

Contract Ability Level Mastery (CALM):
A Mastery program for remediating/extending
basic english writing skills

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**Contract Ability Level Mastery (CALM): A mastery
program for remediating / extending basic english
writing skills**

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. (CALM) for Contract Ability Level Mastery
2. (SNU) for Special Needs Unit

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to implement a mastery program designed to improve and / or extend the basic writing skills of 125 Year Eight students. The basic writing skills were sentence writing and paragraph writing. Five theoretical underpinnings (mastery learning strategies, contract learning, higher order thinking skills, learning styles and control theory) were combined to produce an English program entitled Contract Ability Level Mastery (CALM). The CALM program ran for eight weeks and used action-research as the research methodology. A pre-test and a post-test were administered. The results of the post-test indicate significant improvements in the target students' sentence and paragraph writing skills. The study concludes that the CALM program did help the target students to remediate / improve basic sentence writing and paragraph writing skills.

CHAPTER 1

EVERY JOURNEY BEGINS WITH THE FIRST STEP

In 1994, a Queensland Secondary School's Year 12 students were rated well below the State average on the Writing Task sub-test of the Queensland Core Skills Test. This was seen by many of the school's staff as a reflection, generally, of the poor writing abilities of the students who attended the school. When explored further, the poor writing abilities included were poor sentence and/or paragraph writing, poor spelling and poor punctuation skills. Teachers also remarked that poor writing abilities were obvious in Year 8 but nothing was done to rectify the problems, so the problems compounded as the years went by.

Teachers stated that students who could write acceptably found it difficult to articulate why they performed at a reasonable level and had little understanding of what they were doing. Therefore, if any students did write effectively, teachers believed it was more by "luck" than considered articulated knowledge and skills: Students could not cite any rules for writing sentences and/or paragraphs which they could apply to their work, or the work of others.

WHAT WAS CURRENTLY HAPPENING IN ENGLISH

The school's English program, as it stood, assumed students had the basic skills of writing sentences and paragraphs, but made no allowances for students who did not have those skills. The lack of mastery of these basic skills caused

problems during Year 8, in all subject areas, and in subsequent years because the problems related to poor basic writing skills compounded as the work became more demanding regarding standards of written responses. The school did not offer any mainstream English programs, at any level, which offered remediation or extension work for students in need of help or acceleration.

The Special Needs Unit (SNU) ran programs for students who had diagnosed learning disabilities or, learning difficulties. Some of the students whose basic English skills were severely lacking were offered places in the SNU's programs. However, two mitigating circumstances governed the success of attracting students to the SNU.

The first circumstance was the stigma attached to students attending the SNU. Students who were offered places often refused because they did not want their friends to see them as being different. They [the students possibly to enter the SNU] did not wish to be called, 'dumbies', 'vegies', 'spastics' or other derogatory names often directed at students who attended the SNU by some students who attended regular classes.

The other mitigating circumstance was the lack of SNU staff to cope with the numbers of students requiring help. The school was allocated one full-time Special Needs Teacher. Two other 'interested', part-time teachers who had no formal training in teaching students with special needs and who taught other

regular classes in the school were also members of the unit. The SNU could not be staffed all day every day because of the other teaching commitments required of the part-time teachers.

It was deemed impractical by the Head of Department to implement a new English program across all grade levels simultaneously. This decision was made because the new program would differ greatly from the English programs presently being taught.

The existing program required that students studied pre-set units that were all teacher-nominated. There was no input from the students about what was taught, or how the information may be presented. The pre-set units were thematically based and required a great deal of reading and writing. Four separate units had to be completed during the year. None of the units catered for individual student differences and the same assessment items were required from each student regardless of ability. During the time each unit was studied, no direct teaching of writing skills was required. The students were expected to be able to write essays of 200-250 words minimum and were also expected to write personal letters, newspaper articles and prepare speeches to present to their respective classes.

Where some students had problems with letter or newspaper writing, teachers conducted class lessons for all the students. Following this input,

English teachers assumed the students had the necessary English skills to cope with the work/assessment required. This 'lock-step' philosophy (which is governed by age attainment more than by mastery of abilities) suggests that because students were in a specific grade, they should have the skills required to succeed. Therefore, teachers assumed students would have the necessary skills to cope with Year 8 English primarily based on age and no other criteria.

Even though concerns were expressed about the lack of basic writing skills in the school, generally, the English program still assumed students would have the skills to cope with the work. This being the case, all the students underwent the same assessment techniques, although the topics for essays and assignments sometimes varied from class-to-class. However, little or no consideration was given to students who lacked the necessary basic writing skills. If students were found to have basic writing problems, teachers preferred to send students to the SNU. If the SNU was up to capacity, then the students had to return to the regular class.

If possible, and when time allowed, the SNU teacher(s) would supply modified work for the students the SNU could not take. This action's success relied upon the classroom teachers' following-up on the work to make sure the work was being completed. This 'band-aid' technique did not prove successful. The students for whom the work was set rarely completed the tasks because the work was different from what other students were completing. They preferred to

do the same work as the rest of the class even though they were not capable of completing the work satisfactorily. When students did complete the work supplied by the SNU, the classroom teachers did not feel it was their responsibility to mark or comment on the work. Completed tasks were handed to the SNU staff for marking which, due to their already crowded timetable, led to the withdrawal of supplying modified work to classroom teachers.

TOWARDS A THEMATIC CONCERN

The Head of Department for English thought, as did the Principal and the other teachers of English, that to implement a new program, across all grades, in 1995 would be a drastic change and could disadvantage students who were used to the system as it stood. Also, the new program may not work, so it was decided by the Head of Department for English, the Principal and the English teachers to target only the Year 8 students attending the school in 1995. The rationale for this decision was that if the new program did not prove successful it would not be implemented across all Grades. However, should the program prove successful, then there was every possibility the mastery concept would be introduced into Years 9 and 10. No decision was made about Years 11 and 12 until results were available from the junior school.

Data gathered from a questionnaire (see Appendix A) and informal interviews with eight teachers, each of whom represented a subject-area within the school (English, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Science, Home Economics,

Health and Physical Education, Commerce and Manual Arts) highlighted the need for an English program that considered the following items:

1. A program that assessed the sentence and paragraph writing abilities of Year 8 students upon entering high school.

The school had no testing procedures that enabled teachers to ascertain the writing abilities of the students entering the school. Some anecdotal information was supplied by some of their feeder-schools, but mostly that information related to students who were ascertained or who were considered to be behaviour problems. The report cards students had received at the end of their primary education were consulted where possible, but there were many discrepancies evident in the exiting grades given to students regarding their abilities in English and the students' actual skills manifested in the high school classroom. For the most part, the high school teachers discounted the English grades given at the end of Year 7 because, in the high school teachers' view, the English grades were overly inflated.

2. A program that enabled writing disadvantaged students to be helped, and other, more proficient students to be extended:

There were no strategies in place to remediate/extend students' abilities. All students were expected to do the same work, at the same time and achieve best the students could, whether they had the pre-requisite writing skills or not. Consequently, the behaviour of the students who were not capable of succeeding in such a framework became a problem for the teachers. By ensuring strategies

were in place to deal with problem(s) of differing abilities, the behaviour problems may abate.

3. A program which utilised a sound psychological framework:

By ensuring that students' individual differences were met would go some way to meeting students' academic needs. However, students had other needs apart from the academic. Glasser's (1984) control theory is a psychological framework, the aim of which is to satisfy four needs (power, fun, belongingness and freedom). These needs, Glasser argues, are essential to happy living. By implementing control theory in the CALM program, those essential needs would be met.

4. A program which taught students to become more analytical about their work:

By helping students think more about what and how they were doing was seen as a way of improving thinking skills in general. By becoming more analytical in their approach to writing, the students may develop editing skills regarding not only the mechanics of writing, but the content of their work as well. With the inclusion of thinking skills in the CALM program, students may become more confident about negotiating work-grades in consultation with teachers rather than the teachers just giving grades in isolation. Other subjects may also benefit because students will be able to transfer the skills to areas of study.

5. A self-paced program which empowered students to make decisions for themselves:

According to the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration (1996)

adolescence is characterised by (amongst other characteristics):

- the emergence of the capacity for abstract thinking, for deductive reasoning, expanding the conceptual range beyond the concrete, operational here-and-now to hypothetical, future and spatially remote aspects of abstract thought.

Striking out from the dependence of childhood to take on separate, independent, individual identity and value system (p. 7).

It is reasonable to infer from the aforementioned characteristics that not all students will be at the same level of cognitive development and students need to make decisions for themselves if the developmental process is to be supported and enhanced. Therefore, by allowing students to make their own decisions, CALM will facilitate cognitive as well as academic growth.

6. A system of contracting that allowed students to decide what grades they wanted to achieve:

The Queensland Board of Teacher Registration Report (1996) states that schools and school systems are, however, increasingly recognising the imperative to provide a supportive school environment for young adolescents through such initiatives as:

- Curriculum design - using the interests of young adolescents and their developmental tasks as the basis for coherent and relevant curriculum; providing for flexible and varied pathways for progress through the curriculum; facilitating mastery, promoting excellence.

- Learning and teaching - identifying and reinforcing learning and teaching practices which respond most effectively and sensitively to the developmental needs of young adolescents; involving adolescents in the ownership of programs and processes.

Contracting was seen as a way of facilitating flexibility, relevance and ownership of the work tasks to be mastered in CALM. Students would be able to negotiate timelines and levels of achievement; thereby experiencing learning experiences specifically designed for the promotion of adolescent development.

7. A program which catered for individual styles of learning:

Most of the English teachers regularly prepared lesson which used visual, audio and kinaesthetic strategies. However, techniques were requested which dealt more with styles of thinking so CALM could be more easily tailored to students' styles of thinking. To this end, the work of Butler (1993a, 1993b) on thinking styles and Herrmann's (1995), all of whose work dealt with the processes of thinking and learning strategies, were considered for inclusion. However, Butler's work integrated Bloom's (1968, 1976) taxonomy, so it was decided to include in the CALM program the theories relating to Butler's (1993a) four learning styles, 'each of which has its own characteristics, strengths, limitations and frustrations. Because of our mind's style, each of us prefers to learn in very definite ways as well as think in specific processes.' (Butler, 1993b, p. 11).

IDENTIFICATION OF THEMATIC CONCERN

In consultation with the Head of Department for English (Head of Department for English), myself and the four other English teachers who would be teaching Year 8 English, the following thematic concern was identified. To design and implement an English program (CALM), the aim of which was to remediate and/or extend the sentence writing and paragraph writing of Year 8 students attending the Queensland high school. The program used the following theoretical underpinnings:

(a) Mastery Learning was chosen because, according to Bloom (1968, 1976), Tenenbaum (1986), and Woolfolk (1990), most students can master what we have to teach them. The fact that mastery allowed students to work at their own pace and students were only allowed to progress to more difficult work when certain core elements had been mastered went some way to dealing with the problem of acquiring basic writing skills. Using mastery techniques also ensured that the more competent students were not held back

(b) Contract teaching was chosen as the primary method of teaching because, according to Boud (1986), contracting was beneficial to self-directed learning and independence. When students were actively involved in deciding what and how they wanted to learn, the students experienced flexibility, relevance and ownership of the work tasks.

(c) In order to extend the thinking and promote more thinking about the work they did, Bloom's (1968, 1976) work on higher level thinking was built into the program. Using Bloom's taxonomy of critical thinking ensured students thought more analytically about their own work and the work of others. Therefore, students understood and evaluated what they were doing as opposed to just completing tasks.

(d) The work of Butler (1993a, 1993b) on learning styles was adopted, so individual student differences in learning could be catered for more effectively. In conjunction with contract teaching, learning styles added another dimension in recognising the individuality of students. Whereas contracts dealt mainly with what was to be completed and when, Butler's learning styles allowed students to follow directions, strategies and learning techniques, previously unknown to them [the students], which were geared to their personal learning strengths. Students were also advised as to learning strategies that hindered their progress and learning.

(e) Glasser's (1984) control theory was the framework which enabled the psychological well-being of students to be looked after. The work units designed for CALM used the four needs (power, fun, belongingness and freedom) as the basis for the units' design. As well as the work being formulated using control theory principles, all the strategies briefly discussed in points 1-7 also reinforced the control theory philosophy.

WHY IMPLEMENT THE CALM PROGRAM AT ALL?

The seeming inability of many students to be able to write basic sentences and paragraphs was viewed with concern because of the detrimental effects upon students' schooling and employment prospects. The community, employers and governments of the day have all expressed concern over the perceived problems relating to literacy and numeracy standards in schools. Money has been made available to train and employ Reading Recovery teachers who, along with Support Teachers Learning Difficulties and SNU staff support students experiencing problems with literacy and numeracy skills. However, such support may be short in duration because of time constraints and the number of students needing help. Eventually, most students return to the mainstream classes and do the best they can. The CALM program will keep students in their regular classes, where possible, and run a mainstream program which assesses students' basic writing skills (simple sentence and paragraph writing) in order that the students may be extended or undergo remediation. Such a program will have four aims:

- specifically address itself to remediating and extending basic writing skills.
- be a visible program so those who express concern over the lack of basic writing skills can see what the school is currently doing to address the issue.
- set the groundwork for students to be able to write better sentences which may also help their grades in other subjects.
- improve writing abilities so students may have a better chance of obtaining employment when they leave school.

SPECIFIC CURRICULUM AIMS OF CALM

The term, “basic writing skills” (see p.1 for definition) was used by teachers in reference to sentences, paragraph writing, spelling and punctuation. After consultation with the English Head of Department for English, it was decided the new program which was to be called Contract, Ability-Level, Mastery (CALM) would target only the skills of sentence writing and paragraph writing. These were the skills that the CALM program set out to improve. However, if the outcome of the program was to improve sentence and paragraph writing, how was that outcome to be achieved?

Having discussed earlier the theoretical underpinnings, the reason for implementing CALM and identified the thematic concern, more specific curriculum aims for CALM were then considered. The following aims were seen as core elements which, when mastered, could be developed more fully by students who attained mastery more quickly than slower students:

- students will be able to write and recognise verbs
- students will be able to write and recognise simple sentences
- students will be able to recognise the subject and predicate in given examples of simple sentences.
- students will be able to write and recognise topic sentences both in their own writings and the writings of others. Students will also be able to state and practise the rules regarding topic sentences in paragraphs.
- students will be able to state the rules regarding paragraph writing.

- students will be able to state whether given examples of paragraphing are not good examples of paragraph writing.
- students will be able to write a short, narrative story which uses all of the above aims satisfactorily.

Having previously outlined the major theories which underpinned the design of the CALM program, a review of the literature was undertaken pertaining to programs which addressed the remediation and/or extension of basic writing skills which used mastery learning, contract learning, thinking skills, Butler's (1993a, 1993b) learning styles and Glasser's (1984) control theory as theoretical underpinnings.

CHAPTER 2

YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO GET

This literature review covers five theoretical underpinnings the CALM program dealing specifically with the concepts of mastery learning and exemplified in two current mastery learning models. Also, theories relating to control theory, learning styles, contracting and thinking are interrogated. The literature review concludes by way of a conclusion section which answers four cited criticisms of mastery learning and briefly discusses their ramifications for the CALM program.

A search of the literature was conducted for two reasons. First, a general search of the five major underpinnings that constitute the CALM program was conducted in order to ascertain the most relevant information for the development of the CALM program. The second reason was to see if any programs already existed which used the five major underpinnings to develop the basic writing skills of Year 8 students. Whilst a deal of research was available on the former, no research was found regarding the latter.

PREVIOUS STUDIES IN THE AREA OF IMPROVING STUDENTS' BASIC WRITING SKILLS

An examination of sixty-three studies in the area of improving basic writing skills, five studies were of relevance to this study. A study by Hertler (1992) successfully used pre-testing/post-testing, critical thinking skills and student self-monitoring techniques to improve remedial junior high school students' abilities in reading comprehension and to strengthen writing mechanics. Significant improvements in students' writing were achieved by Thornburg (1991) when the higher order cognitive strategies of modelling, monitoring and collaborative role-playing were combined in a program to improve the writing skills of 58, high-risk Grade 7 Social Studies students. A writing improvement program by Muccino et al (1986) used metacognition as one of seven strategies (socially based writing strategies, theory tested approaches, word processing and instructional television, guided practice and teacher modelling) to help students in Grades 4, 5 and 6 to become more effective writers. Of the seven strategies used, metacognition was viewed as the most successful strategy.

The importance of prior knowledge and/or Bloom's (1976) concept of cognitive entry behaviour, to successful writing was confirmed in a study by Wright and Rosenberg (1993). The concepts of, sharing writing with peers and direct and functional feedback, in order to promote a class of Grade 6 students' re-thinking and revising of their written texts, proved successful in improving the quality of the students' writing (Farnan and Fearn, 1993). The majority of

other research papers which aimed at improving students' writing skills, focussed on the use of computers as aids to improvement and did not use any of the theoretical underpinnings outlined in the CALM program. None of the studies used Butler's (1993a) learning styles, or Glasser's (1984) control theory as strategies for improving basic writing skills.

HISTORY OF MASTERY LEARNING

Mastery learning dates back to the 1920s, during which time, three major studies (Mehrens & Lehmann, 1973; Morrison, 1926 and Washburne, 1922, cited in Block, 1971; see also Guskey & Pigott, 1988) defined mastery in terms of:

- (a) various cognitive, educational objectives students were expected to achieve.
- (b) affective and psychomotor objectives students were expected to achieve.
- (c) teaching material organised into well defined learning units.

In the above studies, students were required to master each objective before proceeding to the next unit. To monitor their progress, ungraded diagnostic tests were administered to provide feedback on the effectiveness of students' learning. On the basis of the test results, students' instruction was supplemented with appropriate learning correctives so students could complete the units.

Interest in mastery learning appeared to fade in the mid 1930's, until the late 1950's, perhaps because of the lack of technology required to sustain a successful

strategy (Block, 1971). It was at this time when, based on the work of Skinner (1954, cited in Block, 1971), programmed instruction became popular. Three major studies (Glaser, 1968; Atkinson, 1968 and Suppes, 1966, cited in Guskey & Pigott, 1988) investigated the teaching of arithmetic, reading and science to elementary school students. As in the earlier mastery approaches, the subjects were broken up into units of work. Although programmed instruction proved to be useful for some students, it was disregarded as an effective mastery learning model because it was only found to be effective for students who required small learning steps, drill and frequent reinforcement, but it was not effective for all, or almost all students (Block, 1971).

Carroll's 1963 'Model of School Learning' (cited in Fuchs, Fuchs & Tindal, 1986), proved to be a useful mastery paradigm because it looked at the major factors influencing students' success in learning, aptitude and time. If each student could be given the time needed to learn to a certain level, then it was claimed they would attain the level and vice versa. As in previous studies, Carroll's (1963) model looked at learning as a sequence of distinct learning tasks which had to be mastered before progressing to the next task. Other conditions cited by Carroll (1963, cited in Block, 1971) as being necessary for optimal learning are:

- (a) time allowed - each student should be allowed the time he [sic] needs to learn a subject. The time he needs to learn the subject is likely to be affected by the students' aptitudes, his verbal ability, the quality of instruction he receives in class, and the quality of the help he receives at home.
- (b) perseverance - the time the learner is willing to spend in learning.

(c) aptitude - the amount of time required by the learner to attain mastery of a unit of learning.

(d) quality of instruction - the degree to which the presentation, explanation and ordering of elements of the task to be learned approach the optimum for a given learner. According to Block (1971), one of the most important aspects relating to quality of instruction has to do with sequencing the order of presentation of material from simple to complex. Quality of instruction also requires that each stage is properly mastered before the next one is taken up, and checking that students understand exactly what the objectives of instruction are.

