weighted modules. (8)
- should Standard students have access to extension? what prerequisites for entry would allow their suitability for the course? Does extension offer specialisation? If so concern re overlap with other KLAs. No consensus achieved (8)
- Will key competencies be incorporated into specific learning outcomes? (7)
- skills should be the same as advanced but at different levels (7)
- relationship between internal and external assessment — consideration of notion that internal and external assessment be mutually exclusive (7)
- school-based assessment and the workload of teachers (8)
- listening assessment has problems — as it exists in 2 Unit Contemporary but it has great potential (7)

The following instruments could be included in a 2 part assessment collection (8)

- listening (external also) (7)
- role-play
- active listening as component of group work
- portfolio of writing which includes draft, then to final copy demonstrating process (7)
- research topic
- learning log
- speaking - oral presentation from research, poetic/dramatic reading (7)
- creative writing.
Stage 6 English Forum

‘Perspectives on English’ - Papers

7/8 March 1998

Chair: Kitty Guerin, Principal, St Clare’s College, Waverley

Panellists:

1. Wayne Sawyer, Lecturer, School of Teaching & Educational Studies, University of Western Sydney
2. Peter Goodall, Senior Lecturer, School of English, Linguistics & Media, Macquarie University
3. Kate Grenville, writer and parent
4. Judy Byrne, Director of Educational Development, Department of Education and Training
5. Associate Professor Adrian Mitchell, Department of English, University of Sydney
Wayne Sawyer

Board of Studies HSC Syllabus review 7/3/98

Introduction

This very conference is the necessary beginning step in syllabus development. I think one of the problems with the short-lived draft syllabus — in many ways an admirable document — was its avoidance of two basic questions:

• just what a syllabus IS — is it a set of specific programs or does it represent a broader level of conceptualisation of principles, or some mix of these things?
• what view or views of what ‘English’ is does it represent?

Any syllabus may consistently represent a particular model of the subject - growth, cultural studies, cultural heritage etc — or it may represent a more pragmatic eclecticism, but whichever of these is chosen, there is a necessity for the syllabus developers to discuss the theories on which the document is based in somewhat more depth than did the draft syllabus. The current syllabus for Years 7-10 and those for Years 11-12 deal with these issues. They are all clearly statements of principle about the nature of the subject and each dwells in detail on its theoretical underpinnings. The draft syllabus did not enunciate directly and in detail a theoretical position on such basic issues as:

• the nature of language learning
• the nature and the parameters of subject English
• the nature of ‘texts’ within English

My brief today is to briefly discuss the second of these, viz. the nature and parameters of ‘subject English’. In doing so, I will of necessity touch briefly on the other two issues.

Models of English

Key paradigms are listed in your course pre-readings in the document, ‘Perspectives on English’ and I don't want to revisit that material in great detail. Briefly, it seems to me, the paradigms currently operating (competing?) in NSW Syllabuses are:

• the Personal Growth Model of English, which emphasises:
  - the importance of personal experience in the classroom
  - the importance of talk and writing
  - an integrated curriculum
  - a workshop-based classroom organisation
  - above all, the active USE of language

This, of course, is the model on which the current 7-10 Syllabus is based, as is the Contemporary Syllabus.
Because of Dixon's emphasis on it in Growth through English, the reader-response paradigm is generally seen as a sub-set of the ‘growth’ model. A careful reading of the current HSC 2 Unit Related and 2 Unit General Syllabuses reveals, I believe, this view of the world behind these Syllabuses:

Students will be engaged in reading and thinking critically about what they have read, defining their attitudes to the text, trying to account for their enjoyment or for their initial inability to respond. They will be occupied in discussing and exchanging opinions as well as in writing about their own, in taking part in ‘workshop’ productions of scenes from a play, and in activities like reading poetry aloud.

(NSW English Syllabus, Years 11 and 12: 2/3 UNIT [Related] COURSE)

But of course these aims of these syllabuses are somewhat undermined by exam system.

The ‘Prescribed Texts’ List is another institutional constraint which highlights a particular model of English, in emphasising, at least as far as 2 Unit Related goes, a:

- Cultural Heritage model - the view, of course, which says that the aim of English should be inculcation of students into the great literature of their heritage.

English in the academy has been moving beyond that view of itself into the much broader Cultural Studies view. To define this, I draw on a mix of attributes identified by Robin Peel and Ray Misson:

a) using the word ‘culture’ to include anything from novels to supermarket architecture
b) an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on ideas from sociology, politics and semiotics
c) using conceptual tools largely derived from post-structuralist theory, including the influence of Marxist and Gramscian criticism, feminism, post-colonial studies etc (important for our purposes because it gives Cultural Studies an overt social purpose)
d) cultural products seen as artefacts that transcend national boundaries
e) cultural studies attends to the historical moment, locating specifics such as gender, race and class in any discussion of the way cultural products are represented.

In the secondary classroom, this formidable sounding intellectual baggage has meant the addressing of such questions about cultural products as:

- Why, and with whom, is (or was) this phenomenon popular?
- What implicit messages is it sending out?
- How is it read?

Peel discusses secondary classrooms bringing these questions to bear on topics such as: the Vietnam War, the way we display the past in museums, superstitions in various communities and the way foreign language coursebooks represent other countries. Obviously, in such a model, what we have traditionally called ‘literature’ is no longer privileged. So, such a model
can represent a threat to teachers' views about their traditional job with senior classes, and it certainly represents a threat to the cultural heritage view of the world. The key word is no longer ‘literature’, but ‘text’. Students aren't restricted to anything vaguely canonical, when political speeches, Melrose Place, the Internet, even the classroom itself are all available for scrutiny.

Obviously also, those three I just listed link Cultural Studies very much to the notion of

- Critical Literacy, which has taken off in Australia as nowhere else, it seems, under the influence of people such as Wendy Morgan.

As Morgan writes, a critical literacy goes beyond simply ‘responding’ to texts to ask questions like:

- How is this the text encouraging you to think and respond?
- What other ways are there of writing about this topic?
- What wasn't said about the topic, and why?

(Morgan, of course, has applied these questions in her earlier ground-breaking work on the Ned Kelly legend). In asking such questions and unpacking the ideology behind texts, critical literacy is ‘uncompromising about the centrality of social conscience in educational practice’ (Knoblauch and Brannon, 1993,p.49). And certainly in Thatcher's Australia of the 1990s, we cannot have enough of social conscience, nor can we have enough of interrogating the economic-rationalist values of that society even as we operate in it. Critical literacy is about empowerment over texts and over language. ‘Empowerment’ is a key word in the critical armoury. And in exams, critical literacy asks very different questions about texts - questions not about characters or themes, but about how readers are being positioned in particular extracts from texts.

Review of these models

Well, what does each of these have to offer a new HSC English Syllabus?

Growth: the criticism that the growth model has undergone at the hands of the critical literacy people has been based on its alleged privileging of the personal over the social. ‘Personal Growth’, so goes the argument, puts too much emphasis on ‘personal’ and leaves students in no position to analyse or critique the ideology or language of texts, including their own language as text, ie it lacks a sense of leading students to understand how texts, including their own language, are socially constructed. Also, the emphasis on a reader-response approach to literature, it is argued, encourages students to envisage literature as if it represented a slice of real-life and hence fails to take the opportunity of teaching students that literature and its characters are social constructs. The problem with this, it is argued, is a lost opportunity to critique the ideology of the text. A ‘critical literacy’, it is argued, will leave students more empowered.

Certainly there is some truth to these claims, especially if what is most emphasised about ‘Growth’ is personal experience. Nevertheless, even in the 90s, I believe the growth model has a substantial contribution to make, particularly if what we emphasise about it is the
‘growth’ of the individual as a USER of language. ‘Growth’ emphasises the aim of English as the individual's growth as a reader, writer, listener and speaker. It is this aspect of the growth model that I believe is underplayed in the definition in your pre-conference reading material. I believe the ‘Growth’ model remains important in two ways:

- in continuing to stress language development through active use. The draft syllabus of 1996 made a distinction between ‘creating’ and ‘critiquing’. This distinction had a number of problems, not least of which was its seemingly a-theoretical nature; but I think it also had a number of pragmatic advantages and I personally would want to preserve VERY MUCH the importance (indeed equal importance) of ‘creating’ in a future senior syllabus and for this aspect of the Syllabus, I think development as a language user needs to be a central aim.

- the issue of pleasure and enjoyment in reading and listening. Critical literacy approaches to texts demand a certain sophisticated detachment. A very big part of our problem in schools is still to get kids, even at the senior level, to even engage with texts, let alone to take the detached kind of stance that a critical literacy demands. This tension between detachment and engagement is a crucial one. There is a related issue in writing and speaking, where our job will remain encouraging many of our students even to find a voice, to articulate real or imagined thoughts or experiences — a self-evident good, surely, beyond the issue of any empowerment that might come from critiquing the ideological parameters of that voice (cf Gill, 1993, 1998).

The 1987 Years 7-10 English Syllabus is still regarded as one of the best in the world. The hard-won battle for a syllabus based on response to literature and experience-based writing should not be given over easily. ‘Growth’, I believe, remains a valid model, now potentially extended by adding a deeper understanding of the political and ideological contexts in which personal language growth takes place.

Cultural heritage: surely this had had its day when Leavis died? A lot of books have been written since Jane Austen; why this continuing fascination with forcing our best students to study a number of pre-20thC texts? On the other hand, won't a Cultural Studies Syllabus, especially one in which popular culture is key, just pander to a kind of lowest common denominator in our students?

Well, Cultural Studies is about preparing students to intelligently read the central texts of their culture and to see how these are operating in their lives — surely a laudable aim.

The problem with this debate is that it is set up as if High and Popular culture were mutually exclusive in the classroom. Is Baz Luhrmann's version of Romeo and Juliet ‘High’ or ‘Popular’? Among 14 year-olds, it's certainly popular. I've spent a lot of my time in English curriculum writing and teaching about engaging ways of presenting Shakespeare in the classroom, especially in the Junior classroom, so I'm hardly going to be arguing against the canon. Like the cultural heritage school, I'll argue passionately for the value of introducing ‘classic’ texts to kids who may have the classroom as their only chance of engaging with them (but even as I write that sentence, I'm also reminded of what the film industry has done for sales of Jane Austen).

The point is we have the potential for treating both ‘High’ and ‘Popular’ in junior classrooms now — why fear Melrose Place in senior school while we're deconstructing Neighbours with
Year 9? The fear that the cultural heritage lobby have about popular culture is to do with relative value. I don't think we really need to worry about this. As Ray Misson argues, ‘one must keep the value of texts in proportion. One does not want to fail to do justice to a text by treating it as rubbish compared with more complex, classic texts, but equally one does not want to inflate its value and make extravagant claims for it. There are some who wish to move outside the value game altogether, and who imply that all texts are of equal value, or see value as purely subjective. However, this is not how we operate on texts, indeed on anything, in the real world. We are constantly valuing. The trick is to be flexible in the criteria for ourvaluations and do justice to the positive aspects of a text while being fully aware of both its negative aspects and its limitations... One wants the students to be able to recognise the value (or lack of it) in any text ’ (Misson, 1998). Peel (1996) discusses how one can try to avoid this problem by substituting ideas about complexity for those about value.

Some directions

So where does this leave us? Where would I like to see the HSC going?

* I believe it IS important to widen the kinds of texts available for examinable study: biography, journalism, popular science or polemical texts on social issues, film, screenplays, picture books, myths, fables, sagas and folk tales and popular fiction, for example, but also other artefacts of that could be grouped thematically in order to throw light on some aspect of culture. ‘English’ HAS evolved since the current Syllabuses were written and we need to evolve with it. I believe the much more generous definition of ‘text’ in the 1996 Draft Syllabus showed the way here in bringing film and other media texts into the ‘mainstream’.

* This grouping of texts in a way that is currently limited to Topic Area and Contemporary Issues has great potential for widening the scope of the study of subject English. Grouping of texts in imaginative ways allows them to be studied for something more than their own aesthetic isolation. Grouping could even be open-ended, nominating genre, theme, author etc and allowing schools to nominate the texts.

* I would like to see real status given to kids' own writing and speaking, film-making, media creating etc. Again I think the Draft Syllabus' distinction between critiquing and creating was a useful pragmatic one, whatever its theoretical shortcomings — not least because it gave it equal weight to a paradigm of English which says that producing texts is at least as worthy a notion of what ‘English’ means as consuming the texts created by other people.

* On the issue of critical literacy as the METHOD of analysis: again, the subject has grown in this direction and the kinds of questions that critical literacy asks has potential for creating a ‘resistant’ generation, something we sorely need. Nevertheless, I would sound two notes of caution: — the first was a problem evident in the Draft Syllabus about just what was meant by ‘critiquing’. Did it simply refer to ‘analysing’ or was it more definitely implying a critical literacy in which texts were to be critiqued for their underlying ideologies? There is a difference of definition here that makes a great difference to the kinds of questions students are asked in assessments. We cannot be vague about this.
— the second is the issue that I mentioned earlier of simply getting kids to engage with texts. For this reason, I'd want to advocate some kind of genuine credit being given to wide reading. Current syllabuses all say that Year 11 should be a year of wide reading. All sorts of reasons that ultimately come back to the nature of the HSC prevent this from being realised in any ideal way. Credit needs to be given to students simply for engaging with a large number of books. This would probably necessitate some form of school-based accreditation.

**Conclusion**

The question to finally ask is whether we favour one model or a generous eclecticism. In some areas, such as whether we are going to ask kids to critique the ideology of texts or respond in more traditional ways, we have to make a decision because of assessment implications. This decision could still differ for different sub-sets of the syllabus.

But in other areas, perhaps a range of possibilities from a number of models can be allowed to apply.

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I. Zones of Contestation
   A. Troubled institutional relationship of ‘English’ and ‘Cultural Studies’ in universities
      1. splitting of departments in older universities
      2. few new universities have departments of ‘English’ as such
   A. Ideological, intellectual and pedagogical conflicts within English and Cultural Studies
      2. different ‘perspectives’ of English not always in harmony or constructive dialogue, but in conflict, or contesting authority within the same area of knowledge and skills

II. What is Cultural Studies?
   B. A controversial question: different views and agendas
      1. Cultural Studies not a discrete body of knowledge, but a way of conceptualizing and addressing knowledge in a range of fields
   A. Main currents and influences
      2. Need to find new ways of teaching a new class of learners
         a. Raymond Williams, E.P. Thompson and Richard Hoggart (the ‘Founding Fathers’ of British Cultural Studies) had all worked extensively in the field of adult education.
         1. Responses to mass culture and the media
            b. negative: Richard Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy* — need to defend traditional life of English working class against onslaught of American mass culture
            c. positive: Australian writers like John Fiske and John Hartley — mass culture is not consumed passively by the people and offers potential for use against dominant order and its values
            d. circumspect: Walter Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ - film is not just a new art form, but a form which throws into question what art is and how it can be studied.
   1. Emergence of ‘Communications’ as a field of study: Marshall McLuhan, Roland Barthes
      c. shift from focus on literary object or author to *process* of communication: linguistic, technological, political
      d. aesthetics, determination of literary or cultural value problematized and sidelined
   1. Encounter with ‘Theory’ from 1980s onwards
      d. intellectual leaders not primarily teachers of literature, but linguists, philosophers, psycholanalysts, sociologists.
e. emphasis on texts as linguistic, social and cultural products, less as products of the individual mind
f. feminist, postcolonial, Marxist, queer theories etc. all argue for the recovery and study of texts other than those by ‘dead white males’
g. broad need to position and contextualize literary study in a philosophical framework.