(e) ability to understand instruction - the ability of the learner to understand the nature of the task he is to learn and the procedures he is to follow in the learning of the task (p. 98).

Bloom (1968) developed these concepts further into a mastery learning strategy. Specific objectives, both cognitive and affective, were designed for each subject. Each subject was also broken into smaller learning units, along with the criteria for mastery of each unit.

Bloom's (1968) model is different in two major respects from Carroll's (1963, cited in Fuchs et al, 1986) model, in that he implemented improved feedback instruments and introduced a greater number of instructional correctives, "which were prepared sheets which not only supplemented the group-based instruction, but provided alternatives to it" (Block & Anderson, 1975). Feedback instruments were improved via Bloom's (1968) introduction of formative evaluation. This on-going assessment made it possible to continually modify the process so all students could achieve mastery.

The diversity of classroom populations prompted the need for a greater variety of instructional correctives. Within the context of large classroom populations, it is unlikely that the quality of teaching is optimal for all students. Therefore, Bloom (1968) introduced the following corrective procedures to enhance students' instructional cues and active participation:

- (a) small group study sessions.
- (b) individualised tutoring.
- (c) alternative teaching materials.
- (d) a re-teaching phase.

Strategies (a) and (b) were seen as an important means of personal-social contact not usually found in large groups. Strategies (c) and (d) were seen by Bloom as providing students with the drill and practice they may need.

Since, that time, Bloom and his colleagues have continued to fine-tune mastery learning (Peterson, 1989). A continuing, major emphasis in their work is the importance of school and home variables, and just how alterable they are. Two of these variables, relating directly to school, are cognitive entry characteristics and quality instruction, which refer to the prior knowledge and level(s) of competency students bring to any subject, while the quality of instruction referred to here, relates to lesson preparation, effectiveness and frequency of feedback and the suitability of lesson material regarding students' ability. Research by Bloom and his colleagues suggests that the latter accounts

for 25% of the variance in determining success of instruction, the former about 50%, and other affective variables account for 25% (Levine, 1985, p. 12).

Having outlined a brief history of mastery learning, it would seem pertinent to discuss some of the reasons as to why mastery learning will benefit students' learning.

THE BENEFITS OF MASTERY LEARNING

Ames (1992) suggests that the central goal of mastery is to maintain achievement-directed behaviour over time. According to Auburn, (1989); Fuchs, et al (1986); and Tenenbaum (1986), mastery learning techniques improve students' levels of achievement because students work under a system that has specific criteria which have to be met in order to receive credit/recognition for units of work. The units of work themselves allow for students to make their own decisions about the level(s) of achievement they wish to realise. Therefore, the more able students are not held back waiting for less able students to catch up. Conversely, students who take longer to achieve have the opportunity to complete core work, but not at the expense of other students who may otherwise be waiting to progress to more in-depth work. Having both the opportunity to decide which level(s) of achievement to realise and also be given the right to decide how long to take completing the work invests students with power and freedom, two of the needs highlighted in Glasser's (1984) control theory.

The mastery approach may also lead students to feel pride and satisfaction with their efforts. Mastery learning allows students to work at their own pace and achieve what they want to achieve rather than experience frustration and failure regarding work which is too hard, and does not consider individual needs (Ritchie & Carr, 1992).

Mastery techniques help students to develop new skills and understand the work (Ho, 1989). When using mastery techniques, the units of work are constructed using a task analysis approach; whereby, the work to be completed is broken into small, achievable segments, each of which must be mastered before students may progress to the next section. When mastery is not realised, students remain at the same level, but are given varying forms of instruction until mastery is achieved. So, when students do master the various levels which make up the units of work, the students' understanding of the work tends to be high (Bloom, 1968, 1976; Ho, 1989).

When mastery is realised, students progress to more advanced levels of work and, in so doing, improve their level of competence, higher order questioning skills and original thinking (Mevarech & Susak, 1993). The improvements in competence, original thinking and questioning skills in students using mastery techniques reflect another aim of the mastery learning approach. When students progress through the levels of mastery required for each unit of work, the levels

of competence, thinking and questioning skills also progress (Bloom, 1968, 1976; Butler, 1993a; Mevarech & Susak, 1993; Prewitt, 1993).

According to Bloom (1968, 1976), units of work should contain thinking/questioning skills that are arranged in a hierarchy: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Students who only master the thinking skills of knowledge and comprehension are not as advanced in the thinking/questioning skills as students who master evaluation (Butler, 1993a, 1993b; Prewitt, 1993). Units of work which are planned using mastery techniques need to offer a hierarchy of thinking and questioning skills which should be reflected in each unit's assessment.

Mastery learning allows students the power and freedom to make their own decisions about what level they want to achieve regarding units of work to be completed in the classroom. The fact that two of the four needs required for success at school (Glasser, 1984) are inherent in mastery learning, may account for students improved attitudes to learning and more effective learning. Kulik, Kulik and Brangert-Drowns (1990a) using a meta-analytic approach, investigated 108 mastery programs and found student attitudes were significantly more positive in mastery classes than in conventional classes, and mastery learning has positive effects on student learning.

Bloom (1968, 1976) states that most students (perhaps over 90%) can master what we have to teach them and it is the task of instruction to find the means which will enable students to master the subjects (Kaplan, 1990; Tenenbaum, 1986; Woolfolk, 1990). Mastery learning has benefits in the classroom. Learners view themselves by how well they do at school (Strein, 1993). When students perform poorly in the classroom, this, along with other factors, may lead to frustration and the development of a negative self-concept. Mastery learning may do a lot to enhance both self-esteem and a positive attitude towards school (Ames, 1992; Gage and Berliner, 1991; Good and Brophy, 1990; Guskey, 1987, cited in Hamachek, 1990; Strein, 1993).

TWO MODELS OF MASTERY LEARNING

Mastery learning can generally be defined as instruction organised to emphasise student mastery of specific learning objectives and to deliver corrective instruction as necessary in order to achieve that goal (Harvink, 1994; Kulik, Kulik & Brangert-Drowns, 1990a; Lefrancois, 1991). According to Kulik et al (1990a), there are two major mastery approaches:

- (1) Learning for Mastery (LFM), as espoused by Bloom (1968, 1976).
- (2), Personalised System of Instruction (PSI), Keller's (1968).

BLOOM'S LEARNING FOR MASTERY

According to Bloom (1968, 1976), mastery begins with the preparing of instructional objectives for a course which is to be studied (see also Fuchs et al,

1986; Gage & Berliner, 1992; Good & Brophy, 1990; Rowe, 1991). All students are expected to achieve the objectives by the end of the course. The course is then broken down into smaller units. Formative tests are constructed which will provide regular, diagnostic information as to how successfully students are learning the specified objectives. Corrective materials are designed to help re-teach students who are not learning successfully. These materials may differ markedly from the original in order to cater for the differences.

The additional procedures of feedback and correctives can significantly enhance the success rate of students in mastery programs (Hoy & Gregg, 1993; Ryan, Jackson & Levinson, 1986). A study conducted by Tenenbaum (1986) used three Grade Nine Algebra classes comprising, on average, thirty students per class, the purpose of which was to see if the introduction of feedback and correctives improved results in two mastery classes and one conventional class. However, only one of three classes used feedback and corrective procedures as defined by Tenenbaum.

Tenenbaum (1986) termed the procedure for introducing feedback and correctives, feedback-corrective learning. The instructional procedures comprising feedback-corrective learning were: frequency of cues, participation, reinforcement, feedback and correctives. The class in which the mastery techniques and feedback-corrective learning procedures were applied, 74% of students achieved mastery (80% or higher). Students operating in the mastery

class which did not utilise feedback-corrective learning procedures, 57% of the students attained mastery. In the class that did not use mastery techniques at all, 17% of students attained mastery.

Mastery learning, according to Bloom (1968, 1976; Ashman & Elkins, 1994; Fuchs et al, 1986; Gage & Berliner, 1991), suggest that courses of learning be broken down into small units and that certain techniques can be used to enhance the learning of all students. The ways in which information is presented and the sequence of instruction are also viewed by Bloom as important to effective mastery learning.

Bloom's (1968, 1976) mastery learning model outlines three instructional processes for successful mastery teaching. According to Bloom, during the phase of Initial Teaching, the unit objectives of the course are presented in the form of an overview (see also Ashman & Elkins, 1994; Fuchs et al, 1986; Gage and Berliner, 1992). Students are also informed as to what is to be learned and why it is important for them to learn the information. Bloom stresses the importance of presenting the material in different ways (visual/verbal, lecture/discussion) in order to cater for different modes of learning. Guided Practice is the second sequence. During this time students put into practice what they have learnt under the careful guidance of their teacher. The final sequence, Corrective/Enrichment, is a time when those students who have mastered the objectives are given the opportunity to pursue other in-depth, higher cognitive,

levels of work. Students who have not mastered the objectives are given corrective help through the use of alternative teaching activities.

When the instructional phases are complete, summative testing, which tests students' understanding of all that has been taught, is carried out. Performance at or above the mastery level set at the beginning of the course determines the grades students receive. Each grade given represents each individual student's mastery of the cited instructional objectives; grading is not affected by how well other students have done (Biggs & Moore, 1993; Gage & Berliner, 1992; Kaplan, 1990; Marvin, 1993; Tuckman, 1992).

KELLER'S PERSONALISED SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION

Keller's (1968); personalised system of instruction (PSI), requires the teacher to define what the course objectives are and then break the course down into smaller units of work (see also Keller & Sherman, 1982). Each unit contains only a few objectives and a time limit of one to two weeks is imposed. Students are directed toward specific textbooks, study materials, a list of study questions to promote thinking and a set of test items based on each unit's objectives. Students proceed through the units at their own pace.

When students complete a unit they are given a summative test which can be either multiple choice, short answer essay questions, or an oral exam. On completion of the exam, students hand in their answers for immediate

correction. If mastery has been achieved, students may proceed to the next unit. However, should the results not be satisfactory, students are asked to review the material again and return for re-testing.

During the review phase, students use a combination of tutorials and private study. The review continues until students achieve a mastery level on the testing. Progression to the next unit is not allowed until the previous unit has been passed.

Grades are based on the amount of units completed during a set time. Should students wish to improve the grades they have received, they may submit special projects or undergo teacher-prepared exams (Gage & Berliner, 1991; Good & Brophy, 1990; Lefrancois, 1991; Ormrod, 1990; Woolfolk, 1990). Students who undergo PSI are likely to realise higher levels of achievement, less variation in achievement, and higher ratings of school courses (Guskey & Pigott, 1988).

As with any education paradigm, there are arguments for and against the paradigm's efficacy and resultant outcomes. Therefore, it seems pertinent at this time to highlight some of the criticisms of mastery learning.

The implications of the criticisms for the CALM program will be stated in the Conclusion section of this review.

CRITICISMS OF THE MASTERY APPROACH

The first criticism is that advanced by Slavin (1986) via his 'best-evidence synthesis'. Slavin states that the evidence regarding mastery learning should be accepted at face value. To this end, "best-evidence synthesis" (only judge a program's success by its results) is seen as a more viable form of review for mastery learning than other, more traditional methods, such as those outlined in Slavin (1987). The criticism is acknowledged, although Slavin's views have been challenged (Anderson & Burns, 1990; Guskey, 1987; Kulik, et al, 1990b),

Slavin's (1987) best evidence synthesis criticism applies to CALM. It was stated in Chapter 1 CALM would be only implemented in Year 8 . The decision was made because the Head of Department for English for English and the Principal had reservations about how effective CALM would be in remediating/extending basic English skills. Any decision about expanding CALM would depend solely on the results at the end of the year. This decision undoubtedly reflected Slavin's stance: only judge a program's success by its results. If CALM's implementation led to a marked improvement in Year 8 students' sentence/paragraph writing, then other grades' English programs would be re-written using mastery techniques. Other possible learning improvements such as more positive attitudes to learning, better staff/student relationships and increased student empowerment to make decisions for themselves were not to be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of CALM. The quantitative data alone would be the deciding factor.

According to Good and Brophy (1990) there are three major criticisms of the mastery approach. The first criticism is, "that individual differences in student learning abilities are too stable and powerful to be compensated for by relatively minor adjustments in time allocation for teaching and learning (Good & Brophy, 1990, p. 176). However, CALM is a program which will instigate adjustments in time allocation for teaching and learning. CALM will also cater for individual learning styles and will allow slower students to spend more time on tasks that other students may complete quicker. The changes to be implemented regarding teaching and learning will offer many compensatory factors to enable all students to achieve to their potential.

The second criticism is in the area of the research that challenges a key premise of mastery learning. The premise is that the mastering of early objectives will reduce the time required to learn the later:

In practice, then, it appears that mastery learning does not solve the dilemma of having to choose between fixing time allotments and accepting individual differences in mastery levels or fixing mastery levels and accepting individual differences in time to learn. Instead, they merely substitute the second choice for the first (Arlin, 1984, cited in Good & Brophy, 1990, p. 177).

Bloom (1968, 1976) states that students can learn anything, given enough time. However, the statement gives no indication of the actual time it takes students to learn anything because of the many variables (ability, motivation, interest, prior knowledge and environment) operant on students in the learning situation. In a school learning situation, what students are required to learn is

usually governed by time. Teachers have a responsibility to complete syllabus requirements and assessment deadlines, even though some students may not be able to complete the requirements successfully because of the variables (plus others) mentioned on page 20.

There are many variables influencing students' learning, some of which may be controlled in the school environment, others may not (Keller, 1968, Keller & Sherman, 1982). CALM will address the variable(s) relating to Year 8 students' level(s) of competence regarding basic sentence and paragraph writing and will either remediate those who are not competent and extend the skills of those who are competent at writing basic sentences and paragraphs.

The third criticism is directed towards the length and content of mastery programs. It would seem the shorter the program, the more successful the mastery approach becomes (Arlin, 1984; Guskey & Gates, 1986). Unfortunately, no mention of the actual length of time regarding the term 'shorter' was evident in the criticism. The CALM program will run for eight weeks, which suggests a shorter, rather than longer mastery program. As to whether the results of CALM will be affected by the time the program takes to complete is impossible to know; therefore, the third criticism is noted but may, or may not be relevant to the CALM program - only time will tell.

Biehler and Snowman (1990) found that mastery learning had three specific limitations:

1. Mastery requires careful planning, preparation of several sets of evaluation materials, and extensive monitoring of student progress. Accordingly, it requires more teacher time and effort than conventional teaching.
2. The standard for mastery may be difficult to establish or defend.
3. Some students inevitably achieve mastery faster than others. Therefore, it is necessary to devise alternative assignments for those who have passed tests at an acceptable level on the first try.

The CALM program has already addressed Biehler and Snowman's (1990) limitations. Careful planning and preparation of materials are manifested in the Narrative Writing booklet (see Appendix A). Specific criteria relating to higher order thinking skills have also been designed to measure students' progress, and to wish to improve students' basic writing skills needs little defending. The third limitation has also been answered in that students who do finish before others are directed to complete higher-order thinking skills activities. In such cases where students have achieved their nominated grades and do not wish to improve the grade, the students will begin the next unit of work.

The concepts of boredom and time were cited by Biggs and Moore (1993) as problems when instigating mastery programs. Students who have to repeat work may become bored and alienated. The time required by some students to master the criteria will vary therefore, a forty minute lesson may not be long enough for some students to master the work set for that lesson. The problem regarding boredom was recognised, and is one of the reasons why Glasser's (1984) control theory was adopted as major underpinning of the CALM program. Glasser argues that the need for fun is fundamental to an effective learning environment so some fun activities will be included in CALM to enhance learning and relieve boredom.

The likelihood of mastery programs increasing competition and thereby leading to social comparison in students was cited as a criticism by Nicholls (1983, cited in Goetz, Alexander & Ash, 1992). Concerns were also expressed regarding students finishing early and the boredom which such a situation would induce. Citing a study which used Keller's (1968) PSI system, Alexander and Ash found that students who could not work at their own pace withdrew from the mastery course.

The CALM program allows students to choose their own levels of achievement (Boomer, 1982; Glasser, 1986, 1992; Griggs, 1990). Whether the right to choose what they want will promote/lessen social comparison is impossible to say at this time, but the suggestion is noted. Students will not be

able to withdraw from the course because both the principal and the Head of Department for English decided that all Year 8 students will undergo the CALM program. However, students will be allowed to work at their own pace which, it is to be hoped, will strengthen the students' resolve to continue working even when mastery is not achieved as quickly as some students would like.

As with all theories there are arguments for and against, and mastery learning is no exception. In other writings, Bloom (1984) advocated moving away from narrowly focussing on instructional procedures and concentrating more on the features of the classroom such as student support systems (similar to peer tutoring) which, when combined with other co-operative learning efforts, are almost as effective as mastery learning. Bloom (1984), also recommends helping teachers become more aware of the ways in which a cross section of children can be taught with specific reference to learning styles, curriculum development and environmental supports. Whatever the complexity of the arguments for and against mastery learning, Biggs and Moore (1993) provide a fitting definition which concludes this section of the literature review, "Mastery learning is not a method of teaching so much as a logistic; a decision to teach an individual more until mastery of the previous material is displayed" (p. 474).

CONTROL THEORY

The second of the major theoretical underpinnings of the CALM program is Glasser's (1984, 1993, 1996; Good, 1996) control theory. Whereas

mastery learning is to be used as the vehicle for the presentation of content, control theory is the framework for providing for the psychological well-being of the students. Glasser (1984) highlights various needs that he considers must be met if students are to succeed in the school setting.

PRINCIPLES OF CONTROL THEORY

Glasser (1984, 1993, 1996) cites four human needs which need to be satisfied: love, power, freedom and fun (see Diagram 1, p. 37). Glasser (1984) states that all persons have different pictures in their heads as to how they want their needs met. These pictures form the basis of each person's quality world. How needs are met is a matter of choice. The choice made is the best one at the time to satisfy a need which is met through one or all of acting, thinking, feeling and physiology.