I. English and Cultural Studies: a joint project?

   C. Cultural Studies is weakened by ignoring literary high culture or viewing it in a hostile way

   D. At least one of the major strands of Cultural Studies is an outgrowth from English
      1. Both Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams were professors of English and saw Cultural Studies as a logical extension of work traditionally carried out in English departments
      
      A. From their origin in the late nineteenth century, English departments have been concerned with ‘culture’ (in the anthropological as well as the aesthetic sense)
      3. English has always been a broad church, containing social historians, philologists, philosophers
      4. the idea that English involves an exclusively literary focus on a narrow band of great works is a recent one, the product of a particular historical moment, and does not faithfully reflect the complex traditions of English as a subject
      5. the names of Matthew Arnold and F.R.Leavis are usually taken in vain by proponents of the Cultural Heritage model of English studies

   D. Much of the work done in the name of Cultural Studies was/is done in English as well
      1. no reason to feel that ‘theory’ and literary texts are in some way mutually exclusive
      2. significant number of university courses where popular and high cultural texts are studied side by side (first text in first year English at Macquarie University is film and screenplay of *Pulp Fiction*).

   E. BUT the very breadth and openness of traditional English carries dangers
      1. ‘The academy has long preferred ways of studying literature which actually permit or enjoin the study of something else in its place, and the success of the new French approaches has in many quarters come close to eliminating the study of literature altogether’ (Frank Kermode, *Not Entitled*, 1995)
      2. English has no need to fear Cultural Studies as such, but it will need to be focussed and to be sure of its ground if the study of literature is not going to slip from a leadership role into the position of (minor) option.

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            English
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Kate Grenville

ENGLISH EDUCATION: THE LONG SLOW FUSE MODEL

I'm a writer, not an educator, so I don't have anything as coherent as a position on this subject.

The only thing I can bring to this discussion is a writer's perspective. I've written 5 books of fiction and 2 books about the writing process (one in collaboration with Sue Woolfe), and writing has been my life and livelihood now for going on twenty years. Thinking about my own English studies at school, and whether they had anything to do with me now being a writer, I was struck by what a long slow fuse the study of English can be.

I must have been a cow of a kid to teach. I lie awake and blush about it now. I announced to Mrs Armstrong one afternoon at Cremorne Girls' High that King Lear was terribly overrated. (Mrs Armstrong was good enough not to laugh.) I told anyone who would listen that Jane Austen was irrelevant. None of us in 5A had ever seen anything as silly as an evening spread out against the sky like a patient etherised upon a table, and we thought it was ridiculous to worry about eating peaches.

Under the desk another whole world was going on. Under the desk were Salinger, Steinbeck, Nicholas Monserrat, Paul Gallico, John Fowles. Ah, now that was real literature. Why weren't we studying that?

At another school I'd been forced to learn poetry by heart. I thought the poetry was doggerel, and I didn't approve of learning off by heart. Things should well up spontaneously from the heart.

In general, I was an extremely resistant consumer of the English syllabus of the sixties.

It took 20 years before something happened that made me eat humble pie. I was in the Royal Hospital for Women in labour with our first child, trying not to panic. Suddenly, from the primitive depths of my back-brain, despised and seemingly forgotten, something came to my rescue.

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
‘Good speed!’ cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
‘Speed!’ echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.’

When that stopped working, there was more.

‘On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
and through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow,
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.’

In the end, Tom was born to a rousing mixture of old chestnuts. The rock-solid gleaming rhythmic safety of these lines had locked onto my neurones in 1963 and never been accessed since, but they were still there, fragmentary but powerful.

It shocked me, as you can imagine. But it set me thinking.

I considered the fact that although my oh-so sophisticated brain might sneer at this ‘doggerel’, some deeper and less articulate part of me had simply gulped it down whole.

I considered that perhaps liking a piece of writing, or finding it relevant, or even understanding it, might not be the whole story. There might also be something much more primitive going on, to do with rhythm and cadence and a dreamlike fluid association of words. After all, ‘poetry does not mean, it is’.

I had to admit that being made to learn it off by heart hadn't actually killed me, either. It had been a way of smuggling this rather valuable thing inside me, past the sneering policeman of a young person's aesthetic judgement. It was part of my organism now, the same way the vitamins in my mother's force-fed spinach were.

I thought then about all the other literature I'd read and scorned when young. I knew enough now to grieve with silly old Lear and see that you didn't have to be wearing white muslin for Austen to be relevant. I had now seen for myself an evening sky spread out against a sky like a patient etherised upon a table. I knew exactly what frame of mind you had to be in to see it like that, and it was not a 16-year-old frame of mind.

So now, too late for long-suffering Mrs Armstrong, the penny had finally dropped.

One of the things that helped me to re-discover that literature was learning how to read as a writer, rather than as a reader. This is where Creative Writing comes in.
Looking at writing as a writer, you look at it not in terms of themes or subject but in terms of the writer's problem. To take an example - the funny part of a joke is, by the very nature of the thing, at the end. So the joke-teller's problem is how to strike the right balance between getting to the punch line too soon, and spinning the preamble out too long.

Once you’ve told a few jokes yourself, you listen to other people telling jokes not only in order to laugh at the joke, but also to see how they managed the problem.

Jane Austen's problems as a story-teller were many and subtle, but one of them must have been how to be truthful to her frustration at being a woman in her society, while at the same time producing writing that was socially acceptable.

It's a common writerly problem. Swift, Milton, Dickens and Milan Kundera have all found different ways around it. Austen’s way was to develop her particular, unmistakable and potent kind of irony.

Now, being angry at the system and not being able to say so was something I knew all about at 16. After all, I was the one who was threatened with expulsion for refusing to wear her socks folded down to the regulation 3 inches above the anklebone. If I’d looked at Jane Austen from a writer’s perspective at 16 I mightn’t have thought her books were so irrelevant after all.

Creative Writing was an unheard-of concept when I was at school, but I hope that for that child who was born to the rollicking rhythms of ‘We leapt to the stirrup’, and for his sister, Creative Writing can open up some new ways into Creative Reading.

I also hope our children will be taught grammar. Any grammar will do.

I'm not good on grammar: apart from a few sessions taught like a guilty secret from an old-fashioned teacher early on, I was never actually taught any in English classes. The little bit of grammar I know came from learning French.

I took it for granted that everyone had the same kind of minimum working knowledge of grammar I have, until I started teaching Creative Writing to adults. One of the exercises I ask my students to do in class is to write a description of a person without using any adjectives or adverbs.

The first time I asked a group of my well-read, well-educated middle-class students to do this I couldn't understand why half the class started writing, but the other half - the younger half -
sat with funny looks on their faces. Finally one of them said bluntly, We're happy to do the exercise, but first you'll have to tell us what adjectives and adverbs are.

These days I never assume everyone knows what an adjective is. But it's a limitation, for readers and writers.

To give an example - you might write that a character is pretty. You can see that pretty is a weak kind of word. You try to think of better words. You go to the Thesaurus. She was beautiful. She was gorgeous. She was ravishing. She was utterly gorgeous. She was startlingly gorgeous.

But the thesaurus isn't going to help you, because what's really wrong isn't the choice of adjective. No adjective will do, because what you need is something with more horsepower than any adjective can provide. You probably need to start thinking about verbs. Once you can see the problem in those terms you can put away the thesaurus and approach the whole problem in a different way.