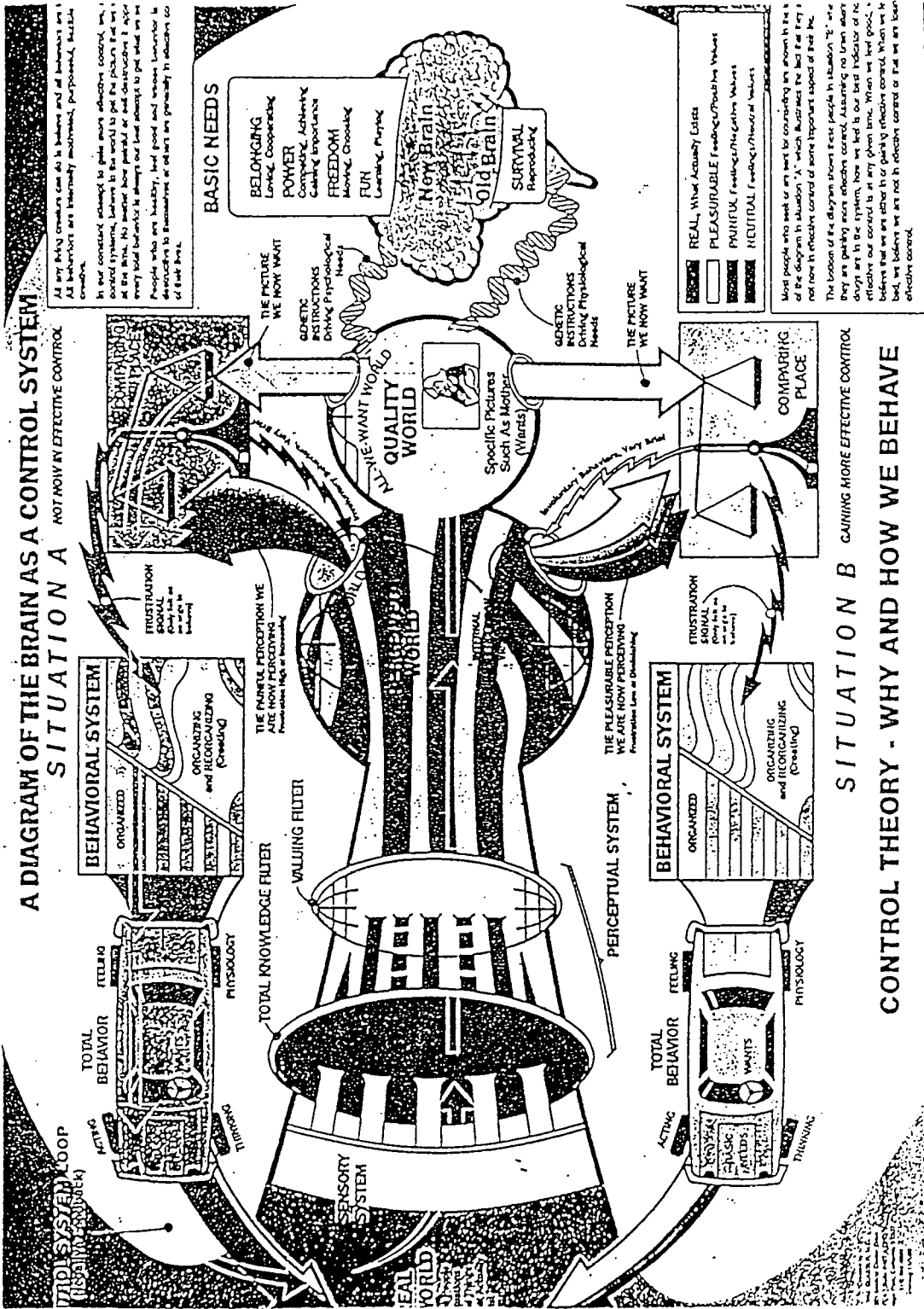
THE CONTROL THEORY MODEL

Control theory is a model that explains human behaviour developed by Glasser (1984, 1993, 1996). Control theory states that we develop our own picture(s) of the world as experiences of the real world pass through a number of filters. These filters include the sensory system that excludes extraneous information and the total knowledge filter that divides the world into what is known and what is not known. Some of this information is dismissed at this filter stage, because the knowledge filter extracts what is seen as unimportant.

The information now passes through a valuing filter. All messages are assigned a value to the receiver as either positive, negative or neutral

According to Glasser (1986), the perceived world consists of all life experiences and how they are viewed. How specific situations are viewed is a matter of individual choice, but it is the quality world that influences behaviour because contained therein are the pictures of what is wanted and how things ought to be. The disparity between the perceived and quality world may lead to frustration. If the two worlds match, a pleasurable perception is experienced. If the worlds are mismatched, a painful perception is experienced. Changes in behaviour will occur only when the two worlds are severely unbalanced and a frustration signal is experienced. A diagram of Glasser's (1984) control theory appears on the next page.

Diagram 1



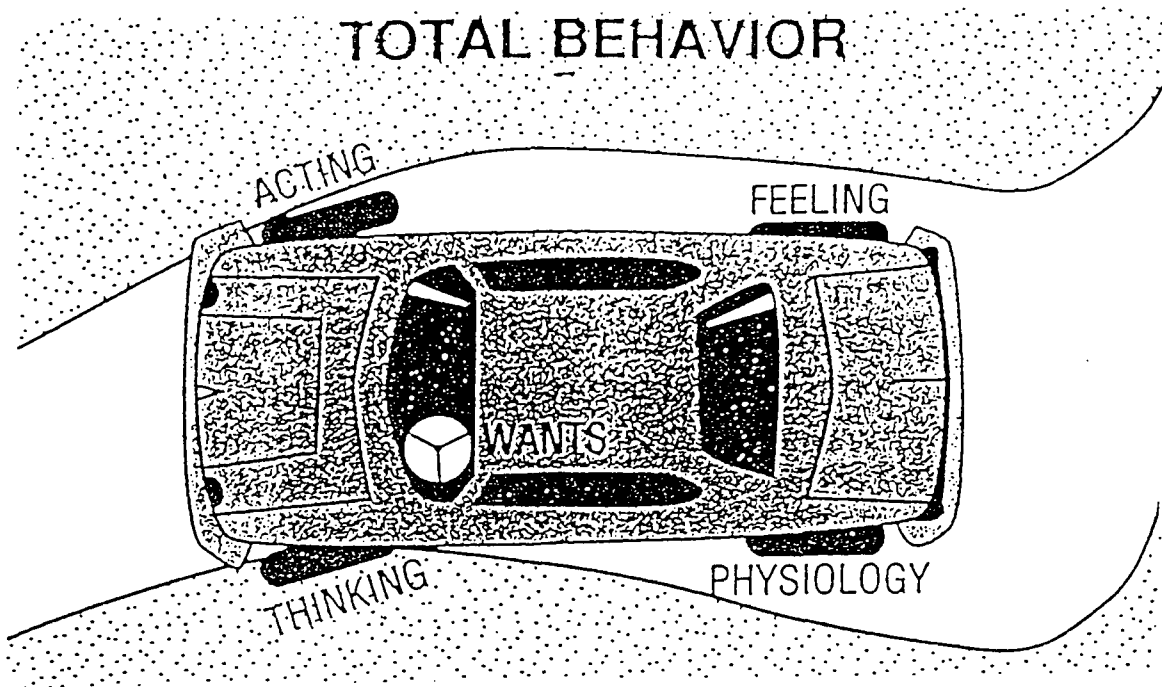
Source: Glasser, W. A Diagram of the Brain as a Control System. (Available from W. M. Glasser, MD, 7301 Medical Center Drive, Suite #407, Canoga Park, California 91307.)

The frustration signal is interpreted as ways of behaving. According to Glasser (1984, 1996), these behaviours range from choosing established ways of behaving, including not changing the behaviour, to choosing another learned behaviour. New and creative ways of behaving may also be chosen, the aim being to bring the two worlds together so they are closely matched, thereby influencing total behaviour.

‘Total behaviour’ is the collective term used by Glasser (1989, p. 65) for the individual basic needs of acting, thinking, feeling and physiology. Glasser uses the analogy of a car to describe this behaviour. According to Glasser, the engine driving the car is made up of the basic needs (see Diagram 2, p.39, see also Diagram 1, p.37). If the basic needs are satisfied (the quality world), all behaviours are congruent. The car is balanced and running evenly on four wheels. If, however, the quality world is not being served, the behaviours will be otherwise. The feeling behaviours will be evident as strong emotion, perhaps depression, anger or frustration.

Glasser (1989) argues that total behaviour requires all wheels of the car to be operating effectively. He stresses, however, that acting behaviour is the easiest to adjust. It is easier to change a way of acting than it is to change either thinking or feeling or physiology. With a change in acting, other behaviours will also change, as it is all part of one car's operation.

GLASSER'S (1989) TOTAL BEHAVIOUR CAR



From, Control theory in the practice of reality therapy:
Case studies. (p. 10) by N. Glasser, 1989, New York:
Harper Row. Copyright N. Glasser

THE NEEDS THAT DRIVE US

Glasser (1984, 1996) has defined five basic needs: survival, fun, power, freedom and belongingness. Each of the five needs will be briefly discussed below:

Survival:

Survival needs include hunger, thirst, shelter and sex. Glasser (1984, 1985) sees the fulfilling of these basic needs as vital to survival. Together, they make up the forces that drive us and it is, "likely that all creatures of the same species are driven by similar forces" (Glasser, 1984, p. 5).

With regard to hunger, thirst, shelter and sex, CALM will not address these issues, literally. However, if students are to survive in the classroom and in the school environment metaphorically, then CALM will offer shelter in that the work will be directed at students' level whilst offering a psychologically safe learning environment. CALM will view hunger and thirst as terms which reflect the quest for knowledge and learning, well established in some students, but sadly lacking in others due, in part, to previous failures. CALM will allow all students to succeed at their own pace and to their own satisfaction. When work is not mastered, students will be encouraged to keep trying. The idea that young children should not be failed and instead be given many chances to succeed and told that if they keep trying, they will succeed eventually, is an empowering and motivating concept (Glasser, 1986, p. 67).

Love (belongingness)

Love is the basic human need of having someone who cares for us. Parents, friends, relatives and teachers all have the capacity to fulfil this need. When students and teachers feel they are not cared for, or included, they may choose

behaviours to show frustration and anger. Students who struggle with work they are not capable of completing, feel excluded. The need for belonging is denied, so students may behave in a frustrated and angry manner.

Mastery learning has benefits pertaining to students' sense of belongingness. According to Chambliss (1989, cited in Ames, 1992), if students are given the opportunity to set their own mastery goals, students will develop a sense of belongingness. Giving students the responsibility for making their own decisions promotes a sense of, "Here, this is my world." This, in turn, leads to a belief that one is important and active participant in the learning process. This mastery goal orientation promotes a pattern of learning that will promote long term, high-quality involvement in learning (Glasser, 1984; Csikszentmihalyi & Isabella, 1990).

It seems goal setting also facilitates a sense of belongingness. One of the best ways to help anyone be more in control of their learning, thinking and productive efforts is to foster setting a goal (Locke & Latham, 1990). The goals need to be intrinsic and social, rather than egocentric or extrinsic (Costa, Bellanca & Fogarty, 1992). Intrinsic and social goals focus on the sense of personal satisfaction or social belongingness. However, egocentric and extrinsic goals focus on competition and the relief of winning and the fear of losing. The influence of the latter can disempower students because they are more likely to develop dependence rather than independence of thought.

Power (importance, achievement and recognition)

The need for power is neither good nor bad. Our culture and history however, have seen this need used in many ways. Glasser (1986) suggests that power is simply a genetic need that has no morality. Teachers should observe it as a need for recognition and success. Glasser believes if students do not feel they have any power in their academic classes, they will not work in class.

However, when students are empowered to manage their own learning they feel more satisfied with their learning (Paris & Winograd, 1990, cited in Ames, 1992). The lack of power students have may be the core of almost all the problems in schools (Glasser, 1984, cited in Hamachek, 1990). Students need to feel important from the standpoint of academic achievement. When students feel that no one listens to them, or they are struggling for survival, they have no sense of personal importance.

CALM invests students with power because students are given opportunities to decide how and what they [students] want to achieve. The use of contracting allows students to negotiate with teachers and arrive at mutually satisfactory decisions regarding the level of achievement students require. The timelines under which CALM operates are also flexible and negotiable. Students may complete work at home to improve grades if the classroom-timelines are exhausted before students have realised their nominated grade.

Fun (pleasure and learning)

According to Glasser (1984, 1993, 1996; Good, 1996), fun is as much a basic need as any other and our genetic need for fun is tied to learning. However, the opposite to fun is boredom, and time spent in boredom is time during which undesirable learning may take place. When a task is repetitive, or too difficult, the learner becomes bored, then chooses other methods of behaviour to satisfy the need for fun.

One of the concerns regarding CALM is that it may be boring. Given that students will have to master certain tasks before moving on to more advanced work, some work will need to be repeated, which could lead to frustration and boredom on the part of students for whom repeating work is necessary. To alleviate the situation, CALM will include activities, both individual and group-based, the aim of which is to provide fun. However, a difficulty arises when a definition of fun is sought which lends itself to educational activities. In keeping with Glasser's (1984) control theory, Good (1996, p. 113) proffers the following questions students and/or teachers ask themselves to see if fun is what they are experiencing, "When I do this, do I feel pleasure, am I having 'fun', am I making discoveries, am I truly enjoying myself?" The abstractness of the noun 'fun' as it applies to the classroom, makes it difficult to design activities that are viewed as fun by all students. CALM recognises the importance of fun in the classroom and will design activities accordingly.

Freedom (freedom from, freedom to ...)

The need for freedom is sometimes in conflict with the need for power. The freedom for students to make their own choices and decisions, even if they can be seen by others as having undesirable consequences, is an example.

Students involved in CALM will have the freedom to make their own decisions regarding levels of achievement and the time required to realise the levels. The decisions will be made in consultation with parents and teachers and the students will be made aware of the consequences which is in keeping with Glasser's (1984) control theory philosophy. Students will experience freedom from, by not having to complete the same work, at the same time, to the same level as anyone else in the class. Students will also experience freedom from the lock-step philosophy which states students at certain ages should be doing certain things. Instead, the work will be available at different levels, levels which will reflect the disparate ability levels in the classrooms.

Glasser (1986) challenges teachers to examine whether their classrooms and teaching styles consider fun, power, freedom and belongingness. Glasser asks: Do students belong? Do students have choices in the class to make progress, to play when they have finished? Is there fun and laughter in the class?

If the basic needs, which are common to us all, can be catered for in the classroom, then students may feel they belong. However, the way(s) students

see their needs being met may be incompatible and/or unacceptable in the real world. It is this "seeing" or "pictures in our heads" which is the focus of the next section.

THE PICTURES IN OUR HEADS

Glasser (1984, 1986, 1996) states all persons have pictures in their heads of things which satisfy the needs of fun, power, freedom and belongingness. When these pictures are compatible with the real world, or what is actually happening, then happiness and satisfaction are experienced. However, when the real world and the quality world do not match, frustration and anger may be experienced, and these may be reflected in behaviour that is directed at obtaining quality world outcomes.

Sometimes, the quality world pictures formed are unobtainable. When this is so, the goal according to Glasser (1986) is to change the picture. If the picture is not changed, painful feelings are felt which result in other behaviours. There are no wrong or unsatisfactory pictures, only unobtainable ones, "A failing student who has no picture of school or school work, may still have a picture of a diploma in his [sic] head because he [sic] recognises that if he had a diploma he could get a better job" (p. 37).

Children who start school believing learning will be fun already have a picture of school. As students progress through school, their pictures may not be

matched by experience. They may experience negative school situations that change their pictures of school. The only way to replace these pictures is through successful experiences in the classroom. One way this may occur is by the student encountering a caring teacher who recognises and meets the needs of students. This person may build enough trust for the students to allow new, more positive pictures of school to be developed.

The pictures students bring to the classroom help shape their attitude(s) to school. It is possible that the experiences on which the pictures were based, were not ones they would have chosen had they been given a choice. However, the actions they bring to bear to satisfy the pictures are all a matter of choice.

THE CHOICES WE HAVE

All behaviours are purposeful and strive to satisfy one or more of the basic needs (Glasser, 1992). The quality world pictures are sensed by our complex behavioural systems and interpreted as either positive or negative signals. These positive or negative signals may prompt various actions. Recognising the signals opens the way to act, feel and think in different ways. For example, if a painful signal occurs when people are being ignored by their colleagues, they may choose to act angrily. The picture in their heads says, "They should not do this to me, I am worth more than that." However, by changing the picture to one of, "I don't mind if they ignore me," may change the behaviour to one of calm rather than anger.

The concept of forming pictures is an established concept of Glasser's (1984, 1996) control theory which is the direct antithesis of stimulus-response theory. Glasser (1984, 1986) states that stimulus-response theory does not adequately explain human behaviour because its basic premise is that what we do is motivated by people or event outside of us.

Glasser (1984, 1986) suggests we are not externally driven, as stimulus-response theory would have us believe, but internally driven to satisfy our needs.

The ringing telephone does not cause us to pick up the phone. We can choose not to pick it up if we wish.

For thousands of years we have wrongly concluded that what we do to or for people makes them behave the way we want even if it does not satisfy them. As much as we would like to see more students working in school, if we cling to stimulus-response theory as the way to achieve this, we will be disappointed. Coercion will no more motivate students than it does nations (Glasser, 1984, p. 20).

Glasser (1986) assumes that students whose backgrounds lack love, or recognition, need not be considered hopeless situations at school. When some students challenge teachers by arguing or slamming down books, they are feeling angry. They are thinking, "This is not fair," and the palms of their hands are sweaty, their stomachs are churning and their mouths are dry. These behaviours are attempts to satisfy one, or more, of the students' needs at the time. It may be the students' need for power, belonging, fun and freedom. These students' needs are now being met by them choosing to feel angry. However, in the long term, this choice is less, not more needs satisfying as they now must face the

consequences of their angry actions. If schools can satisfy the various needs of students then it [school] may well become established in the quality world of students.

CRITICISMS OF CONTROL THEORY

Literature which critiques Glasser's (1984) control theory is difficult to find. Any critiquing found in the literature is more related to Glasser's (1975) reality therapy. However, some extremely brief criticisms of control theory were found in Way-McPhail (1995). The critiques were five in number and included remarks about the difficulties experienced when applying Glasser's control theory to improving students' behaviour and school work in general. Since improving behaviour, work attitude and outcomes are essential elements of CALM, all the comments appear below:

1. It is difficult for teachers to help students satisfy their need for control without feeling threatened themselves.
2. It is difficult to react properly when communicating with students about their inappropriate behaviour.
3. It is difficult to help students experience the true sense of autonomy implied in control theory if outside influences dictate what is taught in schools and how children should be disciplined.
4. It may be difficult to help students who do not want to be at school or do not want to improve their work.
5. Students may not have the necessary skills to make plans to improve their work and/or behaviour (Way-McPhail, pp. 16-20).

Limited both in number and content the criticisms may be, but they do have some relevance for the CALM program. The first criticism highlights the

threat teachers may perceive themselves under when relinquishing control of the classroom. By using contracts, teachers may not teach the whole class at the same time for the same thing, a strategy which they have become used to and see as a way of controlling classes.

The second criticism which cites the difficulty communicating with students about their inappropriate behaviour(s) may have reference to whole-class teaching as opposed to contract teaching, where the teacher is communicating with students regarding misbehaviour while teaching the whole class. CALM will help in this regard because teachers will not be teaching the whole class every lesson because students will be working on contracts; therefore, teachers will have more time to talk with students individually about work and/or behaviour.

Having more time to talk with students was mentioned by Kinsella (1979, cited in Boomer, 1982) as a bonus of contracting students' work, "then there was ample time to sit with individual students, sometimes for a whole period if necessary, and some real learning took place-fruitful and highly individualised" (p. 65).

The more relevant information from item four relates to outside influences dictating what is to be taught at school and their effect upon autonomy. To a great extent CALM invests students with autonomy), the autonomy to decide

what they want to achieve and how and when it is to be achieved. Students may not have the autonomy (freedom) to decide what is to be learnt, but CALM will at least meet three out of the four aforementioned criteria pertaining to autonomy because as Glasser's (1984) control theory points out, "The need for freedom is deep. Your need for autonomy, for the ability to make choices in your life, is strong" (Good, 1996, p. 20).

The negative attitude some students have towards schoolwork may be difficult to change. This is the essence of criticism five; however, there may be many and varied reasons why some students do not wish to be at school and/or do not wish to improve their work. CALM will approach the problem(s) from Glasser's (1984) control theory perspective which assumes if students are given power, fun, freedom and a feeling of belongingness in the context of their school work, then negative attitudes will change and work will improve.

The limited ability of students to make plans about how to improve their work/behaviour is questioned in item six. As CALM will be contract based students will have their basic writing skills assessed and tasks will be governed by mastery learning, making planning easier for those students who lack planning skills. Teachers will be able to spend more time discussing and negotiating with individual students about what and how they want to achieve. Whilst involved in the negotiation, students will experience the skills required

for goal setting and planning and will then put them into action. This element of "on-the-job-training" is another positive facet of the CALM program that will facilitate students' learning above-and-beyond the English curriculum.