It's not that as a writer you think, Oh, now I'm writing a verb, now I'm writing an adjectival clause. You do it by ‘feel’, of course. But if your ‘feel’ deserts you, or if you want to do something beyond the range of your ‘feel’, you need to be able to take the language apart at a molecular level.

I don't think it matters which grammar is taught or what the parts are called. And certainly the old prescriptive rules aren't what I'm talking about. But writers and readers both need a vocabulary to identify the various levers and fulcrums in a sentence. I think it has to be taught, cold-bloodedly, as a tool, the way a soldier learns the Naming of Parts of his rifle.

Since I’ve always prided myself on being a bit of a rebel, I’m extremely surprised to have found myself taking what seems to be such a conservative position in all this. Perhaps it's because as a writer I know that I stand on the shoulders of every writer who's gone before. Not to be aware of that would be an impoverishment, if not downright shameful.

It might have taken decades, but the writer in me has finally educated the reader.

Kate Grenville
Stage 6 English Forum

‘Perspectives on English’

Judy Byrne

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Educational Development

Department of Education and Training

March 1998
INTRODUCTION

I have been invited here this morning to present a vocational education and training (or VET) perspective on the teaching of the subject English. In one way this is a very straightforward task — after all, English is used in a range of human activity in Australia, including the world of work. As teachers of the only compulsory subject in the Higher School Certificate, you do not need to be reminded of the central role that English plays in people’s personal and working lives.

It is a little less straightforward to explain the ways that VET can actively contribute to the revision of Senior English syllabi. Today I would like to concentrate on three ways in which a dialogue with vocational education and training can benefit English. These are by assisting the subject English:

- to better meet the needs of the diverse range of HSC students,
- to respond to recent national and state government policy, and
- by providing a model of an outcomes-based syllabus.

Before explaining these three benefits in detail however, I would like to draw your attention to some important features of vocational education and training and to perhaps address some misconceptions.

### OHT 1 Australian Qualifications Framework

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<tr>
<th>HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR</th>
<th>Vocational Education and Training Sector</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
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<td>Master’s Degree</td>
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<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Certificate IV</td>
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<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>Certificate III</td>
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<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>Certificate II</td>
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<td>Certificate I</td>
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The VET sector is organised into levels within the Australian Qualifications Framework. These levels range from Certificate I through to IV and on to Diploma and Advanced Diploma level. At the lower end of these levels are the introductory courses. In some cases the content of modules or subjects in these courses is also covered in the upper end of secondary schooling. This is the situation which produces Credit Transfer, whereby HSC graduates who enrol in TAFE NSW courses may be exempt from particular modules. Currently there are over 40 HSC courses which provide credit transfer into over 185 TAFE NSW courses.
Despite the fact that English enjoys a central position in the secondary school, it has not managed to attract any significant credit transfer into TAFE NSW courses. For instance, the HSC/TAFE Credit Transfer Guide published by the Board of Studies in November 1997 shows that only one study area in TAFE NSW, that is Manufacturing and Engineering, formally recognises the outcomes of any of the current HSC English courses.

This is certainly not a true reflection of the credit transfer possibilities from HSC English to TAFE courses - but the Board of Studies and TAFE NSW have found it difficult up to this point in time to match outcome-based VET courses using the English syllabi in their current form. It is hoped that this anomalous situation is one that can be rectified through the revision of the English syllabi which is currently being undertaken, and of which this forum is a crucial part.

**English and Credit Transfer**

What are the credit transfer possibilities between HSC English and VET courses? The outcomes of HSC English courses do relate quite strongly to outcomes from the VET course, Communication Skills. Communication Skills in VET (and this is distinct from Communications with an ‘s’) involve the English macro skills of Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking as well cultural awareness and the ability to work with others. When delivered in the context of a VET course, Communication Skills focus on the interactive process which enables people to function effectively in the workforce. Whilst there is clearly more to the subject English than these Communication Skills, each senior English syllabi would help students to develop these skills to some degree and should therefore attract credit transfer.

**OHT 2 Sample Communication Skills Learning Outcomes**

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<tr>
<th>Workplace Communication NCS001</th>
<th>Participate in small, informal groups</th>
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<tr>
<td>Negotiation Skills NCS009</td>
<td>Negotiate to achieve an agreed outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting Reports NSC015</td>
<td>Research material relevant to an issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing in Plain English NCS016</td>
<td>Edit others’ documents according to the principles of plain English</td>
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**Communication Skills**

The learning outcomes for the Communication Skills modules used by TAFE NSW are summarised in the document *National Communication Skills Modules ‘Possible Pathways’* which has been provided in the conference papers. Many of these outcomes are specific to a workplace context such as ‘write complex workplace documents’ and ‘gather and evaluate information on employment opportunities’.
However, English teachers will recognise many generic skills that are fundamental to their discipline. These would range from entry level outcomes such as ‘participate in small, informal groups’ through to higher level outcomes such as ‘negotiate to achieve an agreed outcome’, ‘research material relevant to an issue’ and ‘edit others’ documents according to the principles of plain English’. Whilst it may be argued that these are generic skills which should be developed in most other HSC courses, it is only through the compulsory subject English that it can be guaranteed that these skills will be learnt in a way that is both comprehensive and developmental.

We have heard this morning about the evolution of the subject English as it has been influenced by the various perspectives. The discipline of Communication has also undergone changes, and like English has been informed over time by a range of theories and perspectives. The teaching of Communication Skills can draw on theories ranging from socio-cultural analysis to organisational psychology. The methodologies employed are similar to those used in the discipline of English; employing holistic rather than atomistic approaches and using individual and group projects, role play and student self-evaluation.

Finally, before finishing this overview of VET and English we need to address the direct question:

**Do all English students need Communication Skills for the workplace?**

The answer to this question is: Yes. The workplace is a communication context that all students should understand and in which they should feel confident. Take the example of your local general practitioner’s surgery. Whether HSC students go on to become doctors, surgery receptionists or patients at that surgery - they will all need to be in possession of effective communication skills and to be aware of the processes that operate in these workplace interactions.

I would now like to turn our attention to the three ways in which English can benefit from an interaction with vocational education and training, specifically with Communication Skills.
1. To better meet the needs of the diverse range of HSC students

English syllabii need to provide the essential skills for all post-school pathways; that is for the 37% of HSC students who go on to higher education and for the 63% who proceed to further education and training or employment.

Who are these HSC students? Are their pathways as straightforward as the statistics would have them appear?

We know from our experiences in schools across New South Wales that HSC students are a diverse group. They are living in metropolitan, regional and rural areas. They are Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal and from non-English speaking backgrounds. They are differently abled. They may be accessing their HSC through a distance education mode, from inside a corrective services centre, a youth refuge or from a hospital bed. If they are attending a TAFE college, they may be mature-aged students.

The statistics on post-school destinations that I have just quoted may suggest that this rather diverse group has a relatively predictable set of pathways; that is, either a linear transition from school directly to work, or to work via further study.

Recent research however, from Melbourne’s Youth Research Centre paints a picture of senior school leavers who do not view study and work in a strictly sequential way and who are engaging in a broad range of life patterns. There is little reason to believe that similar research in New South Wales would yield the vastly different results.

This study of 2,000 Victorian students carried out in 1996 indicated that once they have completed schooling, many young people ‘vary or modify their options and do not stick to a linear track.’ (p22) As well, the study showed that there is an increasing number of school leavers who combine work and study. In Rethinking Transitions: Options and Outcomes of the Post-1970 Generation, Peter Dwyer, Associate Professor from the University of Melbourne, points to:

‘...a significant overlap between study, work and other life-commitments that for many of the post-1970 generation is in the forefront of their experience. They are establishing different patterns of response which involve complicated mixes of study, work and family life as part of the youth agenda: mixtures of leaving and returning to the parental home, of part-time work and part-time study, of full-time study and part-time work and even of full-time work and full-time study.