According to Porter (1996), if control theory is to be used in a school, then a whole school approach is required. Students, as well as the staff, need to be educated about control theory in order for them to understand why and how the theory is being used in day-to-day classroom interactions. Teaching control theory could be a lengthy process and may well detract from other more regular school subjects. Porter also states that teachers need to be skilful communicators in order to both explain and use control theory and that problems arise when teachers do not use control theory themselves, but expect the students to practise the theory

It is not envisaged that control theory will be taught to the students or indeed the staff. Glasser (1984, 1986) advocates strongly for educating the whole school about control theory, but for the purposes of this study such a venture was impractical. Also, Porter's (1996) concerns are more directed to the use of control theory as a behaviour management strategy not as a model for curriculum design. It has been stated previously that should behaviour management strategies prove necessary, then Glasser's (1984) reality therapy techniques will be used, techniques which themselves are founded on control theory principles. However, behaviour problems may not arise if students are

given some control over their learning (White & Greenwood, 1992). The use of contract learning is one way of empowering students.

CONTRACT LEARNING

Contracting is a simple form of individualised instruction, one that may be adopted with relative ease by classroom teachers. The teacher makes contracts with individual students for a specific type and amount of work to be completed during a set period of time. Evaluation criteria are clearly stated so students know what work is required for what grade. Contracts may be written by either student and/or teacher, but either way they offer considerable flexibility in the way time is used during the course of a contract. Other benefits of contracting are that contracting promotes self-directed learning and independence (Boud, 1986; Rogers, 1983; Garavan & Sweeney, 1994; White & Greenwood, 1992).

Contracting is one method of organising independent study. In a survey conducted by Gage and Berliner (1991) of 150 examples of programs using independent and self-directed learning contracts, students:

- (a) believed the goals and activities were worthwhile.
- (b) made their learning more positively significant.
- (c) disciplined themselves to do the work.
- (d) used human and material resources.
- (e) produced an outcome or product better than what they were originally capable of producing (p. 456).

Murphy (1988, cited in Gage & Berliner, 1991, p. 458) found that contracts proved to be effective in, "improving academic productivity, performance accuracy, study skills, school attendance and social behaviour." Motivation is also increased when students have some input into determining their course of study (Hardigan, 1994; Hupp & Leonard, 1991). The very process of negotiation leading to a contract is seen as benefiting students in that it is a more realistic way of preparing students for the adult world because negotiation is an adult mode of interaction (Biggs & Moore, 1993; MacKinnon-Slaney, 1994).

When contracting is used, it is possible for students to choose the grade they wish to achieve, controlling to some extent their own academic success and how hard they need to work to realise that success (Good & Brophy, 1990). This is achieved by specifying exactly what work has to be completed and the date for its completion to realise certain grades. It is also made explicit that higher grades require more difficult standards to be achieved (Biggs & Moore, 1993; Good & Brophy, 1990). Hence, contracting may be viewed as a means of goal setting and, "The contract is an agreement for learning between the student and the teacher" (Kervink, 1993, p. 310).

When individuals set themselves goals, which are moderately difficult, their achievement motivation as related to effort and persistence is much greater (Dweck & Elliott, 1987, cited in Good & Brophy, 1990). Another advantage of allowing students to decide what they want to achieve via contracting, addresses

students' need for power, which is one of the five basic needs outlined in Chapter 1, pertaining to Glasser's (1984) control theory.

Underachieving students may also benefit from contracting. Heacox and Espeland (1991, p. 65) have identified five guidelines to be followed when constructing contracts for underachieving students. As each goal is rather extensive, what follows is a precis of each one:

1. The student or child must be involved in completing this contract.
2. Any goal specified in the contract must be reasonable and reachable in terms of students' abilities.
3. Any goal specified in the contract must be something students want to achieve.
4. Enough time must be provided for the goal to be reached.
5. Remember that the most effective contracts are those that form partnerships between home and school.

With the five guidelines enacted, contracting student's work becomes systematic and well organised which may help all students as well as those underachieving.

However, not everyone is in favour of contract learning

CRITICISMS OF CONTRACT TEACHING

Generally, the literature is supportive of contract teaching. One concern expressed by Kinsella (1979, cited in Boomer, 1982) addressed the issue of self-discipline. When Kinsella's students were asked to complete a contract, "the class was thrown because they were quite unused to working in this free sort of

way without immediate demands to produce a 'piece of work' per period. They were accustomed to being strongly dominated by the teacher" (p. 65). Kinsella also found that for some students, adjusting to contracts was not spontaneous. Some students could only handle the freedom that such a strategy offered if they [some of the students] understood very clearly what was allowed and expected. The need for contracts to be specific is viewed by Rogers (1990) as essential for all students (rather than some) because, "students need contracts they can cope with; not too much too soon" (p. 127). Students may not be the only ones unfamiliar with contract learning.

Woolfolk (1990) acknowledged contracts were effective in reducing students' anxieties regarding grades, but suggested the system [contracts] could also lead to an overemphasis regarding the quantity of work. Teachers may also be too vague about the standards that differentiate acceptable from unacceptable work. If these two factors are to be controlled, then Woolfolk suggests that regular individual conferencing should take place, "to check progress and provide encouragement" (p. 554).

Students may not be the only stakeholders adversely affected by the use of contracts in the classroom. Teachers may themselves be unfamiliar with the concept of contract teaching. In such a situation, "it may be best to begin with a simple format" (Gearheart, Weishahn & Gearheart, 1992, p. 358). The use of contracts as a threat concerned Cole and Chan (1990), who argue that the

contract should be seen as a statement of aims and goals, not as a means of extracting unfair advantage over a student. If terms of the contract appear unreasonable after a trial period, the teacher and the student should renegotiate the contract.

The CALM contracts will be specific regarding what is to be mastered before progression to the next level is allowed. Students will also be nominating their own grades, which may be re-negotiated at any time, so as to reduce performance anxiety. When students have reached their negotiated level, conferencing will take place to encourage students to progress to higher levels of achievement.

The use of contracts in the classroom may benefit students in a number of ways. These benefits may be further enhanced by linking contracts with levels of thinking and levels of assessment. Students who master higher levels of thinking can realise higher grades than students who do not master higher-order thinking skills. This next section looks at Bloom's (1968, 1976) taxonomy of thinking and how it may be used to decide students' levels of achievement in the CALM program.

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

The ability to think creatively, to solve problems, to make satisfying and productive decisions are fundamental goals of education (Butler, 1993b;

Gardner, 1993b; Rogers, 1983). In order to achieve such goals, we need to become sensitive to, as well as learn how to elicit higher levels of thinking. One useful classification system of such thinking has been developed by Bloom (1968, 1976) who separated thinking into six levels.

1. Knowledge: Students must recall or locate information that has been recalled or located.

2. Comprehension: When a student comprehends information, rather than merely recalling it, that information becomes useful in future problem-solving or decision making and makes creativity more probable.

3. Application: Information and skills become useful when they can be applied to a new, not previously encountered situation.

4. Analysis: Creative thinking and problem-solving begin with analytical thinking: mentally taking something apart to better understand the relationship of the parts to the whole. When students can take information apart in order to better understand interrelationships, they are ready to reorganise that information in new patterns and create with it.

5. Synthesis: The creation of something that is new to its creator.

6. Evaluation: The making of judgments when there is no one answer which is right for everyone is one of the most complex levels of thinking because evaluation is based on all other cognitive levels (Biggs & Moore, 1993; Hunter, 1982; Ormrod, 1990).

Bloom's (1968, 1976) higher order thinking taxonomy is useful because it incorporates many of the goals which schools and society deem to be important. It also serves as a useful vehicle for planning and assessing the work students are expected to complete. However, as useful as the taxonomy is, it rarely appears in its entirety in school contexts. When it does appear, the exercises and activities are directed toward the lower order thinking skills (knowledge and comprehension) at the expense of higher order thinking (Benson, 1992; Gardner, 1993a; Good & Brophy, 1990; Ostrander & Schroeder, 1994; Rose & Nicholl, 1997).

Schools also do not seem to cater for higher order thinking, even though its benefits have been acknowledged (Biggs, 1991; Evans, 1991; Rogers, 1993; Splitter & Sharp, 1995). There would seem to be little doubt that teaching students higher order thinking skills has obvious benefits in the areas of problem-solving, self-esteem, independence, flexibility in thinking about problems and self-efficacy (de Bono, 1993; Douglas, 1991), and yet it would seem only lower order thinking skills typically form the focus of schools' questioning repertoire.

A research study conducted by Fleming and Chambers (1987, cited in Lefrancois, 1991) found that out of 8,800 test questions used primarily in high schools, 80% of the questions, "dealt only with knowledge of facts and specifics which are the lowest level in Bloom's taxonomy" (p. 180). Rogers (1983) found that schools predominantly teach the lower order thinking skills, "The typical classroom in our samples employed the lowest order of cognitive behaviour (memory) almost exclusively" (p. 204). Bloom (1984) lamented the dearth of higher order thinking skills being taught in schools, commenting, "After a million sales of the taxonomy of objectives on instructional materials, our classroom teaching methods, and our testing methods rarely rise above the lowest level of the taxonomy" (p. 120). Therefore, if students are to be given the opportunity to master higher order thinking skills, instruction directed to teaching beyond knowledge and comprehension will have to be provided. By allowing students to solve problems by systematic thinking and meta-cognition,

Kaniel and Reichenberg (1990) found children became independent learners by using their skills in real life situations. According to Paris (1990), providing insight into one's thinking can lead to flexible and confident problem solving as well as self-efficacy and pride. McClellan-Tiedt, Carlson, Howard and Watanba (1989) found that as a model for teachers to use in planning lessons, Bloom's higher order thinking skills taxonomy offers a sensible yet flexible categorisation of thinking descriptions.

CRITICISMS OF BLOOM'S HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILLS

TAXONOMY

Some concerns were expressed by Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1990) about the cognitive ability of students to handle the more formal-operational aspects of higher order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis and evaluation). In Sprinthall and Sprinthall's view, "we cannot assume that adolescents are automatically able to use formal operations at Bloom's levels 4, 5 and 6 without deliberate teaching that is aimed at this objective" (p. 356).

Sprinthall and Sprinthall's (1990) reference to the use of formal operations is a sobering comment. The CALM program has given little thought to this aspect of students' development. Even though the thinking activities have been designed using key words which cue students in to higher order thinking, some students may not be able to complete/understand the activities because their cognitive developmental levels may not be up to the task. However, the fact CALM allows students to work at their own pace may go some way to addressing the problem of students' disparate levels of cognitive development. Biggs and Moore (1993) understood the significance of students' cognitive development when they questioned why some students achieved mastery and others did not. Biggs and Moore went on to suggest that I. Q. correlates with school performance: "Teach every student a topic for forty minutes and then test them. The distribution of scores will follow the normal curve: a few do well, most so-so, a few badly". (p. 474).

The fact some the Year 8 students undergoing the CALM program will be at differing levels of cognitive abilities is a concern. However, using Bloom's (1968, 1976) higher order thinking skills taxonomy, where students' grades are dependent on a hierarchy of thinking skills, will allow less able students to work at the more fundamental thinking skills (knowledge, comprehension and application) for longer. The more able students will be able to achieve to their level without being held back.

Biggs and Telfer (1987) argued that the convenience of the forty minute period works against student learning. Add to that information Bloom's (1968) statement that students with learning difficulties may take up to six times longer to master work than other students, then time becomes a significant factor in students' learning. A factor which CALM has already considered and planned for by not using the forty minute period as a barrier to students' learning. Another planning consideration for CALM is the importance of learning styles

LEARNING STYLES

A significant contribution to acknowledging and planning for higher order thinking using Bloom's taxonomy can be found in Butler (1993a; DePorter, 1994). Bloom's higher order thinking skills taxonomy is incorporated into the four psychological models of learning (concrete sequential, abstract sequential, concrete random and abstract random) because it is viewed as a, "helpful tool to clarify the level of thinking in each style" (Butler, 1993a, p. 201).

Butler (1993a, p. 203) found that whilst teachers did give attention to Bloom's (1968, 1976) taxonomy of higher order thinking skills, they frequently began and remained at the knowledge/comprehension level which did not give students equal access to learning quality thinking. In Butler's opinion, this situation quite often gives rise to much frustration in students.

Butler (1993a, p 221) believes that learning styles and Bloom's taxonomy should be linked. To that end and for the sake of instructional planning, Butler has constructed three levels of thinking; each level contains two levels of Bloom's higher order thinking skills taxonomy:

LEVEL 1: Emphasise knowledge and comprehension: the gathering and gaining of information.

LEVEL 2: Emphasise application and analysis: the engagement of the learner with the information.

LEVEL 3: Emphasise synthesis and evaluation: the dynamic thinking of the learner in his/her own way.

Combining the levels in such a way as to form a new thinking paradigm (Basic, Engaged and Dynamic Thinking), is not seen by Butler (1993a) as negating the processes or sacrificing the distinct individualistic characteristics of Bloom's (1968) taxonomy. Rather, it recognises that Bloom's categories of knowledge and comprehension are basic thinking skills. In the case of Engaged

Thinking, Bloom's categories of application and analysis allow the learner to engage with the content. In the case of the higher order thinking categories, synthesis and evaluation, each still requires an intrinsic response, an original interpretation, hence Butler's term, 'Dynamic Thinking'. Whilst asserting that the promotion of higher order thinking skills is extremely important, the learning styles students use to access information is also seen by some authors as essential to effective learning.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING STYLES

The term 'learning styles' in this study relates to the work of Butler (1993a; DePorter, 1994), pertaining to four psychological models of learning: Concrete Sequential, Abstract Random, Abstract Sequential and Concrete Random. However, the importance of learning styles as it applies to the modalities of learning: haptic, visual and auditory (Dryden & Voss, 1994; Rose and Goll, 1992; Jensen, 1988) is acknowledged, and provision for the modalities will be made in the design of the CALM program. Also recognised are the learning style categories of field dependence and field independence (neither of which is catered for in the CALM program. Catering for Butler's learning styles will be an integral part of the CALM program because they are viewed as strategies that may help students with the process of becoming more effective learners.

Bloom (1968, 1976) recommends that an important strategy to cater for differences in students' ability to understand instruction is to vary the materials. The use of alternative instruction materials is an attempt to improve the quality of instruction in relation to the ability of each student. The fact the CALM program is mastery based, the importance of quality of instruction is inherent in its design. Therefore, information regarding the learning styles of students may well lead to more effective teaching and learning because it may provide information about how students learn. Griggs (1991), views learning styles as critically important and understanding the way individuals learn is the key to educational improvement.

According to Renzulli and Smith (1993), it has been recognised for some time that students' abilities, needs and interests vary dramatically in the classroom. (see also Gardner, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c; Herrmann, 1995; Branden, 1994; Prewitt, 1993). Little progress has been made in achieving individualised instruction for all children. Where it has been said to have been realised, upon further investigation, only the rate and pace of learning have been individualised, or brighter students are several worksheets ahead of less able students.

A number of studies have set out to determine the importance of learning styles. The results of research conducted by Munro and Munro (1992) and James (1962, cited in Renzulli & Smith, 1993) point to the fact that when materials to be learnt are presented in the preferred learning style of students,

more effective learning takes place. Homework grades, test scores and attitude can be significantly enhanced when students are taught to study using their learning style strengths. Another study, by Pascal (1971, cited in Renzulli & Smith, 1993), suggested that materials directed at students' preferred learning styles, resulted in enhancing students attitude toward the subject matter and the subject being studied. The results of a more recent study conducted by Renzulli and Smith (1993), "support the hypothesis that learning style matching can be of substantial benefit in increasing both student interest in subject matter and their evaluation of the instructional style" (p. 24). According to Hooper (1994), "In this day and age, teaching must cater for individual needs, personalities, dreams and learning styles" (p. 22).

Some learning styles will be more developed than others, although all the styles may be used to some extent. Whatever the order of dominance, "style affects preferences for cognitive learning, and we need to make learning style differences a central feature of our work with students" (Butler, 1993b, p. 86). When students' learning styles are not made a central feature, it is possibly the biggest single cause of school failure and poor self-esteem (DePorter, 1994; Dryden & Voss, 1992; Heacox & Espeland, 1991; Prewitt, 1993; Rose & Goll, 1992). Therefore, if students' learning styles can be catered for regularly, throughout every learning sequence, students may learn more easily and with less resistance (Dryden & Voss, 1992).

THE FOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL LEARNING STYLE MODELS

Butler (1993a, 1993b) and DePorter (1994) cite four psychological models which serve to identify types of behaviours and suggest how and why persons who exemplify them behave in certain ways. Following is an outline of the strengths and limitations of each learning style as they apply to classroom situations and lesson strategies. Each style will be discussed in terms of the qualities of such learners and the situations which enhance and impede their learning.

The first of the learning styles cited by Butler (1993a) is Concrete Sequential. (CS). People who exemplify this style are practical, predictable, to-the-point, organised and structured. Concrete Sequential students produce their best work by using approaches that facilitate their strengths. They especially like using the physical senses. Hands-on activities are highly valued as are specific directions and instructions. Class work, which involves worksheets, charts, categorisations and computer work are highly motivating.

Situations which do not enhance learning for CS students

- General discussions that lead to no specific point.
- Continuous reading and lecturing.
- Problems without clear directions.
- Time with no activities to fill it.
- People who ignore, miss, or do not care about details.
- People who change their minds.

People who impose their way without searching for a more practical or efficient approach to the problem.

The second learning style is Abstract Sequential (AS). These students are considered to be intellectual, logical, conceptual, rational and studious. Abstract Sequential learners find learning most enjoyable when a great deal of reading, developing of ideas and information, analysing and evaluation are required. They learn especially well when reason and logic are required.

Situations which do not enhance learning for AS students:

- Assignments where they have to work with disinterested students.
- Too little time to learn a subject thoroughly for an 'A' grade.
- Those who laugh at intellectual people.
- Those who believe intellectual people have no feelings.
- Teachers and students who "fool around" in class.
- Physical activities in which they fear for their safety.
- Questions in class when preparation time has not been given.
- Pen-ended activities in which they must create from nothing.
- Assignments to copy material over.
- Hands-on or "messy" projects.

The Third of the four psychological learning styles is Abstract Random (AR). Abstract Random students are emotional, interpretative, sensitive, holistic and thematic. Abstract Randoms produce their best results by using approaches

that require interpretations and explanations rather than exact answers. They like to use the artistic media; reading for emotional enjoyment; personalised meaning; and opportunities to work with others. AR learners interpret the world through their emotions, which allows them to understand ideas, place, people and things in a personalised and interpretive way.

Situations that do not enhance the learning of AR learners:

- Explanations of feelings to those who cannot see the random point of view
- Orders to 'toe the line', 'shape up', or meet deadlines.
- Separation from friends as punishment.
- No time to themselves.
- Requirements to compete with others for the sake of competition.
- People who laugh at their sensitivity.
- People who do not understand random explanations.
- People who 'set them up' for hurt feelings or emotional reactions.
- Demands to put ideas and answers into a finished product once they have been mentally completed.

The final learning style is Concrete Random (CR). Students who engage the Concrete Random learning style are experimental, original, investigative, option oriented and risk taking.

Concrete Random learners are intuitive and use their intuition to explore possibilities in any subject. They learn most effectively when asked to experiment with ideas they have brainstormed, written down or have spoken about. They produce their best work when required to problem-

solve, create open-ended options and come up with different ways to arrive at the same answer.

Situations which do not enhance the learning of CR learners:

- Restrictions or limitations, such as demands to sit still for long periods.
- Requirements to do things exactly as others want to do them.
- The necessity to find answers someone else is looking for.
- Formal reports.
- Time schedules.
- Routines.
- Re-doing a project.
- Continuing on a project when there is no interest in it (pp. 133-136).

CRITICISMS OF LEARNING STYLES

The concept of learning styles is a matter of some controversy. However, when searching the literature for articles specifically on Butler's (1993a, 1993b) concept of learning styles, no articles were found critiquing the work. However, some critical comments, albeit few were found pertaining to the philosophy of learning styles in general. Included under the general heading are: learning/cognitive styles and modality preference.

According to McInerney and McInerney (1994), a number of authors have examined the issue of learning styles (Brandt, 1990; Dunn & Dunn, 1972, 1979; Dunn, Beaudry & Klavas, 1989; Keefe & Ferrell, 1990; O'Neil, 1990).

However, the information related by these researchers is more concerned with the modalities of learning (audio, visual, kinaesthetic and field dependent/independent) rather than Butler's psychological models of learning.

The work of Dunn, Dunn and Price (1979) looked at gathering a great deal of data regarding the best environment and strategies for effective student learning. Their studies addressed such questions as: Where does the child work best? How does the child learn most easily? What type of learning structure suits this student most of the time? This sort of approach provided a wealth of diverse and useful information regarding students' motivation and potential learning influences. The fact that there was so much information made any effective implementation of programs difficult because, "the sheer diversity of possibilities creates problems for the classroom teacher" (McInerney & McInerney, 1994, p .499).

Included under the general heading are: learning/cognitive styles and modality preference. Dunn (1984, cited by Truch, 1993), use learning styles and cognitive styles interchangeably. Learning style is, "the way in which each person absorbs and retains information and/or skills; regardless of how that process is described, it is dramatically different in each person" (p. 116). Truch goes on to note research Dunn cites which suggests that when students' learning style preferences were matched with sympathetic teaching strategies and

resources, students achieved statistically higher than when students' preferences were mismatched with teaching methods and resources.

Several writers (Rose & Goll, 1992; Clark, 1992; Gearheart, Weishahn & Gearhart, 1992; Silverman, 1993) found that assessing students' learning styles and adapting classroom methods and assignments had positive effects upon learning outcomes. However, research conducted Cronbach and Snow (1983, cited in Royle & Rutherford, 1984, p. 60) gave the opposite view. They found few consistent results for programs matching instructional treatments to learning styles. In fact according to Royle and Rutherford, Cronbach and Snow argued that, "basing instructional adaptations on student preferences does not improve learning and may be detrimental." (p. 118). Peterson (1981, cited in Truch, 1993, p. 68) found weak effects when matching learning styles with sympathetic teaching strategies, although Peterson did find motivation and self esteem improved in students whose learning styles were treated sympathetically. A nominal-level analysis of four primary learning styles (doing, watching, thinking and watching) by Cornwell and Manfredo (1994) validated the existence of the four styles, but found matching teaching strategies and resources had little impact upon students' learning.

However, when it comes to co-operative learning, trying to cater for individual styles may cause group conflict. Since there is no such thing as the perfect course, using a variety of approaches is best (Miller, 1993). Other

research by Orr and Day (1993) in which students were assigned to six experimental conditions of co-operative or individual learning stratified by learning style, found no evidence to support the hypothesis of interaction between instructional direction and learning styles.

Modality preference is another form of learning style. As Truch (1993) has highlighted, "there is still a dearth of research on the subject" (p. 120). Larivee (1981) used method-by-modality strategies to teach beginning readers and concluded, "differentiating instruction according to modality preference does not appear to facilitate learning to read or the acquisition of reading skills" (p. 188). In contrast to Larivee's results, a research study by Thorpe and Borden (1985) which used visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile approaches, proved successful in teaching disabled students sight-words. Apart from the problems relating to the effectiveness of modality programs, diagnosing modality preferences is in itself a problem. According to Truch (1993), only about ten percent of students show a clear-cut preference for one modality over another and there are few reliable instruments available to measure such preferences.

Butler's (1993a) work is not included in the literature pertaining to the category of learning styles and modality preferences which has been previously discussed. However, the points outlined by Doyle and Rutherford (1984, cited in Truch, 1993) have been noted. The view taken by Miller (1993) regarding co-

operative learning has ramifications for CALM because co-operative learning will be used as a teaching strategy.

Whilst CALM will supply teachers with work booklets and other reinforcing activities, it will not specifically plan for modalities of learning. A valid criticism of CALM may be evident here: if the students are to work from booklets, how can modalities of learning play a part in the teaching process? When it comes to working directly from the booklets modalities cannot be used. However, reinforcement activities can be designed to reinforce the basics and modalities can certainly be used in those. Also, CALM booklets will be only frameworks for teaching. Teachers will be expected to supplement the materials so all students will have the best opportunity to master the material.

The research by Dunn, Dunn and Price (1985) pertaining to the classroom environment will have little impact on CALM's introduction. This is not to suggest that classroom environment is not important. Unfortunately, there will not be time to undertake such an exhaustive study of students' learning preferences as outlined by Dunn et al. Should CALM progress across the grades, then such environmental considerations would certainly be a major focus of CALM's implementation.

The controversy regarding learning styles and modality preferences is duly noted. Although there is no conclusive data that using learning styles/modality

preferences enhances or detracts from students' learning, CALM will only include Butler's (1993a, 1993b) learning style activities as reinforcement activities and will vary the learning style categories so as to cater for all four psychological styles.

From the limited research available, it is clear that there is no definitive answer as the effectiveness of learning programs which cater for learning styles and modality preferences. Perhaps the controversy that surrounds the topic is best summed up by Doyle and Rutherford (1984, cited in Truch, 1993) who conclude that:

- there is no single dimension of learners that unambiguously dictates an instructional prescription.
- There are higher-level interactions between learner characteristics and instructional treatments. The effect of learning style on achievement is likely to be affected by the nature of the task, the relationship between the teacher and the student, the time of the year and other local conditions.
- Most students can adapt to a variety of instructional modes, even if they are not preferred. The central issue is whether the instruction provided is of sufficiently high quality, in terms of such dimensions as task clarity, feedback and opportunities for practice to facilitate learning.
- Teachers often present information in a variety of formats (lectures, discussion, questions) and adjust to the attributes of learners during

individual contracts. Thus, opportunities are provided for different learners to gain access to instruction (p. 119).

HOW THE LITERATURE REVIEW WILL INFORM THE DESIGN OF CALM

Having reviewed the five theoretical underpinnings, application of the findings to the CALM program is required. If a mastery approach is to be used effectively, then, according to Ashman and Elkins (1994), students must master a series of learning steps that permit correction of errors, consolidation of learning through practice and mastery of skills or content at a predetermined level before moving to the next in the hierarchy of skills to be learned. This can take place in either a group or individual setting.

Due to the diverse ability levels in classrooms (Bloom, 1968, 1976; Kulik and Kulik & Brangert-Downs 1990a), the following corrective procedures need to be built into a mastery program, so all levels can be catered for within the classroom. According to Bloom (1968), these strategies will enhance personal-social interaction and drill practice:

- (a) small group instruction
- (b) individual tutoring
- (c) alternative teaching materials, and
- (d) a re-teaching phase.

Two important variables must be considered before students start any unit of work. First, students should be given a cognitive entry test, which will ascertain their prior knowledge/competence level of the content of the work to be studied. The second variable is the quality of instruction that relates, in particular, to the quality of the lessons/materials to be presented, frequency and suitability of feedback and the suitability of material(s) regarding students' abilities.

In order for students to learn successfully, Bloom (1968, 1976; Keller, 1968) suggests three instructional processes which should be followed. During the initial teaching phase, the objectives of any unit of work need to be presented as an overview. The students are told what is to be learned and its importance to their learning in general. Phase two is Guided Practice, during which time students practice what they have learnt. Phase three is Corrective/Enrichment, at which time students who have shown mastery proceed to extension work. Students who have not mastered the work go through corrective procedures.

Writers generally agree that when it come to grading, students are marked on the amount of units completed in a set time (Gage & Berliner, 1991; Good & Brophy, 1990; LeFrancois, 1991; Ormrod, 1990; Woolfolk, 1990) Should students wish to improve grades, they can submit special projects or sit for teacher prepared exams.

Regarding Glasser's (1984) control theory, the CALM program will need to consider students' five basic needs: survival, fun, power freedom and belongingness. According to Chambliss (1989, cited in Ames, 1992) and Good, (1996), one way of achieving belongingness is to allow students to set their own mastery goals. Students may experience a sense of power if they are encouraged and recognition is given for hard work and/or achievement. Being able to manage their own learning and being listened to will satisfy students' need for power (Paris & Winograd, cited in Ames, 1992). Glasser (1984) states that if work is too repetitive, too difficult, students may become bored, which will lead to them [students] choosing other methods of behaviour to satisfy the need for fun.

The fun factor will need to be considered carefully in light of Glasser's (1984) statement because mastery is a repetitive process. When students experience fun, power and belongingness in the classroom, are they experiencing freedom as well? In the context of freedom Glasser (1995) asks teachers to consider, amongst other things, their teaching styles, a consideration which is also mentioned by Butler (1993a, 1993b) when alluding to the four psychological models of learning. Students whose learning styles are catered for, may experience a sense of freedom when work is directed at their own, personal, style of learning. If the CALM programs works to meet the needs of students, then they [the students] will have a positive picture of learning and the school will be placed in students' quality world (Glasser, 1984, 1986, 1992).

The use of contracting in the CALM program, apart from empowering students (Glasser, 1984; Good and Brophy, 1991), will also increase students' self-directed learning and independence (Boud, 1986; Rogers, 1983). Underachieving students will benefit greatly from the contracting process (Heacox & Espeland, 1991). The inclusion of contracting in the CALM program will improve students' academic output. They [students] will complete work more accurately, be more effective regarding study skills and behave more appropriately (Murphy, 1988, cited in Gage & Berliner, 1991). Students will also be more prepared for the adult world because negotiation is an adult process (Biggs & Moore, 1993).

By basing CALM's activities and units of work around Bloom's (1968, 1976) taxonomy of thinking skills, students will have access to higher order thinking skills. Improving thinking skills will lead to more effective problem solving (DePorter, 1993; Ho, 1989), improved self-esteem, greater independence and self-efficacy (Butler, 1993a; Kaniel & Reichenberg, 1991; Paris, 1990; Rogers, 1993).

Writers generally agree that directing work at individual students' learning styles will help students learn more effectively (Butler, 1993a, 1993b; DePorter, 1993; Herrmann, 1995). An important guideline for any mastery program is to vary the material(s) to cater for students' individual differences (Bloom, 1968, 1976). However, bearing in mind the previous discussion relating to the

controversy regarding learning styles and their effectiveness, careful consideration will be given any teaching materials used in that regard. Careful monitoring of the effect of all such materials upon students' learning will also be a priority. If learning styles are considered to be critical to the way individuals learn (Dryden and Voss, 1992; Griggs, 1991; James, 1962, cited in Renzulli and Smith, 1993; Munro & Munro, 1992), then such strategies warrant inclusion.

CHAPTER 3

LEARNING IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

Research is considered to be the more formal, systematic and intensive process of carrying on a scientific method of analysis. Scientific method in problem solving may be an informal application of problem identification, hypothesis formulation, observation, analysis and conclusion (Best & Kahn 1993). It is generally accepted that research is a process whereby interpretations are made on the basis of evidence. All educational research utilises some methodology that enables that research to examine how individuals interpret their actions and the situations in which they act.

In order to discuss research, then, requires a discussion of a family of methods that share the characteristics of a disciplined inquiry. According to Carr and Kemmis (1986, p. 60), disciplined inquiry refers not only to the ordered, regular and principled nature of investigation, but also to the way in which notions relating to the manner of formulating questions is addressed. How content is defined and conceptually organised are equally important, as are the principles of discovery and rectification which constitute the ground rules for creating and testing knowledge are defined.

Research is by no means a unified and monolithic enterprise, and the orientations that a researcher may adopt are based on differing assumptions

concerning knowledge, evidence and research management which are closely related to research techniques. These assumptions emanate from three main conceptual frameworks or paradigms of research - empirical-analytical, interpretive and critical.

Research projects rarely proclaim the paradigm from which they derive, but it is nevertheless possible to discern from the overall approach and the dominant tone, many of the ideological biases and assumptions implicit in research. A wide array of beliefs, values and assumptions structure researchers' perceptions and shape their subsequent theorising. There is no correct methodology that provides certainty for any researcher, for it is the interests of the researcher or the question of the research which, to a large degree, determine the research methodology.

Although it is true that there are fundamental differences in emphasis among the three major paradigms, the various methods can supplement each other, providing insights into human behaviour. While the empirical-analytical approach is able to provide objective standards for verifying or refuting theoretical considerations and for producing generalisation, it offers only a narrow range of understandings. Interpretive research on the other hand emphasises the importance of the subjective experiences of individuals, with meaning and the evaluation of the events being a personal and subjective

construction. Critical approaches are directed to personal or social transformation.

Action-research was chosen as the research methodology for this study because, "it is concerned with the everyday practical problems experienced by teachers, rather than the 'theoretical problems' defined by pure researchers within a discipline of knowledge" (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1992, p. 121). According to Kemmis, the term, 'action-research' was first used by Kurt Lewin in 1944. The term was used to describe a form of research that could unite the experimental approach of social science with programs of social action in response to major social problems of the day.

Action research is an inherently social form of research and aims to improve and involve in three areas:

1. the improvement of practice,
2. the improvement (or professional development) of the understanding of the practice by its practitioners,
3. the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place (Grundy & Kemmis, 1981, cited in Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992, p. 321). Action research in education is linked to the emergence of curriculum as a field of study, and the struggle to make that field distinctive in its relevance to the solving of curriculum problems (Schwab 1969, 1970, cited in McTaggart, 1993, p. 21).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The action research methodology used for this study is outlined by Kemmis and McTaggart (1992), who cite four "moments" of action research which make up the overall research plan and are referred to as phases: reconaissance, planning action and reflection/evaluation. For the purposes for this study, only the research methodology, reconaissance phase and planning phase data will be contained in this chapter. Data regarding the action phase will be discussed in chapter 4. The reflection/evaluation phase will form the basis of Chapter 5.

The first step in the overall planning process is the reconaissance phase, "it is a special case of the usual reflection phase which comes at the end of research cycle as we have described it - a special case simply because it precedes your initial plan" (p. 54). Data gained from the reconaissance phase forms the basis for the rest of the phases.

RECONAISSANCE PHASE

The plan for this report was to design, implement and evaluate a Mastery English program which would remediate and/or extend the sentence and paragraph writing skills of Year 8 students attending a Queensland high school in 1995. Following is a description of the reconaissance phase of the research methodology used to implement and evaluate the program.

During the reconnaissance phase, data is collected from a variety of sources, the aim of which is to inform the plan. Six members staff members of the Queensland Secondary school and thirty Year 8 pupils were surveyed as to what they felt could be improved regarding English writing skills. After the surveys were completed, a thematic concern was chosen for the focus of this research project. The rest of this section will discuss how the thematic concern was arrived at, and will be organised in the following way:

1. Staff concerns
2. Student concerns.
3. Summary of informal interviews with five general teachers.
4. Summary of informal interview with the Head of Department for English.
5. Rationale for thematic concern

Staff concerns

According to many staff members, pupils attending the high school have poor writing skills. This information was gleaned from day-to-day conversations with teachers from all subject areas and English Department meetings. Analysis of class results on the 1994 Queensland Core Skills Test: Creative Writing task (see p.1), which placed the school's Grade 12's below the State average for this task, suggested issues relating to the learning of English writing skills in general, and to the acquisition of basic skills of effective sentence and paragraph writing specifically. Unless students had the basic writing skills of sentence and paragraph writing by or during Year 8, then their writing skills may not be

adequate to cope with the other subjects in high school which use writing as the major form of assessment. A point that was continually reinforced via the comments from teachers who had to mark assignments in the Departments which used writing as the major form of assessment.

Teachers from all subject areas commented on the inability of many pupils to write proficiently in English. In the opinion of the teachers concerned, the problem transcended all Grades. The main concerns expressed were that many students had very poor sentence construction; little or no knowledge of paragraphing techniques; very poor punctuation and spelling. When teachers were asked to quantify how many pupils exhibited poor basic writing skills, the answers varied considerably. Some said all of them; others said the vast majority of them, and three teachers said they could count the number of pupils who could write properly on the fingers of one hand and still have fingers left over.

As to what extent evidence informed the teachers' answers is debatable. However, there seemed to be a real concern with the teachers across all Departments that the standard of written English was poor across all Years. If this were the case, those pupils who were poor writers could be disadvantaged in subjects where writing was an integral part of the assessment process. Achieving poorly in subjects where writing was deemed important could also

adversely affect the pupils' self-esteem and their chances of gaining meaningful employment when they left school.

There was obviously great concern in the school concerning the lack of adequate writing skills and yet there was no action being taken by any subject area to rectify the matter. The pervading feeling was that if the pupils arrived at high school without adequate writing skills it was too late to do anything about the situation. It was suggested the program be trialed in the primary schools rather than the high school, so students would have the necessary skills before attending high school. All the five primary schools were approached, but each refused the request for various reasons. Seeing as how we could not implement the program in the earlier Grades, the original decision to trial in Year 8 was implemented.

A formal questionnaire (see Appendix B) and some informal interviews were conducted with eight general teachers (one from each Department in the school) to ascertain their opinions as to why so many students had poor writing skills. All of the teachers interviewed taught in both the junior and senior classes. Six of the eight teachers interviewed said it was the primary schools' fault that the pupils could not write adequately.

It was not the high school's function to teach 'the basics' and there was not enough time to go back over what should have been learnt elsewhere. All of the

teachers interviewed could name five to ten students (average class size is 26) in their classes who had severe writing problems. When asked what they [the teachers] did to help the writing disadvantaged students, a number of replies were noted, some of which are listed below:

Nothing, they just have to do the best they can.

I sometimes give more time to poorer students when they have to do assignment work.

I tell the English Head of Department, or I sometimes tell the Special Needs teachers.

I get better students to help the poorer students.

I don't really have the time to do anything, although I wish I did. There will always be students who have to fail. If they [the students] can't write properly, then they are usually the ones who don't pass.

I have a work program to follow! It doesn't mention teaching kids to write properly. I assume they are proficient at that when they come here.

I try to set different work for them, but it's really time consuming and they don't seem to appreciate anyway. Sometimes they actually refuse to do the 'other' because their mates aren't doing it. They don't want to be treated differently even though they fail at the regular work - miserably! When I let them do the what the rest of the class is doing they muck-up because they can't do the work; it's a real problem.

It's not my job to teach them English; that's the English Department's job!

All the eight teachers interviewed said they did not have time to teach writing skills because the demands of the curriculum were too great. If they were to teach writing skills, then they would fall behind with the content to be taught. All of the interviewed teachers stated it was the sole responsibility of the English Department to teach the pupils writing skills.

INTERVIEW WITH ENGLISH HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

The English Head of Department (Head of Department for English), said she had long been aware of the problem regarding poor writing skills but had not felt the standard of written English was any worse than other schools throughout the Region. When asked what led to that belief, she replied that at Senior English Moderation Meetings she had seen other students' work from other schools, who were achieving just as poorly regarding written expression. As far as the Head of Department was concerned, the school was, on the whole, of an average standard when it came to the writing skills of Year 12 students.

When questioned about the previous year's results pertaining to the QCS Test Writing Task which had rated the school's students below the State average for writing, the reply was that the students had arrived from primary school with poor writing skills generally, and they didn't improve as the years went on.. The point was also made that although some students seemed to be able to write adequate sentences and paragraphs, the students could not say what constituted a proper sentence (simple, compound or complex), or a proper paragraph. It seemed very much a matter of 'luck not judgement' if sentences and/or paragraphs were written correctly because the students did not seem to understand what they were doing.