Even school students are nowadays in various ways acting as ‘part-time adults’ - as shop assistants, surrogate or even unmarried mothers, workers in a family small business, as farm hands, in sporting teams, and even within the underground or informal economy. Over 70 per cent of the jobs in the youth labour market are now held by young people who are also students (Ashenden, 1990) - they are already combining the two worlds of study and work.’ (p22)
If Senior English syllabi are to meet the needs of school leavers they must to take into account this range of life patterns that young people are choosing. In many ways, recent government policy has recognised these trends both in the labour market and in life options of young people today. It is to recent educational policy initiatives, and their impact on the revision of Senior English that I would now like to turn.

OHT 3  

**Seven Key Competencies**

- Collecting, analysing and organising information
- Communicating ideas and information
- Planning and organising activities
- **Working with others and in teams**
- Using mathematical ideas and techniques
- Solving problems
- Using technology

2. To respond to national and state government policy

Two government educational initiatives that are impacting on the subject English are the national program to introduce employment-related competencies, and the New South Wales government’s reforms to the Higher School Certificate. Communication Skills has a role to play in the incorporation of both of these initiatives.

**Key Competencies**

1992 saw the publication of the national report, *Putting General Education to work: The Key Competencies Report* into the expectations held by employer and community groups regarding 15 to 19 year olds entering the workforce. This report presented seven generic competencies which it were deemed essential for effective participation in education and training, work and adult life. Three of these seven competencies relate specifically to communication. These are:

- collecting, analysing and organising information
- communicating ideas and information
- working with others and in teams.

The NSW Government White Paper on Reforms to the Higher School Certificate *Securing the Future* which was released in 1997, recommends that ‘revised syllabus documents identify those key competencies present in the content of the syllabus and that are integral to the learning outcomes.’ (p18)

OHT 4  

Securing the Future - English p18

‘The primary, perhaps pre-eminent, means of acquiring and enhancing proficiency in the English language is through
reading, writing, reflecting over, critically analysing, and communicating about, the wide range of literary texts, media and other forms of personal and everyday communication. Future opportunities in further education and training, employment and other aspects of economic and social life in Australia are enhanced by mastery of English’ (p18)

Securing the Future

How will a reformed HSC cater for the needs of this diverse range of school leavers and their post-school options? What implications does this have for the subject English?

The NSW Government’s White Paper recommends that English continue to be the only compulsory subject in the Higher School Certificate. In doing so it recognises the critical role that the subject English plays in developing and enhancing proficiency in the English language, as well as its role in enabling students to have access to ‘future opportunities in further education and training, employment and other aspects of economic and social life in Australia.’ (p18)

The key questions arising from this view of the role of English are:

Do the current English syllabi provide access for all students to these future opportunities? How can the revised syllabi fulfil this role?

Most teachers of HSC English would be able to describe the English skills required of students entering higher education, and be able to explain the extent to which current English courses prepare students for this pathway. Some teachers may argue that there has been a disproportionate focus in some English courses on preparing students for university at the exclusion of other options.

The integration of both the generic communication skills and relevant Key Competencies into the core element of the revised English courses would go some way towards addressing the needs of the diverse range of students; preparing them for future contexts including further education and training, employment as well as other life patterns.

Given the strong emphasis on communication skills in the employment-related competencies, the VET sector could assist in helping the revised of Senior English syllabi meet the needs of both the national and state educational reform agenda.

3. By providing a model of an outcomes-based syllabus.

As part of the reformed HSC, all subjects are to adopt a standards-referenced approach to assessment and reporting. The VET sector can assist with the transition of subject English to
this new approach by providing a model for standards-based syllabus development in this related domain. Communication Skills syllabus developers, for instance, have had many years of experience in designing outcomes-based courses and competency-based assessment practices for the macro skills which are common to English syllabi.

The Communication Skills modules are generic and competency-based, reflecting a hierarchy of skills. The purpose, learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the modules have been agreed to nationally and have been mapped against endorsed industry competency standards to check that they meet the specific industry training requirements. A similar process will need to be undertaken by the Board of Studies, except that the standards will be based on ‘educational outcomes expected of students as defined by the content of each Higher School Certificate syllabus’ rather than industry standards.

Finally, I would like to talk about the integration of appropriate Communication Skills outcomes into the revised English syllabi.

Decisions about which learning outcomes would be suitable for integration into HSC English courses, and how this could be achieved, will depend on a number factors. These factors include the nature of the courses which are developed and, in particular the concept of the common core. Other variables would include the level of difficulty of the Communication Skills learning outcomes and the degree to which senior school students can be expected to achieve learning outcomes designed to meet the needs of people already in workplace environments.

These decisions will need careful consideration and close collaboration between representatives from the secondary and VET sectors.

CONCLUSION

There is much work ahead of us not only over the next two days of this English Forum, but also in the months ahead. It is hoped that a dialogue with colleagues from the VET sector will be able to assist in this exciting process of change, not only in the ways that I have outlined, but hopefully in other ways that the delegates at this English Forum are able to create as they work together.
Adrian Mitchell

NICE DISTINCTIONS: STAGE 6 ENGLISH AND THE GENTLE ART OF DISCRIMINATION

Where, in the great scheme of things, is Stage 6 English? In recent times, nowhere much it seems. For quite a while now there has been an uncanny quiet. It's as though those responsible for curriculum design have embraced too literally the theoretical position of infinite deferral. This forum is the first welcome sign that the arteries have not become entirely desiccated.

So — given that we are all here, what might be some of the useful questions to address? What do we need to establish clearly among ourselves as we set out to determine our recommendations about the shape and size of Stage 6 English? One that follows on from what I was just hinting at is ‘what is the value of English, and in particular Stage 6 English?’ How does it help? What is the good of English?

The answer to that depends largely on who you are talking to: the community, the teacher, the student. In terms of the community, it seems to me unfortunately the case that on the whole, as a professional group we have not been very effective at representing ourselves to those of any other persuasion, any other discipline. That's ironic, given our specialisation, that we don't seem to make ourselves heard, or well understood, or at least not in our own terms. We haven't been able to articulate the value of English, or to separate our concept of value from that of the vested interests, or the market. We can't pretend that utilitarianism does not exist; we can't resort to some version of Oscar Wilde's clever provocation, and claim that English should be perfectly useless. We're talking serious business here, we are talking TER. We have to find a response for the P & C, and Oscar Wilde never had to confront that.

For example, it would undoubtedly be an advantage to us if we could demonstrate that English helps you get into Medicine. We all know it doesn't. Better still if we could say, as perhaps we should, that English helps you get through Medicine, helps you take Medicine; or anything else for that matter. But we don't because we can't. We have become the victims of an economy of scale, and we see year after year our students, and especially our advanced students, disadvantaged because of their subject choice.

None of us is impressed by the bean counters and peanut peddlers. They keep telling us what's good for us and our discipline, and the Bell curves keep on being invoked like a modern promissory rainbow. Common experience tells us that Bell curves are not true, in that they don't show what is happening to our students. They are a statistician's device, and become true only because of the mathematics of big numbers, when the peanuts hide under the thimbles. Agreed, what I am arguing is by rhetoric — but that is what we deal with in English, it is how we get at our truth. Rhetoric was one of the foundation academic disciplines along with mathematics, and is just as fundamental as an avenue to knowledge. Rhetoric is how we do it, and just because it is rhetoric doesn't mean that it is to be discounted. Rhetoric is about organising language, rhetoric is if you like the numbers of coming to the point.
We have no dialogue with the peanut crunchers. They do not notice when they prick us that we bleed, that we are bleeding. The terms in which our students are represented to themselves are not the terms which emerge from our discipline, our system. Their achievements are measured in terms irrelevant to, and I would add inimical to, the discipline in which they are presenting themselves. There's an inherent inconsequentiality in principle in this situation: the demand that a qualitative discipline become somehow quantified, not only in its assessment but also in its syllabus. It's not just that under present scaling arrangements we see insufficient reward for work done. What we want is some other means of identifying our students' achievements — maybe going some of the way to standards-referencing would be good for English.

There is more at issue for the status of English than compressions of measurement — I'm not going to say any more about that because (the line is irresistible) I can feel a Mack attack coming on. There's something more, again astonishing given that our subject is English. We don't seem to be recommending ourselves very effectively, not even to ourselves. We have to see if over this weekend we can do something about that - but what? In what way can we represent our own significance? I'm not going to wander into areas of Key Competencies and the like here, I'm interested in how we think about our own discipline, and how we display that image of what we do. Consider for example our favourite stalking horse. Just how many units of Mathematics do you need to read a thermometer? How many units of Mathematics do you actually need for anything? The omni-importance of Mathematics is not to be questioned, apparently. I don't doubt for a minute the interest of Mathematics for mathematicians; on the other hand, I don't know if the community is wonderfully well-served by its disproportionate presence in whatever new version of the HSC that gets dreamed up. English is not only the medium of instruction, but the medium of our social interaction. The question is not whether English should be there, but how much of it, and in what aspect. English, not Mathematics, is the core of the Higher School Certificate, the vital underpinning of Stage 6.

English is no longer the subject or the discipline it once was. Even if you were to consider that a matter of profound regret, the fact is that what is now called the clientele looks for more, or other, than the classic dispensation, the great tradition. But conceding this is no reason to dispense with the dispensation. English may no longer be about the best that is known and thought in the world — and indeed there is undeniable difficulty in agreeing about just what constitutes the best; and an even greater difficulty in convincing students they ought to read it. English is not a fixed discipline, and I suspect it never was. There are at present approaches to English which give the high priority to self-expression (but wouldn't it be nice if there were something to express) and others which discount authorial activity and read texts as cultural documents, manifestations of ideological undercurrents. Disclosed, the hitherto concealed is bravely flaunted, much as Madonna's underwear — the fashionably antifashionable sign of our postmodern times. One of the documents that has been circulated for this forum identifies a number of different approaches to English — the Cultural Heritage model, Personal Growth, Cultural Analysis, Literacy Development. all with features to recommend them, each with a limitation of some kind. And the question for us is what do we
think would be best for Stage 6 English? But maybe another question ought to be heard first: what do students think the value of Stage 6 might be?

One answer to that is provided in a student response to such a question, only it was asked of the A-levels in Great Britain, and it was asked some time ago. Britain is a different place, with different customs and indifferent plumbing, agreed. But the response was interesting I suggest: for according to the students, the value of English at this stage is that it has taught them how to discriminate. How to decide between what they might accept and what they need to question; or between what they might admire as original and innovative, and what is hackneyed and cliche-ridden and plain dull; or between what is interesting in its formulation, but a pitch nevertheless at some other agenda. And this not only in terms of the texts they are to read, but in terms of their own expression, probably written but also spoken.

The study of English literature is not just the reading of books. It is the formation of opinion, character and ideas. It is a defence against bad writing, borrowed ideas, and skilful advertising. It is a lesson in self-expression and clear thinking; and it is an enjoyable experience. Maybe Australian students would be a lot more sceptical, even scathing in a bad year - yet there's the germ of an important concept here. It reminds me a little of a road safety programme a few years ago, perhaps still in place called defensive driving, which didn't mean driving forever in second gear, or driving in a Volvo, but being smart, aware, knowledgeable and skilful enough so that you are ready for whatever might come up. So might one think of 'defensive reading' — to recognise what you are reading for what it actually is.

How do you learn to discriminate? Certainly by becoming familiar with a variety of models of the kinds of texts that are available; or the kinds of writing skills that might be called upon, recognising agency as well as appreciating content. The capacity for discrimination not only means judgement, but the conjoint ability to argue or defend that perception; so that the process of discrimination is as significant in the educational strategy as the judgement itself. What that requires in familiar terms is not just that a student should ‘know’ a text, or a strategy, but know why it is like it is and how it works and then, desirably, whether it works or not in this particular context. It seems to me that somewhere here lies a common thread between the various approaches identified in that document. And that provides a warrant for English that even the warty adherents of quantifiable disciplines ought to be able to acknowledge.

Let me hasten to differentiate between discrimination between and discrimination against. What I have in mind is a programme that ought to move very strongly against that second sort of discrimination. I alluded earlier to Arnold's ‘best that is known and thought in the world.’ Applying that to contemporary Australian circumstance, we would want to look at writing both in English and in translation, from wherever it happens to come, so that the range of represented experience, as well as the range of representation of that experience, is as wide as can be managed. That is to bring further into the foreground some of the thinking involved in drawing up the wide reading programme; and, I would like to add, the all-but forgotten original discussions about the Topic Area. There were good principles there, but they have in my opinion largely dropped from sight.
Knowledge is power, said Francis Bacon; which is meant to cheer us up because that's all the power we are going to get. If knowledge is in fact power, then it is power held in abeyance, latent. Discrimination comes into play when that knowledge is applied; it is the necessary next step, its agency. What you learn has to be put to work, has to be put into operation, process. So the acquisition of knowledge, the learning process, is not about getting smart but about how to be smart - wising up, if you like. In principle that ought to be possible in all subject areas, but it is particularly a benefit to be derived from subject English; and if that were to be identified as the target concern then the kind of curriculum design and the recommended texts and so on can be much more extensive, less repetitively intensive than has been the practice for many years. It certainly means we should be a lot more adventurous about taking up literature — whether imaginative or factual — from the wide range now available. Chances are that is where the best that is known and thought is to be discovered anyway. Look at the cultural diversity represented in the Booker Prize winners; and the same pattern is represented in languages other than English. The so-called metropolitan cultures are not the be-all and end-all of literature or knowledge, though they do seem to hold on to the major publishing houses. The multicultural community from which our Stage 6 candidature is constituted is matched by the recognised accomplishment of so many writers from so many cultures around the world — that is not just a happy coincidence but an indication of where else we ought to be looking for our texts.

There's another aspect of my theme I'd like to open up. No doubt it has to do with my involvement in the examining side of the HSC, or Stage 6. The examinations are there because they are required to be there, and that's the way it is going to be for some time to come - the Government has made that quite clear. If we can get past the inherent difficulty of an exam that is simultaneously designed to be competitive and yet also to certify a standard of attainment, then there's a question about the educational benefit of formal examinations. I actually believe there is a very real benefit indeed, provided we are clear about what we are doing: that we are not so impressed by prodigious feats of short-span memory (how many quotations can even a good student come up with 2 weeks after the exam?) as by the ability to think on one's feet, to think to some point; to find a response to some proposition - either for or against or arguing out the pros and cons — inside a limited time. The time limit has the function of requiring students to decide on priorities, to decide on the most pertinent points in the case they are constructing, to discriminate between all the things they know and then to present their view as effectively as they can. Knowledge being selectively put into play again, you see. Not what the student knows but the selection from among the many things known; and if we get anxious about the word discrimination because it resonates with discrimination against, where ignorance, not knowledge, is both latent and patent, then perhaps another way of thinking about this agency of knowledge is to think of it as a new rhetoric; and you see how deftly I've swooped right back to my beginning, though that might also mean I've progressed nowhere at all.