The next question asked what action had been taken to help the students gain basic writing skills when they arrived at the school? The Head of Department

for English replied since five years had passed it was almost impossible to remember, but some of the poorer writers may have been referred to the Special Needs Unit. Since it was impossible to recall all the details, the question was redirected to focus on what was happening now to students who enter Year 8 with inadequate, basic writing skills, namely: sentence writing and paragraph writing. Again, the Special Needs Unit was requested to take the 'severe' cases, but no other options were offered apart from the regular Year 8 English program. So, students entering the school at Year 8 with inadequate basic writing skills, were expected to do the same program as students who had the skills already. The same program was also given to students who may have had writing skills above and beyond the basic skills. Therefore, the program as it stood was adequate for some students; too difficult for students without the basic writing skills, and too easy for the students who had skills beyond the basic. This was confirmed by the Head of Department for English as an accurate overview of what was happening now.

When asked why no one had designed a program to make the situation more equitable, the Head of Department for English replied that even though she had been aware of the problems for a number of years, there were two major reasons why a new program had not been designed:

- (1) The amount of time it would take to design and implement a program which may resolve the problem.
- (2) Any program designed to remediate students' basic writing skills would have to be designed so it did not disadvantage those pupils who may already be proficient writers, and who would therefore need extending not remediating.

So far, the interviews with staff members had highlighted a number of concerns. Of all those interviewed, each one expressed concern about the generally poor level of sentence and paragraph writing, and how this situation was seen by them to make their work more difficult and prevented some students from succeeding in other subjects whose day-to-day work and assessment procedures required students to write a great deal.

Having spoken with teachers, the next step was to see what some Year 8 students had to say about the problem of inadequate writing skills. Only one question was asked (see Appendix C), a question which was left completely "open". Seeing this was an exploratory phase, using an open-questionnaire would facilitate students to give information and opinions.

According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1992, p. 100) response rates to open-questionnaires can be low. In order to overcome this problem, the question was given to the sampled Year 8s during an English lesson. The teachers encouraged the students to respond, but if any student did not wish to respond their right of refusal was accepted.

Student concerns

Thirty Year 8 students were surveyed using random sampling. According to (Gay, 1992) "Random sampling is the best single way to obtain a representative sample" (p. 126). A list of Year 8s was obtained, and every fourth student was

selected to be part of the sampling procedure. The selected students were simply asked to suggest improvements that could be made to the way in which the teaching of English skills: sentence and paragraph writing, could be improved. Twenty two of the students replied to the survey. A summary of the responses follows. The surveyed students had major concerns which, during collation, were grouped under four headings: decision making, time to complete the work, assessment and teacher/student relationships.

Decision making

The majority of students were concerned they had no decision-making powers at all. What the teacher wanted them to do they had to do. Individual interests or abilities were not considered. Some students were told to do work they already knew and were quite competent at, whilst others were given work they were not capable of completing.

Time to complete work

Most students felt there was not enough time to complete the work properly. Some students replied that because they were not fast workers, they were always being left behind. Eventually, they were so far behind they just gave up trying. Other 'quicker' students replied they were bored most of the time because they wanted to get on with other work, but the "dumbies", "slow kids" and "class-idiots/clowns" took so much of the teachers' time they "found other things to

do". At the time of answering the survey eighteen of those who responded were "bored" with English and hoped Year 9 would be more fun.

Assessment

Twenty-five of the respondents were glad there were no formal exams in English. Some students mentioned that in other subjects which did have exams (Maths and Science), the teachers were always using exams as threats to get them to work. Those students who considered themselves as "poor" learners resented exams because they didn't understand the subject(s) anyway. They felt bad exam results only confirmed that they [the students] were "dumb"; therefore, what was the point in trying. English had lots assignment work to be completed which was seen by most respondents as acceptable and a fairer way of assessing somebody because you didn't have to rely on remembering lots of facts, and you had lots of time to complete the work.

Teacher/student relationships

Twenty-four of respondents felt their English classes were places where they were more able to talk to their friends because of group work, drama and general teacher-student/student-student interactions. Fifteen of the students commented a lot of class talk was without teacher consent. Where talking was getting out of control, some students remarked it was detrimental to "good work". In classes where they weren't allowed to talk, the majority of students talked anyway. A number of students said they decided who were or weren't "good" teachers by

how much in-class talking they allowed, and how they dealt with those who talked too much. A few of the students thought talking should be allowed all the time if it did not disturb other students.

When collating the information from the survey, it became obvious that the concerns the students had about the English program did not reflect the concerns of the staff. The teachers' were concerned about what was taught. The students, however, were more concerned about the processes and procedures in the classroom rather than the content of the English program.

The interviewed members of the school's staff had highlighted four main areas of concern regarding written English: sentence writing, paragraph writing, punctuation and spelling. Data from students indicated the need to develop a program, but to rectify all four areas was viewed as too great a task. Therefore, the proposed thematic concern for this research was to design, implement and evaluate a program, the aim of which was to remediate and/or extend the sentence writing and paragraph writing skills of a population of 125 Year 8 students who would be attending a Queensland high school in 1995.

SUMMARY OF RECONAISSANCE PHASE

Some teachers and students were surveyed as to how writing skills could be improved at the school. The surveyed group of Year 8 students highlighted a number of concerns. These concerns were not the same as those of the staff

members. Whereas the surveyed staff-members had expressed concerns about specific content (spelling, punctuation, sentence and paragraph writing). However, the students were more concerned with other issues which had more to do with classroom procedures than lesson content. The issues were, decision making, time to complete work, assessment and teacher/student relationships.

The disparity between staff and student comments was cause for concern. The students were saying they had no control over what they did or how they did it, whereas the teachers were just concerned with teaching the content the students needed to learn. The inference being, that in order for a program to work for remediating and/or extending basic writing skills, such a program would need to include ways of answering the students' concerns as well as those of the teachers.

RATIONALE FOR THEMATIC CONCERN

The fact so many of the staff had expressed concern over the previous four years about poor writing skills in general, and the fact that Grade 12's of 1994 had scored well below the State average for the QCS Writing Task, was considered evidence enough for the design and implementation of a program to improve the basic writing skills of sentence and paragraph writing of Year 8 students. However, it was not considered practical to target any other year group in the school, other than the incoming Year 8 year, because of the amount of work such a project would require if it were to be implemented across all the

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year groups. There was also no evidence that such a program would work, so it was not considered advisable to make such major changes to the English programs operating in the school. Other reasons pertaining to the importance of students leaving school with adequate writing skills were outlined in Chapter 1.

PLANNING PHASE

This phase is next because the data collected in the reconnaissance phase forms the basis for the planning phase. Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) suggest eight steps which need to be enacted in order to finalise a working plan. The headings for each of the steps, and a summary of the action group's discussions pertaining to each one the headings are outlined below.

Step 1: Describe the thematic concern and outline why it has been chosen:

The inability of many students to write adequate sentences and paragraphs was as a significant educational concern because of the ramifications of poor writing skills may have on students' future prospects. With the present community focus on improving literacy in schools, the thematic concern seemed even more relevant because its aim was to improve writing skills.

Step 2: Outline the membership of the action group:

The group comprised all six of the teachers of Year 8 English, which included the Head of the English Department and myself. This was considered

an appropriate group because all of the members were to be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation the program.

Step 3: Describe and give a brief rationale for specific changes across three categories.

Category 1: Language and Discourse: Some mastery-terms were introduced into the units of work students completed because the concept of mastery learning was new to students, and parents. Such terms as, Bloom's higher order thinking taxonomy, self-paced learning, recognition of prior learning, contract-teaching and negotiation were all explained by teachers to their students. Parents wishing more details were either advised over the phone, or interviewed.

Category 2: Activities and practices: There were a number of activities and practices which were significantly different from the way Year 8 English had been taught previously. Instead of teachers teaching directly to students, booklets would be designed which formed the basis for students' learning. Individuals, or groups of students were taught by the teachers if the mastery results were not satisfactory. However, if students were progressing satisfactorily at their own pace, then they would be given permission to continue working at their own pace. At strategic places in the booklets, specific instructions would direct students to get their work marked before going any further. This allowed teachers to keep an eye on the progress of each student and made sure they [students] were not continuing with work they were not qualified to complete. It was hoped that this form of self-paced learning would help

students become more independent and more responsible regarding their learning habits.

Other changes were reflected in the contracting and negotiation with teachers that students undertook to empower them to achieve what they wanted to achieve. The thinking-skills activities, which reinforced the higher-order thinking skills built into CALM, were also an innovation. The use of Glasser's (1984, 1986, 1989) control theory as the framework for the psychological well-being of students in the classroom, had also never been used in the school's Junior English Program.

All of the changes were introduced with a view to improving the students' basic English skills and making them more independent learners. The changes in teaching practices, offered the teachers different techniques and philosophies for teaching students, which could be used in other school subjects. Not only were students being shown different ways of achieving successfully, so were the teachers.

Category 3: Social relationships and organisation. The idea of forming positive social relationships between student/teacher and student/student was reflected in the organisation of the CALM program. The fact students could work independently, meant the teachers could spend more time interacting with students because they were not at the front of the classroom teaching to the

whole class. This meant more time to make individual contact with students during class-time.

The work-booklets were designed with readability in mind, so students would not be disadvantaged if their ability to read and, or comprehend was poor. Students with severe reading/comprehension problems (Grade 2/3 reading and/or comprehension ages as measured by the Neale Analysis of Reading) were taken by the SNU. Where students were withdrawn to the SNU, they worked from the same booklet, but a task analysis approach was used which allowed the students much more time to work through the material. This process was used because according to Bloom (1968, 1976), students who have learning difficulties can take up to six times longer to master material than students who do not have learning difficulties. According to Ashman and Elkinss (1994, p. 70), students who manifested reading and/or comprehension ages two years below their [the students] chronological age were considered to have a learning difficulty.

The use of group-work in the thinking-skills activities was another factor of the program's organisation that enhanced sociability in the classroom. Given that less able students were grouped with those who were more able, enabled all the students to listen, discuss and work co-operatively to achieve a common goal and have fun at the same time.

Step 4: Detail a plan and schedule of work: The group felt it would not be advisable to have just one unit of mastery work and then revert to the old English program which had proven to be ineffective in addressing the needs of students. Therefore, it was decided to design an English Mastery program for the whole year, the first unit of which, was one specifically designed to extend and/or remediate sentence and paragraph writing. This first unit would also serve as the research focus for this study.

The timing for the research phase of the program was determined by the Head of English. The decision was to implement the research in the first week of term which was eight weeks long. This was considered enough time to ascertain students' abilities, run the mastery unit specifically designed for sentence and paragraphing writing and evaluate the results.

There were five units of work prepared for the whole year: Narrative Writing, Diary writing, Letter writing (personal), Letter to the Editor and a unit on writing newspapers were parts of a total English program for the Year 8s. The Narrative Writing unit was the unit which contained the sentence and paragraph writing activities (see Appendix A). A detailed description of the unit follows. The other four units followed the same format, but required more of students in the way of higher order thinking skills.

DESCRIPTION OF UNIT 1: NARRATIVE WRITING

Before discussing the format of the first unit, two terms need explaining.

The term sentence relates to a simple sentence: namely, a sentence which had a finite verb, a subject and a predicate. However, where students demonstrated mastery of other sentence structures, they were started on the paragraphing section of the unit.

The term paragraph was defined by the English Head of Department for English as a collection of sentences about a topic. The paragraph must have a topic sentence at the beginning and all other sentences must be relevant to the topic of the paragraph. It was acknowledged topic sentences could be placed at other places in a paragraph, but for the purposes of basic mastery unit, students were required to put topic sentences at the beginning of a paragraph. Students who demonstrated skills in placing and recognising topic sentences in other places in a paragraph were given due recognition and were allowed to start the booklet at a higher level.

Mastery learning

Since this was a mastery approach, the unit was organised so students needed to master specific criteria before moving on to the next task. The criteria for each level of achievement were listed at the front of the booklet and at other relevant places where the content for mastery changed. As per the mastery

philosophies (Bloom, 1968, 1976; Keller, 1968) students were required to achieve 80%, or more, before going on to the next task.

Before students could be given any units at all, there needed to be some way to ascertain their abilities to write sentences and paragraphs. Bloom (1969, 1978; Ornstein, 1991) advocate the use of a Cognitive Entry Behaviour test which could be administered before and after a unit of work to see what prior knowledge students already had, and to see how much learning had taken place by the end of the unit.

It was decided to design a mastery pre-test/post-test (see Appendix C) which would be given to the students during their second week at high school. The results of the test determined where students would start on the CALM program. If some students achieved mastery of all the items on the pre-test, then they were given the next unit of work. Placing students at different stages of the CALM program was seen as recognising students' prior learning(s) which was seen by Glasser (1984) as one of the important factors pertaining to control theory.

Survival

Another Glasser (1994) control theory element was the concept of survival. Survival, in the context of the this unit, and the other units, pertained to students

being able to find some level of survival in the classroom by working at tasks at which they could succeed.

Love (belongingness)

One of the teaching strategies used, was to allow students to work together in groups of their own making (friendship groups), or to work in a group with students who were at the same level of achievement. Teachers saw this a caring strategy because it acknowledged the need and/or wishes of students to work with each other.

Power (importance, achievement, recognition)

Students were helped to feel important because they were consulted, listened to and were empowered to make their own decisions about who they wanted to work with and how long they could spend on the various tasks. They could see how they were achieving by their progress through the unit booklet. Recognition was realised by allowing students to start at different places in the booklet depending on their score on the pre-test.

Fun (pleasure, learning).

One lesson per week was given over to fun activities. During this time, Drama and games to promote co-operative learning were to offset the more structured mastery program. As the unit progressed, games were designed specifically to enhance certain aspects of sentence and paragraph writing skills.

Freedom (choice, freedom from, to or of...)

By virtue of students being able to choose working-groups, the pace at which they worked and what levels of achievement they wanted, the students were already experiencing a deal of freedom.

Contract learning

In this first unit, some things were negotiable, some were not. Mastery of proper sentence and paragraphing skills was required by all students before they could progress to the next unit(s). There was some negotiation allowed regarding the time students could take to complete the work, but the content of the unit was not negotiable.

The staff of the SNU had suggested that upon entering high school, each student should be given a reading/comprehension test. The results of the testing would highlight reading disadvantaged students who would experience difficulty with reading and/or understanding the content to the CALM program. This was considered impractical because of the time it would take to test all of the students. The validity of conducting reading/comprehension tests so early into students' high school career was also considered impractical and even unfair.

Two suggestions were accepted:

- (1) . The primary schools would be asked to supply information on students who had severe reading/comprehension problems.

(2). Students who did poorly on the CALM pre-test were referred for a reading/comprehension test. Students who were identified as having poor sentence/paragraphing skills and severe reading/comprehension problems (Grade 2/3 reading and/or comprehension ages) were given the choice to go to the SNU for their English lessons. If the students chose not to go, then the SNU staff supplied modified work so the students could still work successfully in the regular classroom. The fact the CALM pre-test and a reading test were given in the second week of high school, severely at-risk students who were not identified by the primary schools were identified and given help quickly.

Grading of student work

Students wishing a C Grade were expected to master the thinking skills of knowledge, comprehension and application. This was considered to be consistent with Bloom's levels of higher order thinking. The grade of C+ could be obtained if the work was presented neatly.

B Grade

Students who required B Grade expected to have mastered the thinking skills of analysis and synthesis. The Grade of B+ could be obtained for neat work.

A Grade

The Grade of A could be achieved by showing mastery of the skill of evaluation. An A+ was given to work that was neatly presented.

Having decided on "who would be doing what, when, where and how" (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992, p. 76), the planning was completed. Attention was turned to the next step in the overall planning process.

Step 5: Contestation and Institutionalisation

According to McTaggart (1993), "Good ideas are not enough. Educational practices and patterns of schooling, and classroom organisation must also be changed to secure improvement" (p. 78). During the discussions which took place regarding the implementation of CALM, a number of practices and organisational changes were suggested which would have ramifications for the teachers of the program, as well as the students. The changes and the relevant discussions regarding them are listed below.

Organisation of the Units

Each unit was organised into booklet form, and had specific content and criteria which needed to be mastered. Some of the teachers expressed concern that their individual teaching styles would be affected because of the strict layout of the booklets; the booklets seemed to be inflexible. It was pointed out the booklets did contain necessary content and assessment criteria, but the way in which teachers taught the material was very much open to variation.

The booklets set-out what needed to be taught, but how teachers taught the material was a matter for individual preference. It was hoped teachers would

design creative lessons to teach the content because then a bank of teaching resources/lesson plans could be added to the program so other teachers might use them.

Students with reading problems

Even though the unit booklets had been designed with easy readability in mind, and that the severely reading-disadvantaged students could be taken by the SNU during English lessons, some teachers expressed concern about those students who would still have problems reading and understanding the work. It was decided see what happened once the program was under way. If major problems arose concerning reading and/or understanding of the work, the SNU staff would be contacted to see if teacher aides or volunteer tutors could be made available to help students.

Marking of work

It was seen to be important students' completed work be marked as soon as possible so progress could be affected to the next unit(s), or work which was unsatisfactory could be remediated. The immediacy and quality of feedback was an important facet of CALM and needed to be considered carefully.

There were no concerns expressed as to the amount of marking, but rather how and when it would take place. The teachers' previous experience of marking was to take students' books home and mark them over a couple of days.

Unfortunately, this practice did not fit the CALM need for immediate feedback, remediation and/or extension, so a change in classroom practice was required.

To provide feedback as soon as practicable after task completion, the decision was taken to try and mark students' work in the classroom as soon as the work was completed. This immediately posed problems of classroom management for some of the teachers because they did not know what students who were waiting for work to be marked would be "getting up to" in the classroom. The suggestion was made that students could continue with the next stage of the work till their other work had been marked.

If, after the work had been marked, mastery was not achieved, any work on higher level tasks ceased. The unsatisfactory work could be done again till it was satisfactory. If, on the other hand the marked work had achieved mastery, then the students had already started the next task, so no time had been lost at all. Any outstanding marking could be taken home and marked in readiness for the next lesson.

Inclusion of thinking skills activities

The action-group decided to use group-work when the thinking activities were introduced because this would also allow teachers to begin assessing group-work skills. The activities could be designed so students had fun as well as using the skills they had mastered. Where possible, the activities would be

varied to account for the students' different learning styles. The idea that students should keep a Thinking Journal was adopted. In the journal, students would write what they had learned, how the thinking skills activities had helped them with their learning and what did they do well or would do differently. Examples of thinking skills activities can be found in Appendix A.

Step 6: How the action-plan relates to others involved

The eventual findings emanating from CALM's implementation would be shared with the staff of the school. Other subject area Heads of Department had hinted they may consider implementing some mastery strategies depending on what was learned from the English Department's experiences with the mastery strategies.

As well as staff members, the results were to be shared with the Parents and Citizens Association of the school. The Principal had previously sought permission from the PandC to trial CALM because it was a marked departure from what had been happening before. The P and C supported the trial, with the proviso they would be informed of the results when the trial period had been evaluated.

The students involved in the trial were also to be informed of the results. The teachers thought this would be a useful exercise because students would then be aware of the progress they had made as a group since the beginning of

the year. As well as informing students, the parents would also be made aware of what CALM had achieved.

Step 7: Monitoring changes in language/discourse, activities/practices and social relationships/organisation.

The monitoring system chosen for this step was that each teacher would keep a diary. Where changes in any of the three categories were evident, be they planned unplanned, they would be written down. Regular meetings of the teachers were planned, so the diary entries could be tabled, discussed and changes made to the program where necessary.

Step 8: How will the data count as evidence for what happened in the first action step?

In order to collect the data, it was decided that each teacher would keep a diary over the nine weeks of CALM's implementation. Teachers would try to write an entry each day, but would definitely write three times a week. A meeting would be convened at the end of each week to share information, concerns and ideas. Diary entries for the week could be shared with the group, so the feelings of the teachers could be voiced as well as the information which related to CALM's content and/or organisation. The information gleaned from these sessions would go towards refining CALM where necessary.

CHAPTER 4

DO OR DO NOT, THERE IS NO TRY

The data in this chapter relates to the weekly discussions held with the teachers who constituted the action-group. The discussion focussed on how CALM was proceeding during the action phase of the Research methodology. Following is a summary of each meeting.

THE ACTION PHASE

Even though the Head of Department for English for English required the program to run for the whole year, the research component (Narrative Writing unit) was implemented from 30th January 1995 to 3rd April 1995. The program finished one week before the end of the first Term, so meetings could be arranged before the holidays to discuss and reflect on what had been achieved.

In the second week of the term, all the Year 8 students were given the mastery pre-test (see Appendix C). It should be noted the pre-test tested the students' abilities to use verbs and direct speech as well as simple sentences and paragraphing because these were also included in the Narrative Writing unit. The results of the test were collated and appear in Figure 1. The figures on the left-hand side of the graph are percentages.

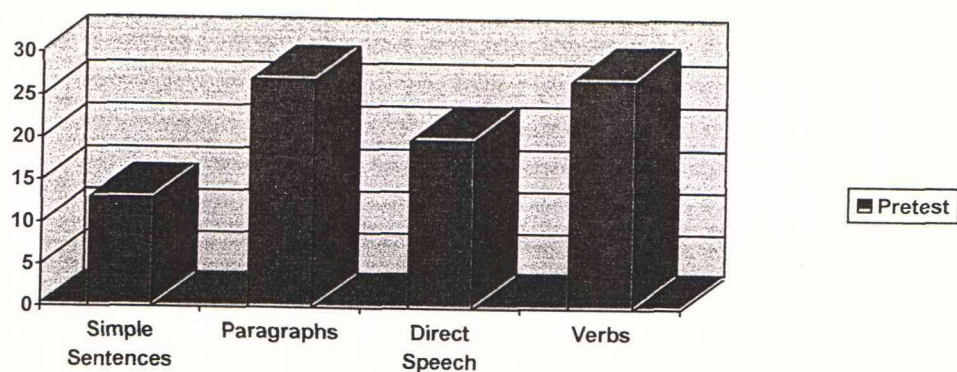


Figure 1. Results of the mastery pre-test. The figures on the left are percentages.

As was expected, some students had adequate knowledge of sentence and paragraph writing and others did not. Only 13% of students achieved mastery of simple sentences. Only 27% of students achieved mastery on the paragraphing tasks.

The SNU staff administered reading/comprehension tests to those students exhibiting very poor writing/understanding of the basic skills of simple sentence and paragraph writing. Having collated all the information, it was decided to offer some students the assistance of the SNU for intensive help during English lessons.

As per the action plan, the rest of the students were given the Narrative Writing unit that contained the work on sentence and paragraph writing. Students were placed at different levels of the booklet depending on the results of the pre-test. The booklets were given out on the last day of the first week, so students could take them home to show their parents and familiarise themselves

with the format and content. The parents were given an overview of CALM for the whole year, even though the trial period was eight weeks, and were required to sign a pro-forma indicating they did/did not understand what CALM hoped to achieve. If any parents indicated they had trouble with either the philosophy or content of CALM, a meeting would be arranged to discuss and/or explain the program. No such discussions were requested.

The actual teaching phase began in the second the week. As per other subjects in the school, English had five lessons per week: three single lessons and one double lesson. Each period was forty minutes long, with some time being lost on Mondays and Fridays when Care-group meetings took place. The classes ranged in number of students from twenty-two to twenty-eight and they were grouped heterogeneously.

During the first lesson of using the booklets, the terms, knowledge, comprehension, application analysis, synthesis and evaluation were explained and discussed with the students. The importance of thinking skills was also explained. The rationale for using contract teaching and self-paced learning was outlined before a time for questions was implemented. This concluded the first lesson, so work from the booklet itself made up the remainder of the lessons. The post-test was administered in the last week of the program. The results of the testing and other data are discussed in the Chapter 5.

Summary of week 1 (second week of term)

The major concern of the meeting were the results of the pre-test which was given to the 125 Year 8 students involved in the study. All the teachers expressed concern at the students' poor performance in the areas of simple sentences and paragraphs. Two teachers felt the test was too early in the students' high school career. The other teachers disagreed, stating the results could have been affected by anxiety, but in their collective previous experiences of teaching English classes, the students performed pretty much as expected.

The disparity between the teachers views regarding the results of the pre-test questioned the validity of the pre-test's data. In order to see whether the data were representative, it was decided that teachers would collect a random sample of work from the previous year's Year 8 students and look at the sentence/paragraph writing skills to see if any comparison could be made with the results from the pre-testing. The sampling would be taken from writings completed by the students in the first term of 1994, so the samples were representative of basic writing skills at the beginning of Year 8. To some extent, the random sampling was viewed as a quasi control.

CALM was specifically designed to address the problems of poor sentence and paragraph writing skills. Students who were placed on levels of work that were either too hard, or too easy, would soon be identified when the teachers

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marked the work. The pre-test would not be 100% accurate, therefore, teachers will wait and see, and re-direct students if necessary.

Many of the students had asked questions about the “why's and wherefore's” of the CALM program, but all of the teachers felt they had dealt effectively with all of the student enquiries. Five parents rang the school requesting to talk to teachers. Again, those enquiries were handled satisfactorily. No parent had said their child was not to be involved in the CALM program. Two parents rang to say it was about time the school started to address the problems of poor writing skills. The two parents also commented that they had approached the primary school on many occasions to complain about “appalling” writing and reading problems evident in their respective children, but nothing was done.

All the teachers had explained the meanings of the mastery-terms used in CALM to their students. There were only a few questions asked by students at the time of explanation. However, all the teachers felt that as CALM progressed and the ramifications of the program dawned on the students, then there would be a deal of questions about the language of mastery. A few parents contacted the school regarding some of the terminology, but the teachers' explanations were readily accepted either over the phone, or during arranged interviews of which there were six.

A few administrative details were discussed, the most pertinent of which was the cost of photocopying. The Narrative Writing booklet had gone well beyond the expected cost of production. Therefore, the English HoD asked that students be made aware that if they [the students] lost the booklet, a replacement charge (amount as yet undecided) would be incurred.

Summary of week 2.

Generally, the feeling was that the CALM program was going 'remarkably' well. The main topic of conversation was the lack of discipline/behaviour problems throughout the classes. The teachers who had taught the previous Year 8 program were the most vocal in their praise of positive student behaviour.

The "old" program required students to work on a unit entitled "All About Me". This first unit was designed to inform the teachers of various interesting details and insights into their pupils' lives. However, because the students were so diverse in their abilities regarding reading, understanding and completing the activities, inappropriate student behaviour became a serious problem within a very short time. This had been the situation for at least five years, a situation which was now changing. One teacher suggested that this year's intake of Year 8's was a "good" year, therefore, any program (even the old one) would have had the same effect on student's behaviour. The other teachers in the group, who taught other Year 8 subjects apart from English, disagreed. According to three teachers in the group, this year's Year 8's were the worst for quite some time. In

other subjects, some of their well-behaved English students were extremely disruptive, unco-operative, disrespectful and almost impossible to keep on task.

With a view to behaviour, the teachers were asked to keep of record of specific behaviours that they [the teachers] saw as important to effective learning. We decided on the following list of behaviours:

- (a) On task
- (b) Noise level in the classroom.
- (c) Inappropriate out-of-seat occurrences
- (d) Willingness to start working upon entering the classroom
- (e) Occurrences of reprimands for not working satisfactorily

It was agreed to gather data on those behaviours as long as the teachers would not be required to offer statistical data. The teachers considered themselves to be busy enough with a new program, so it was decided to use the diary observations as the means of keeping-an-eye on the targeted behaviours.

Fifteen students had lost their booklets already even though teachers had warned them of the consequences. As per the previous week's meeting, a small cost was imposed for the re-printing of booklets. Ten of the lost booklets were replaced, but the other students were not co-operating in bringing the money. Some teachers expressed concern about (a) the students who were "refusing" to comply and (b) the students who may not be able to afford the replacement cost.

In order to overcome any emerging problems of social justice or discrimination, it was decided to print some booklets that could only be borrowed during class-time. However, students who borrowed the booklets were encouraged to rectify the situation as soon as possible. The students experiencing financial difficulties were exempted from paying till such time as they could pay.

Summary of week 3

Ten students had said they could not understand what the booklets were asking them to do. When the students were asked if they had experienced reading and/or understanding the mastery test, they said they had not, but some words were explained to them by the teachers who had administered the test. The names of the ten students were checked with the SNU teachers to see if any information existed regarding problems with reading/comprehension, or any other learning difficulties. It transpired that six of the ten students had reading and/or comprehension ages greater than two years below their chronological ages. All of the six students with reading/comprehension problems had been offered places in the SNU, but refused the help. It was decided that the teachers would schedule a time in each lesson to help the students who were having problems understanding the work.

The behaviour of the students was still positive and the teachers were managing to keep fairly detailed notes on the list of targeted behaviours discussed last meeting. One of the teachers brought up a concern which

reflected the impact CALM was having on teacher behaviour. The CALM program required students to work from booklets. This being the case, the amount of direct-teaching was minimal, which was causing one teacher a deal of concern.

The teacher shared a diary entry with the meeting:

I still find it hard to come out of the teacher-mould. When I see the students working well on their own, or in groups, without any real direction from me, I think I am failing them in some way. I always believed teachers had to be at the front of the classroom telling students what to do and how to behave. Since teaching this course, however, I have had to do some more thinking about how and what I do. I must admit to feeling uncomfortable with the CALM program at this time, but I'm not sure as to why.

The other teachers identified with the feeling of discomfort, but felt they could teach when the need arose. They also felt that they were still teaching, but it was a different form of teaching. Even though they were not writing on the board, or giving actual lessons all the time, their new-found time to wander the classroom, talk to students, mark work and give feedback almost immediately and take time to encourage their students, involved them in the teaching independence to students who may have had little previous experience of the concept. All the teachers agreed it was just case of getting used to something new. They all admitted to being able to stop their classes any time and give a lesson if they so desired, but they were all happy to see the spirit of independence flourish in their classrooms.

It was during this summary period the teachers were asked how they felt the program was going. The teachers said they were quite happy with the way the CALM program was going, however some students were not. All the teachers could cite examples of student comments which hinted that the teachers were 'not doing their job(s) properly'. When asked by their teachers what prompted the comments, the following statements were quite prevalent across all the classes:

- (a) Teachers were not teaching them properly.*
- (b) Teachers were not teaching them at all.*
- (c) They [the students] could not be expected to learn if they were not being told what to do.*
- (d) Did the teachers still get paid the same money for doing nothing?*
- (e) The teachers were not properly trained English teachers because they [the teachers] did not write on the board all the time.*
- (f) Why do we have to do booklets all the time?*

In one teacher's class, one student in particular was most supportive of CALM. The student's previous experience of English work had led him to believe he was incapable of doing well in the subject. The pre-test had highlighted a number of errors, so he was placed at Part One of the booklet. Within two weeks he had progressed to Part Three and was doing more homework than he had ever attempted before.

When asked how he was thought he was doing on the program, he replied he would finish the booklet as soon as possible because he wanted to start another booklet. The teacher said to him she thought his attitude to English had changed over the weeks. He replied that English was going to be his best subject from now on because he felt in charge of what he was doing. He liked to plan things, so he had drawn up a timetable of when he expected to finish each booklet. In primary school he had been told when to start and finish things, and had been ignored by teachers when he tried to negotiate his own timelines for work. "They didn't listen to me, so I didn't listen to them." He knew he had a lot of work to make-up, but his timetable would make sure he achieved his aim

Regarding the negative comments, all the teachers pointed out that although the comments were made, they were by no means indicative of the general feeling of the students and it was only the third week of the CALM's implementation. Just as the teachers were adjusting to the new situation, so were the students, which may well account for the few students who felt they were not being taught properly. It was also mentioned that no phone calls from parents expressed concern with the program. As the weeks progressed and the students became more familiar with CALM's organisation and benefits, it was hoped any negative comments would be minimised.

Summary of week 4.

At this stage of the program a major area of concern was expressed by teachers in the group. The CALM program did not require students to complete work by certain dates. This decision was taken in light of Glasser's (1984; Good, 1996) control theory needs, specifically students' needs for freedom and power. By imposing time-limits on students to complete work was, arguably, flying in the face of Glasser's (1984) control theory. However, practice was proving different to theory. A major concern relating to the use of time was expressed by the four teachers pertaining to the lack of specific times whereby work had to be completed.

The teachers noticed that because there were no specific times to finish the tasks, some students completed less work as the weeks progressed. When students were questioned as to why they were not working as hard as they might, they said they were told they could work at their own pace and that was what they were doing. The teachers saw this situation as unacceptable for the following reasons:

- If students took too long to complete tasks that they were capable achieving more quickly, then they could fall behind and not complete the set work by the end of the year.
- Even though it was a mastery program, students had to complete certain work by the end of Year 8. The work in Grade Nine would be based on

students mastering all the units in Year 8. Therefore, students who did not complete all the Year 8 units, at least to a C level, would be disadvantaged.

- Students who saw themselves falling too far behind because they had taken too long to complete other work might give up and stop working altogether.
- Some students were naturally slower workers, so should not be punished by not meeting work-completion dates should they be set.

However, students who were capable of working more quickly might be encouraged to do so if target-times were built into CALM. All the teachers agreed that target-times for completion should be built into CALM's re-write. Students would still have the power and the freedom to complete work at home even though there would be no class-time available because a new unit of work would starting. Therefore, deadlines, in the context of CALM were not viewed as going against Glasser's (1984) control theory philosophy.

The concept of target-times was also seen as a real-life situation. Meeting deadlines, establishing goals and meeting them are expectations in other school subjects as well. So, by making the students aware of when work is to start and to finish, and plan accordingly, may be considered useful in other situations, both in and out of school. Until CALM was re-written, teachers were going to set target-times themselves. A short discussion ensued which looked at realistic dates for the completion of the various parts of the Narrative Writing booklet. The students were informed of the decision and the target-times during the next English lesson.

The subject of behaviour was mentioned briefly. The majority of students were still acting well within the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, although a few difficult students had surfaced recently. The Head of Department for English had not been consulted about those students because their unacceptable behaviour(s) was not that serious as yet that it required the use of the school's behaviour management plan.

The situation of the lost booklets was resolved successfully. Those students allowed to borrow booklets only for class-time, found themselves falling behind in the work, so they had purchased new booklets and were making up the lost work. Students experiencing financial difficulties would still be allowed to borrow booklets and take them home if they so wished..

As was expected, some students were progressing quicker than others, but the majority of students had completed the activities on verb, subject and predicate. Some students had just started to write the Snowman story. This was again in keeping with expectations as some of the students had been extremely successful on the pre-test; thereby, starting at a much higher level in the Narrative Writing booklet.

Summary of week 5

At this stage of the CALM program, a review of the problems pertaining to CALM program began.. Students' behaviour was still a bonus according to all

the teachers. The behaviours listed in the summary of week 1 were still being monitored, the results of which would be brought to the group's final meeting. The target-times for work completion had addressed some of the problems regarding, but the slower students were still finding it hard to complete work in class-time and were not reliable when finishing work at home. Therefore, some students were well behind the target-times.

Now that the teachers and the students were familiar with the way CALM worked, there were no comments from students about the teachers not working and all the teachers were more comfortable with their change of role in the classroom. The booklets were still catering for the reading levels of the majority of the students. Students who had difficulty understanding the booklets were given time every lesson to talk with the teachers about what they [the students] had to do. The activities designed via Bloom's (1968) higher order thinking skills taxonomy challenged the students who had mastered the previous levels of thinking skills.

The fact the CALM program was into its fifth week meant there was a great deal of marking to be done which was causing problems. One teacher wrote:

This is ridiculous! The more I do, the more I get to do. I've done more marking this last week than I care to remember and it's still coming in. If I wanted to teach anything I'd be hard put to find the time. There has to be a better way to do this, but I don't know what it is. Perhaps the other teachers are coping better than I am.

The other teachers were feeling the strain of endless marking. This was not only causing concern for their CALM marking, the marking the teachers were getting from their other classes was also piling up.

When discussing the problem of marking, it became obvious that as students progressed to the higher-order thinking skills the marking was not as constant because those activities took some time to complete. The bulk of the marking was in the first two to three weeks, when students were completing the activities on subject, verb and predicate.

The suggestion was made by one teacher to design answer-keys so students could mark their own work. Some advantages of such a modification were that students would become more independent of the teacher. Students who finished would not have to wait for the teacher to mark the work before going on to the next task. Students would understand the need for trust and honesty. There would obviously be times when teachers would be needed to help students whose answers may not reflect the answer-keys exactly, but the suggestion (the only one at that time) was enthusiastically received by the group. The issue of students cheating on the answers was mentioned, but was considered a minor concern at the time of the meeting.

Summary of week 6

This meeting focused on the thinking-skills activities that the teachers were beginning to use. Two of the teachers in the group found working from just the booklets was boring both in their eyes and the eyes of some students. One teacher wrote:

I don't seem to be doing much in this class. The students are working, but I'm not! I look around the room only to find "noses to the grind stone". Perhaps because I'm not actually teaching them face-to-face I'm bored. I really don't like this feeling. I'm not doing my job, or am I?

Both teachers used the Theme Lesson (see Appendix A) and found it to be most useful. The activity not only reinforced the concepts of verb, subject and predicate, but enabled the teachers to start to assess group-work skills as well as relieve the boredom of working from the booklets.

During the time the groups were preparing and performing, the teachers witnessed their students having fun and working as groups quite well. Some students were not happy with the groups they were in, but did not let that detract from their responsibilities. The co-operative learning strategy, DOVE, (see Appendix A) proved to be beneficial when organising the various roles in each group. The students who were given certain roles treated the tasks responsibly.

When the groups actually performed, both teachers were extremely impressed by both the variety of sentences and how accurate the sentences were regarding subject, verb and predicate. Whilst the groups performed, the other

students became an attentive audience and worked enthusiastically to try and spot incorrect sentences. If there was controversy over the accuracy of some of the sentences presented, both teachers were surprised by the informed opinions of the students who offered reasons and suggestions for their opinions. Some of the students in one teacher's class asked if they could design their own thinking-skill activity for remembering subject, verb and predicate. This was encouraged by the teacher, but as yet the students had not finalised what they would do.

According to one of the teachers, the group-work had proved to be so successful in reinforcing some of the concepts of simple sentence structure that the teacher wrote a play about subjects, verbs and predicates (see Appendix E), which was performed by her class in the last week of CALM's trial. The other classes using CALM formed the audience and were also required to participate at certain times in the play's performance. The teacher considered the play to be an extension of the learning style philosophy in that the play would appeal to students who liked moving around and performing. The teacher said that judging by the fun that both actors and audience experienced, Glasser's (1984) need for fun had also been addressed.

The only real concern expressed was that only five or six students had the courage to offer comments when involved in the DOVE process. As much as the teachers tried to involve the more retiring students, their efforts [the teachers'] were not really successful. It was suggested by the rest of the group

that because the activities were fairly demanding, some of the students may have found them quite threatening. Given more time and as the CALM program progressed, more students may feel more secure about participating in sharing their thoughts and opinions. However, the teachers who had not used the thinking-skills activity as yet were pleased to know that it was a useful tool for teaching co-operative learning skills, role-taking and promoting fun in the classroom.

All the teachers felt the CALM program was now well underway and proving to be successful in what it set-out to do. The students were still behaving well and completing the work satisfactorily. Some students were achieving beyond their original, nominated grades because they had surprised themselves as to how quickly they were learning and wanted to complete more work for a better grade. All the teachers could cite examples of students progressing beyond what they [the students] originally thought they could achieve.

Summary of week 7

It was to this meeting the teachers brought their data regarding the targeted behaviours agreed to in the summary of the first week. Each teacher shared their data and which were then discussed and collated. The results were as follows:

- All students were on task 70% to 80% of the time.