This is just the moment to scuttle sideways, in a ragged subordinate clause. For there is another thought that occurred to me when I first began fretting about what on earth I could say this morning. I have been reading some history, partly to even up the scores — if historians are going to appropriate fiction then why shouldn't we look at the narratives of once upon a time. Actually I was reading Greg Denning, who had written about Captain
Bligh's bad language, and guess what? History isn't what it used to be either, just like English. It too is under radical reformation. One thing that caught my mind's eye was Denning's comment that we are approaching an incipient post-post-modernism, in which any form of representation calls attention to its own representing as well as its relation to what it represents. That leaves traditional History with its passion for the last post terribly nostalgic for the certainties of fact.

Now I mention this as a salutary model for what we too are encountering, but also as a strategy for introducing one further dot point to my wish list. Some of you may remember what I recollect inexactiy, that a few years ago there was a run of answers in the HSC 2 Unit Related novel section where it became apparent that students were making no distinction between the nineteenth century and the middle ages. Maybe it was the dark ages. Anyway, the historical sense was entirely missing. In our kindly way we all fell about laughing, but that was a mistake: because it now seems to me to have been one of those telling moments when we failed to comprehend what we were being told. We were told it again with the famous essay on the end of history - that was all about the end of the cold war and Bob's your uncle, whether Menzies or Santamaria it didn't matter any more. The end of history; that is, the end of a process of declining awareness of the evidence, the actual effective weight, of the past and its relation to the present. Where's no past tense, the ignorant present's all...

True. I don't especially need to make History's case for it; but do you see the implication for our discipline, for example the implication for how narrative is read, or mis-read, or un-read? Certainly there can be no comfortable Aristotelian/Forsterian assumptions about the structure and logic of plot, of cause and effect across time, if all that is retrievable is the endless titillation of sensation. Next week, next chapter, is another barely related episode. Re-runs can be expected. In this new context there is an especial need to articulate the interconnection of what has preceded and what is recommended as somehow 'relevant', meaning all too often instantly attractive no matter how brainless. Without spelling it out, that suggests to me a much more important reason for continuing to re-visit the literature of the past even while we investigate the attractions of so much that is widely interesting in current writing. If our students are to discover the grounds of the distinctions between different kinds of writing, different levels of writing, different kinds of ideas, as well as the grounds for valuing these divergences, then we need to have developed in them a sufficient awareness for them to make confident discriminations for themselves. We have to find the means of heightening their awareness of how language both determines what they read and how they read, and in that process develop the skills I called defensive reading, defensive writing, though it doesn't much matter what it is called: the skills are what matters. That's the challenge I see for Stage 6 English.
The Stage 6 English Forum

On 7 and 8 March the Stage 6 English Forum was held at Trinity College Auburn. The following is an account of the organisation of the Stage 6 English Forum. This information assists in understanding the process used to establish the findings that underpin the Executive Summary Report.

The Delegates

There were approximately 200 delegates in attendance at the Forum. They included practising teachers drawn from all systems, consultants, academics involved in the field and in the practice, members of professional associations, community organisations and professional bodies. In addition members of the Board of Studies, the Years 7-12 and K-6 English Syllabus Advisory Committees and officers of the Board of Studies were in attendance at the Forum.

The delegates were in all cases nominated by the invited body in order to ensure that there was no selection by officers of the Board of Studies. Approximately half of the delegates were practising teachers. (See list of Invited Organisations - Appendix B.)

Pre-Conference Reading Package

Each delegate was provided with a pre-conference reading package so that all participants were informed and could contribute to the Forum. This pre-conference reading package is available on the Board of Studies Web Site (http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au).

See attached Appendix A for a Summary of the Contents of the pre-conference reading package.

The Forum Organisation:

The Forum was organised so that the morning of Day 1 was dedicated to addresses to delegates:

1. Rob Randall, the Director of Curriculum at the Office of the Board of Studies, provided a framework related to the broad directions for syllabus revision as outlined in the NSW Government’s White Paper Securing Their Future. He also provided a brief overview of standards-referenced assessment and reporting and its relation to syllabuses, teaching and learning and the Higher School Certificate examination.

2. Kerry Edmeades, Inspector English, in ‘Setting the Scene’ focused more specifically on the place of the consultation in the syllabus development process, the purpose of the Forum, the role of the delegates and the parameters surrounding the development of the new HSC English courses.
   The panel comprised:
   * Wayne Sawyer, Lecturer, School of Teaching and Educational Studies, University of Western Sydney
   * Peter Goodall, Senior Lecturer, School of English, Linguistics and Media, Macquarie University
   * Kate Grenville, writer and parent
   * Judy Byrne, Director of Educational Development, Department of Education and Training
   * Associate Professor Adrian Mitchell, Department of English, University of Sydney.

See Appendix B for a copy of the panel speakers’ papers, which are also available on the Board’s Web Site

4. The balance of Day 1 and Day 2 was then organised into cross-course workshop groups with a mixture of delegates from the respective nominating bodies.

Each workshop was run by two facilitators (cross systems) nominated by members of the Years 7-12 SAC. These facilitators were trained prior to the Forum and were provided with a booklet of Facilitators Notes for conducting the workshops. Each of the workshop groups was also provided with 1-2 members of the SAC to act as recorders and observers and to assist, but not participate, in the conduct of the workshops.

The workshop questions were designed to proceed from broad considerations concerned with the nature of English and the students at Stage 6, to narrower focus questions on particular courses.
Forum Program

Stage 6 English Forum Program
Saturday, March 7 1998
Day 1

8.30 – 9.00 am Registration and coffee
9.00 – 9.05 am Official Welcome
   • Brother John Thompson, Principal
     Trinity Catholic College, Auburn
   • John Ward
     General Manager of the Office of the Board of Studies
9.05 – 9.20 am Changes to the HSC
   • Rob Randall, Director of Curriculum
     Office of the Board of Studies
9.20 – 9.35 am Setting the scene – Kerry Edmeades, Inspector of English
9.35 – 10.55 am ‘Perspectives on English’
   Chair: Kitty Guerin, Principal, St Clare’s College, Waverley
   Panellists:
   1. Wayne Sawyer, Lecturer, School of Teaching & Educational Studies, University of Western Sydney
   2. Peter Goodall, Senior Lecturer, School of English, Linguistics & Media, Macquarie University
   3. Kate Grenville, writer and parent
   4. Judy Byrne, Director of Educational Development, Department of Education and Training
   5. Associate Professor Adrian Mitchell, Department of English, University of Sydney
10.55 – 11.25 am Questions to Panel
11.25 – 11.55 am Morning Tea
11.55 – 1.35 pm Workshop Session 1: The Nature of English at Stage 6
1.35 – 2.35 pm Lunch
   Display of Working Documents: The Nature of English at Stage 6
2.35 – 4.15 pm Workshop Session 2: The Students at Stage 6

Sunday March 8 1998
Day 2

9.15 – 9.30 am Coffee and Tea
9.30 – 10.00 am Welcome and Overview of Trends Emerging from Day 1
   – Kerry Edmeades
10.00 – 11.30 am Workshop Session 3a: The Stage 6 English Courses
   Morning tea will be available from 10.00 to 11.30 am
11.30 – 1.00 pm Workshop Session 3b: The Courses in Stage 6 English
1.00 – 2.00 pm Lunch
   Display of workshop documents: The Students at Stage 6.
2.00 – 3.30 pm Workshop Session 3b: The Courses in Stage 6 English (cont.)
3.30 pm Conference close and refreshments.

The Workshops

Prior to the Forum, delegates nominated to participate in workshops to discuss individual courses, ie Fundamentals of English; English as a Second Language; Standard English;
Advanced English; Literature. Subsequent to Rob Randall’s Conference address, delegates were invited to nominate to a group to discuss a possible Extension course.

**Saturday 7 March 1998 -**

**Workshop 1:**
Eight groups comprised of delegates from the varied nominating bodies and representing a range of course preferences addressed the following:

### WORKSHOP 1 THE NATURE OF ENGLISH AT STAGE 6

**Purpose:** To consider how the various perspectives on or aspects of English could help shape Stage 6 English.

**Questions:**

1. What perspectives on or aspects of English would be essential in:
   a) all of the proposed Stage 6 English courses;
   b) each of the proposed stage 6 English courses?
2. What statements might be made about the nature of English at Stage 6?

**Workshop 2:**

Delegates remained in the same groups to discuss:

### WORKSHOP 2 THE STUDENTS AT STAGE 6

**Purpose:** The purpose of this workshop is to evaluate the breadth of the needs and interests of students studying English at Stage 6 and how these needs and interests might be accommodated within the available structures. It includes consideration of the expectations made of the students.

**Questions:**

1. What are the interests and needs of the students at Stage 6?
2. How could the breadth of their interests and needs be accommodated by English at Stage 6?
3. What do post-school interest groups expect of the HSC candidature in English?
Sunday 8 March 1998 -
Address:

Following Workshop 2 the Syllabus Advisory Committee members and course organisers co-ordinated a summary of the proceedings from workshop 1. This was provided to delegates in the form of an address by Kerry Edmeades on the morning of Day 2. This address provided the initial stimulus to Workshop 3a.

Workshop 3a

Groups for workshop 3a were reconfigured but again according to the previous criteria. These groups discussed the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORKSHOP 3a THE STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong> To outline the broad content of each Stage 6 English course and map its place in the Senior English curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What should constitute the common core of the Standard and Advanced courses?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for the core? Consider both internal and external assessment approaches.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What are the features that distinguish this course from the others?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. What should be common across the courses? What should be the differences?</td>
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Workshop 3b

Groups for Workshop 3b were configured from the pre-Conference course nomination preferences and from the selections subsequently made by Delegates who wished to discuss the possible Extension course. The selection resulted in one group discussing each of the other four options: English as a Second Language; Extension; Fundamentals of English and Literature with two groups discussing each of Standard English and Advanced English.

The questions discussed were:
### WORKSHOP 3b  THE ESL STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE
#### Group 1

**Purpose:** To provide detailed advice on the nature of the ESL course.

**Questions:**

1. What could be the rationale of this course? What could be the ‘strict eligibility requirements’ (Securing their Future) for this course?
2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?
3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?
4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?
5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?
6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?
7. How can this course be ensured of commensurate status with other English courses in the eyes of community, employers etc.?
8. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?

### WORKSHOP 3b  THE EXTENSION STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE
#### Group 2

**Purpose:** To provide detailed advice on the nature of the Extension English course.

**Questions:**

1. What are the interests and specific needs of students who would be attracted to the extension course/s in English?; How might students not traditionally undertaking advanced English be attracted to an extension course in English?; What could be the rationale of this course?
2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?
3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?
4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?
5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?
6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?
7. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?
### WORKSHOP 3b  THE FUNDAMENTALS STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE  

**Group 3**

**Purpose:** To provide detailed advice on the nature of the Fundamentals course.

**Questions:**

1. What could be the rationale of this course? What are the interests and specific needs of students who would be attracted to the Fundamentals of English course?
2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?
3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?
4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?
5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?
6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?
7. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?

### WORKSHOP 3b  THE LITERATURE STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE  

**Group 4**

**Purpose:** To provide detailed advice on the nature of the Literature English course.

1. What are the interests and specific needs of students who would be attracted to the Literature course/s in English?; How might students not traditionally undertaking advanced English be attracted to a Literature course in English?; What could be the rationale of this course?
2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?
3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?
4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?
5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?
6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?
7. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?
### WORKSHOP 3b THE ADVANCED STAGE 6 ENGLISH COURSE  
**Groups 5 and 6**

**Purpose:** To provide detailed advice on the nature of the Advanced English course.

**Questions:**

1. What could be the rationale of this course?
2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?
3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?
4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?
5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?
6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?
7. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?

### WORKSHOP 3b THE STAGE 6 STANDARD ENGLISH COURSE  
**Groups 7 and 8**

**Purpose:** To provide detailed advice on the nature of the Standard English course.

**Questions:**

1. What could be the rationale of this course?
2. What kinds of teaching/learning experiences should this course offer?
3. How might this course incorporate the key competencies?
4. What are the key skills, knowledge and understandings, and values and attitudes, that students should acquire from this course?
5. What kinds of course structure and content could serve the rationale?
6. What kinds of assessment strategies would be most effective for this course?
7. Have we designed a course suitable for its intended students? Are there aspects not included? Are there other aspects that now need to be omitted?
Process of Tabling the Summary Findings from the Forum Workshops

Transcripts of each workshop have been recorded and Workshop Summaries have been written from them.

These have been further summarised into the Summary Findings.

The process of finalising these summary findings involved the SAC members attached to each workshop group in validating the transcript as a true and accurate record of discussions, then mapping the transcript to the summary findings.

The Summaries of each workshop are organised according to the questions that were asked in the workshop and then organised as:
- Areas of Consensus;
- Areas for Further discussion.

Publication of the Summary Findings from the Forum Workshops

As with the pre-conference and conference papers, the Executive Summary Report of the Stage 6 English Forum will be posted on the Board’s Web Site early in Term 2, following consideration by the Board at its April 28 meeting.
Appendix A - Summary of the Contents of the pre-conference reading package

Office of the Board of Studies
Stage 6 English Forum
held at Trinity College, Auburn
7-8 March 1998

Forum Program

Pre-Forum Reading Materials

SECURING THEIR FUTURE (extracts).........................NSW Government
   Curriculum Issues
   Assessment Issues
   Key Competencies

PERSPECTIVES ON ENGLISH .................... Office of the Board of Studies

REPORT OF THE SENIOR ENGLISH STAGE 6 SYLLABUS
CONSULTATION ........................................ Office of the Board of Studies
   Executive Summary
   Extracts from Senior English Review Committee – Report on the Draft English
   Stage 6 Syllabus Consultation – June 1997
   Definition of Subject English
   Needs and Interests of the Student
   Content

THE REVISION OF THE ENGLISH K-6 SYLLABUS AND SUPPORT
MATERIALS .............................................. Office of the Board of Studies

COMMUNICATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AS A COMPONENT OF
STAGE 6 ENGLISH .................................................. TAFE NSW

EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WHO ARE LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND
LANGUAGE ......................................................... Multicultural Education Unit (DET)

Delegates were also supplied with:

NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS MODULES Australian Committee for
   Training Curriculum (ACTRAC)
   • Writing Skills for Work (NCS002)
   • Work Team Communication (NCS004)

FOCUS ON LITERACY Department of Education & Training
   STATEMENT OF THE KEY COMPETENCIES
Appendix B - Invited Organisations

Association of Independent Schools
Association of Teachers of the Media
Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
Australia Council
Australian Catholic University
Australian Playwrights Centre
Australian School Library Association
Australian Society of Authors
Board of Studies NSW
Catholic Education Commission of NSW
Charles Sturt University
Department of Education and Training
Educational Drama Association
English Teachers’ Association of NSW
Entertainment and Media Alliance
Independent Education Union
Macquarie University
NSW Teachers Federation
NSW Writers Centre
Office of the Board of Studies NSW
Southern Cross University
Syllabus Advisory Committees - Members
  * English 7-12
  * English K-6
Syllabus Advisory Committees - Nominees
The English Association
University of Newcastle
University of New England
University of New South Wales
University of Sydney
University of Technology Sydney
University of Western Sydney
University of Wollongong