- Noise level in the classrooms was minimal. What noise there was related to students talking to each other regarding levels of contracting and grade achievement.
- Inappropriate out-of-seat behaviours were minimal.
- Students started work quickly after entering the rooms.
- There were very few questions about what work had to be done during each lesson.
- There were few occasions when students had to be reprimanded for not working satisfactorily.
- There was little, or no concern expressed by students about not being able to understand, or do what the booklets required them to do. When concern was expressed, it was found that the students who “complained” were those who either did not go to the SNU because they had refused the offer, or could not go because the unit was too crowded.

In such cases, teachers took time to read and explain to the students what was required. If a space became available in SNU, certain students were encouraged to seek more intensive help.

Summary of week 8

During this meeting, the results of the pre-tests and post-tests were discussed. The results of both the pre-test and post-test are displayed in Figure 2 below.

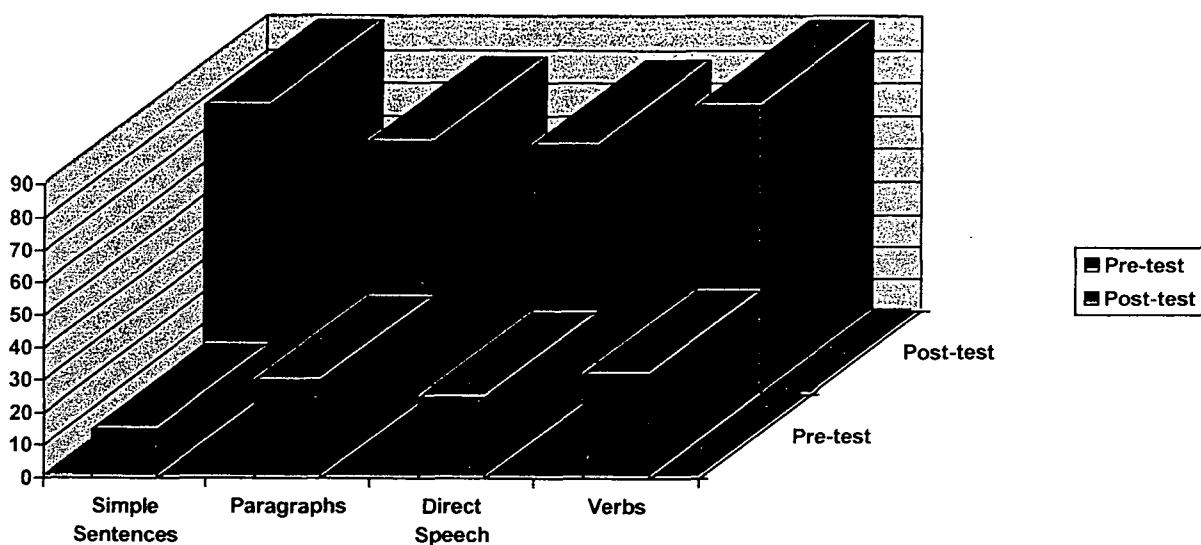


Figure 2. Comparison of the results pertaining to the mastery pre-test and post-test. The figures on the left are percentages.

When the two tests are compared there is little doubt that the students' sentence and paragraphing writing skills improved during the eight weeks of CALM's implementation. However, before going further, a discussion regarding the construct validity of the research is in order.

CONSTRUCT VALIDITY

The CALM program best fits into the experimental method of research, which can be examined using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The experimental method is the only truly test hypothesis concerning cause and affect relationships and is the most valid approach to the solution of educational problems, both practical and theoretical, and to the advancement of education as

a science (Best and Kahn, 1993; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). When using the experimental method, various research designs may be used. The experiment typically involves two groups, an experimental and control group (Best and Kahn, 1993; Gay, 1992; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). CALM did not have a control group because all Year 8 classes had to undergo the program. CALM also used a pre-test/post-test structure which, according to (Gay; Best and Kahn), CALM's research design is best described as pre-experimental. Research methodology requires that the validity of the study can be argued under various headings. Validity is categorised in two ways according to Gay (1992) and Best and Kahn (1993), Internal Validity and External Validity.

Internal Validity:

An experiment has internal validity to the extent that the two factors that have been manipulated (independent variables) actually have a genuine effect on the observed consequences (dependant variables) in the experimental setting.

External Validity:

The researcher would achieve little of practical value if these observed variable relationships were valid only in the experimental setting and only for those participating. External validity is the extent to which the variable relationships can be generalised to other settings; other treatment variables. other measurement variables and other populations.

Best and Kahn (1993) admit that experimental validity is hard to achieve because internal validity is difficult to realise outside a laboratory setting because of the many variables to control “when experimental controls are tightened to achieve internal validity the more artificial and less realistic the situation becomes” (p. 141). Hence, both Gay (1992; Best and Kahn, 1993) admit that some compromise is inevitable in order to realise a reasonable balance. However, Wolcot (1990, cited in Eisner and Peshkin, 1990) views validity in qualitative research as absurd and posits that the role of the ethnographer “is not to tell readers what to think of an experience, but to show them the experience from beginning to end” (p. 143). Burns (1990) whilst admitting that the concept of validity is peculiarly important in research, sees validity as complex and controversial (p. 202).

Controversial or not, “there are a number of experimental designs that control many threats for you, all you have to do is select a ‘good design’ and go from there” (Gay, 1992, p. 303). For reasons outlined earlier, CALM fell into pre-experimental, even though “pre-experimental designs do not do very good job of controlling extraneous variables that jeopardise validity” (p. 319). However, the pre-experimental design “does control internal validity factors such as history, maturation and testing, but internal validity is poor” (p. 148). The results of the CALM program will now be analysed, using the eight threats to internal/external validity headings outlined by Campbell and Stanley (1971, cited in Gay, 1992).

THREATS TO INTERNAL VALIDITY

History:

History refers to the occurrence of any event which is not part of the experimental treatment, but which may affect the performance on the dependent variable. The longer the study lasts, the more likely it is that history may be a problem. This is not seen as relevant to the CALM program. The program only ran for eight weeks; which would seem too short a time for any major events to influence the outcome of the research.

Maturation:

Subjects change (biologically and psychologically) in many ways over a period of time, and these changes may be confused with effect of the independent variables under consideration. It is not possible to say whether or not biological changes took place during the eight weeks of CALM's implementation. However, some positive psychological changes may have been promoted via the use of Glasser's (1984) control theory as a major theoretical underpinning of the CALM program.

Testing:

Pre-testing may produce a practice effect that can make subjects more proficient in subsequent test performance. The pre-test conducted at the beginning of the research period was also the post-test used at the end of research time. Students were told which areas they needed to improve, but had

no further interaction with the actual test questions 'till the end of the eight weeks. During the eight weeks, students worked to improve and/or extend their basic writing skills; therefore, the post-test was a good indicator as to what students knew at the beginning of the research period and at the end of the allocated time.

Unstable instrumentation:

Refers to unreliability, or lack of consistency in measuring instruments which may result in invalid assessment of performance.

The pre-test and post-test were exactly the same, so there was no variation in the test instruments. The teachers who marked the pre-tests also marked the post-tests. When the pre-tests had been marked, the Head of Department for English for English moderated the results to see that marking was consistent across all the classes. The same procedure was followed regarding the post-tests.

Selection bias:

There was no selection bias variable in the CALM program. All Year 8 classes at the school concerned had to undertake the same mastery program for the same amount of time.

Differential selection of subjects:

Usually occurs when already formed groups are used and refers to the fact that groups may be different before the study begins and this initial difference

may at least account partially for post-test differences. The classes were already formed before CALM was implemented. The school's policy is to have heterogenous class structures. All students completed the pre-test and post-test at the same time. Administering the pre-test/post-test was done specifically to measure differences in the students' basic writing abilities at the beginning and end of the research period. Any other specific differences which may have occurred during the implementation phase were not noted.

Mortality:

This heading's relates to students who exit from the research program whilst the program is still running. This does not apply to the implementation of CALM in this study.

Selection-maturation interaction:

If already formed groups are used, one group may profit, more or less, from a treatment, or have an initial advantage because of instruction, history or testing factors. The groups were already formed and the testing factors were not viewed as a threat to the program. However, the teachers who taught CALM were not all trained teachers of English. In two cases, English was very much a second teaching subject and the two teachers needed to have the terms subject and predicate explained to them before the CALM began. The two teachers also had concerns about explaining compound and complex sentences if some of the students progressed to that level of work. It would be fair to say that the two

teachers were not comfortable with the technicalities of English and would seek help when necessary.

Bearing in mind the lack of English expertise and the lack of confidence expressed by the two teachers regarding teaching English, the two classes which were taught by them may have been disadvantaged, instruction-wise, when more in-depth explanations of English terms and the modelling of more complex writing techniques and terms was required. It should be noted that during the eight weeks that CALM was implemented, the two teachers concerned sort no help from the more experienced teachers of English who were also teaching CALM.

THREATS TO EXTERNAL VALIDITY

Pre-test interaction:

A pre-test may sensitise or alert subjects to the action of the treatment. As mentioned previously, the pre-test and post-test were one of the same. Students had no further interaction with the exact questions until the post-test was administered. The fact that there was a long gap between each test may also invalidate that threat. The issue of whether completing a pre-test would affect students' attitude to new ways of presenting material was questioned by Gay (1992) who conjectured "On the other hand, taking a pre-test in algebraic algorithms would probably affect very little a groups responsiveness to a new method of teaching" (p. 307). To all intents and purposes CALM is a new

method of teaching. That being the case, the pre-test would probably have little or no negative effect on the students' responsiveness to the materials and teaching methods to be employed.

Multiple treatment interference:

This threat may occur when the subjects receive more than one treatment. Both Bloom (1968, 1979; Keller, 1968) suggest that when one way of teaching something does not have the desired result, then try other ways. That kind of multiple treatment will work in students' favour so, in such an instance, the multiple-treatment is hardly a threat.

Selection treatment interaction:

The fact that subjects are not randomly selected from a population limits the researcher's ability to generalise. The target group in the case of CALM was an entire years intake of Year 8 students who were grouped into classes heterogeneously. Therefore, the target group was an entire population as far as the target school was concerned.

Specificity of variables:

Care must be taken in terms of generalisation of results. Generalizability of results may also be affected by short-term or long-term events which occur whilst the student is taking place. The teachers who taught CALM were unaware of any short-term or long-term events that may have affected the

program. However, that is not to say there were no such events. As far as CALM's implementation goes, it is not really possible to say if this threat to external validity was relevant.

Experimenter effects:

Active bias results when the researcher's expectations affect his or her behaviour and hence outcomes. The researcher took not part in the teaching of the CALM program; therefore no bias was attributable to the actual day-to day teaching of the students. However, when informal conversations took place between the CALM's teachers, the researcher's bias may well have been evident in the recommendations which arose from such interactions which, in turn, might have affected the way the teachers taught or interacted with their students. If this was the case, then any bias that affected the outcomes of CALM was implicit rather than explicit, but it must be acknowledged that the researchers' bias could have affected CALM's outcomes.

Reactive arrangements:

In an effort to maintain a high degree of control for the sake of internal validity, a researcher may create an experimental environment that is highly artificial and hinder generalizability of findings to non-experimental settings. The classroom environment which each teacher created was not determined by the researcher. Glasser's (1984) control theory was used as the foundation for unit designing the Narrative Writing unit, and Glasser's (1975) reality therapy

was recommended to the CALM teachers as an effective behaviour management strategy. However, the teachers had free reign as to how they wanted their classrooms to operate. The fact that the researcher was not teaching the CALM program and had little to either classroom practices and student behaviour suggests there was no reactive arrangement on the part of the researcher that affected the outcome of the CALM program.

CHAPTER 5

UNLESS YOU TRY TO DO SOMETHING BEYOND WHAT YOU HAVE ALREADY MASTERED, YOU WILL NEVER GROW

This chapter contains the reflection/evaluation phase of the research methodology. During the reflection/evaluation phase, the action-group members reflect upon the weekly summary information, discussed in Chapter 4, and the information's ramifications for the CALM program. The information is then used to re-design some aspects of the CALM program. Also included in this chapter is a discussion relating to the seven goals outlined in Chapter 1. Each of the seven goals will be discussed with regard to the results pertaining to their implementation.

REFLECTION/EVALUATION PHASE

During this phase, the action group members reflected upon the weekly discussions outlined in Chapter 4, the information from which formed the basis of the reflection/evaluation phase of the research methodology.

Behaviour in the Classroom

All the teachers remarked that over the eight-week period of teaching CALM, they had experienced very few behaviour problems with the students as compared to other years. When they had been teaching Year 8s in previous

years, there had always been major concerns about some students' inappropriate behaviour(s) in the classroom.

The CALM program had some positive effects regarding students' behaviour generally. One teacher mentioned that the present group of students was 'a good group of students' who would have behaved appropriately anyway, with or without the CALM program. This was discounted by the other teachers because their combined experiences, over many years, of teaching Year 8 English had not seen such a "trouble-free" group before.

Reflections regarding appropriate behaviour

The fact students behaved appropriately in the classes was as expected. The literature regarding the use of mastery learning (Bloom, 1968, 1976; Tenenbaum, 1986; Woolfolk, 1990) contracting and self-paced learning (Boud, 1986) and control theory (Glasser, 1984), suggested students' behaviour in the classroom would be more appropriate because the needs of the students were being met in a number of ways.

Students in the CALM program were given the power to make choices about what they wanted to achieve. The students were given recognition for prior learning and could work at their own pace. The caring psychological framework embodied in control theory also recognised and acknowledged the needs of the students.

The fact that the work-booklets were written with a view to easy reading, might also have affected students' behaviour because the instructions and activities were easier to read. All of the teachers remarked they had experienced only minor problems regarding students who had difficulty understanding the work. The comment was made that most, but not all, of the really reading disadvantaged students had been taken by the SNU, which relieved the problem of time consuming explanations of tasks and/or instructions to less able students.

The use of classroom time

The use of time within lessons was also seen as a significant factor regarding positive classroom behaviour. Teachers remarked that because the booklets contained the information students needed to know and students could work at their own pace, teaching the class as a whole group became less of a focus for some teachers. Instead of using lesson time for teaching everybody, teachers found they spent more time helping individuals, talking with students and forming more positive relationships, marking and commenting on students' work.

When teaching did take place, it was rarely to the whole class and took place in small groups (clusters), or with individual students, whenever the need arose. Some teachers said this situation had made them re-think about using classroom time generally. Some students also had problems with the way classroom time was structured. All of the teachers said there were incidents when various students had commented that they [the teachers] were not teaching properly;

there should be more actual teaching, and how were they [the students] expected to learn if they [sic] were not being told what to do. There was a host of other comments that reflected uneasiness in the students about CALM and the way it was being implemented; especially during the first two weeks. However, as CALM moved into the third week of implementation and some students had made significant progress, the concerns seemed to ease and any remarks were generally more favourable.

The teachers noticed a more positive attitude to CALM as the weeks progressed because the students were succeeding in mastering the content, albeit at different levels and times. Students were saying they wished their other subjects allowed them the choice of grades and offered varied time for completion of work.

Reflections on the use of classroom time

Some concerns were expressed about CALM's by both staff and students during the first two weeks of implementation. However, as the weeks progressed, students' success rates, teachers' valuing more quality-time with students either in groups or individually, saw the concerns dissipate. Some teachers felt the way CALM used student and teacher time in the classroom a little threatening to begin with because it contested their beliefs about the use of classroom time generally, and what teachers did in the classroom. In fact, some teachers were considering changing their practices in other subject areas because

what they had experienced whilst teaching CALM was viewed as extremely valuable.

The major criticism regarding the lack of target-times for the completion of work was cause for concern. Even though the philosophy of allowing students to work at their own pace had obvious value, if the work was not being completed, students were jeopardising their chances of a successful transition into Grade Nine which required students to have at least a grading of C for each of the units of work above and beyond the Narrative Writing unit.

The marking of work

During the planning phase, it was suggested the marking of work would pose a problem because of the volume of work required for students to complete in a short space of time. A number of good ideas from the planning phase were put forward and implemented, but marking did pose a major problem. All teachers experienced a deluge of marking within the first week. Students were continuously requiring exercises to be marked during class time, and even when marking was taken home it was still not possible to keep up with the demand. Teachers found they had to mark during morning teas and lunchtimes, which was unsatisfactory because they felt it was encroaching upon their own time.

There were also concerns that marking from other subject areas was falling behind due to the extra amount of time spent on English. The only good news

the quantity of marking diminished as students progressed to more complex and more time consuming tasks. However, the first two weeks of CALM were viewed by the teachers as unacceptable with regard the volume of work which needed immediate marking.

Reflections on the marking of work

The amount of marking required for the CALM program was a major concern. Not only was the marking load impinging on the teachers personal time, but work from other subjects for which the teachers were also responsible was not being completed. Whilst the teachers saw the need for 'immediate' feedback, the reality was that meeting the need was not practical as the CALM program stood at the time of implementation.

The language of mastery

All the teachers said the students soon internalised the meanings and ramifications of mastery terminology. Many of students were already familiar with term such as knowledge, comprehension and application, but were so not so cognisant of the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Where there was a lack of understanding of any of the terms used, teachers took time to teach to either groups, or individual students, what the terms meant.

Even though the students seemed comfortable with the language of mastery, some parents were not. When the forms went home asking parents to sign if they understood what CALM was trying to do, a number of phone calls were received from parents requiring more information. On a number of occasions, meetings were arranged with parents, during and after school, to discuss the aims of CALM and how it was to be implemented. Whenever parental contact was made, teachers remarked parents were not against what the school was doing, rather they [the parents] just wanted more details regarding assessment, homework and work completion dates.

Generally, the parents who were spoken with felt CALM was addressing skills which had, for the most part, been ignored for too many years. The fact the Narrative Writing unit was set-out clearly and the criteria were so clearly defined, impressed the parents.

Reflections on the language of mastery

A deal of effort was put into helping both students and parents understand the language of mastery. Wherever possible, teachers went out of their way to spend time, both in school hours, sometimes in their own personal time to explain concepts or vocabulary specific of the CALM program. It was pleasing to note there were few major problems that were not explained to the satisfaction of those who enquired. The language of mastery was deemed to be important to all who participated in the CALM program.

Effectiveness of the thinking skills activities

All the teachers saw the thinking skill's activities as extremely useful. The students accepted them readily and showed a great deal of enthusiasm when they were introduced into the lessons. The results of the activities indicated students were beginning to think more about their English work, generally, and were remembering essential information to do with sentence and paragraph writing. The activities were viewed by the students as fun and they enjoyed the challenges the activities offered. Some students had even requested to design some activities for the class to do during the following weeks.

During the activities, teachers were able to assess group-work skills and highlight any students who were having difficulties with either cooperating, suggesting ideas or becoming involved at all. This diagnostic information was seen by teachers as valuable because they [the teachers] knew some practise would be in order for students who were not coping working with their peers.

Another aspect of the thinking skill's activities was they relieved the 'drudgery' of the day-to-day work routine which CALM seemed to promote. Teachers and students felt what they were doing, completing booklets, was boring and there needed to be other "things" to do. One teacher wrote:, *"A few students had said the work was boring, even though they knew what they were doing was helping them become more skilled."*

Reflections on the effectiveness of thinking skills

The thinking skills component of CALM was viewed by all participants as an integral and worthwhile part of the program. The teachers saw the value of the activities as helpful in learning the essentials of the lessons. The students also saw them as valuable because the drudgery of day-to-day learning was relieved. Group work skills could be assessed as the students worked together, which enabled students less inclined to cooperate to obtain some important 'workplace' skills.

Having discussed the data with the action-group, there was obviously a need for some aspects of CALM to be modified. However, before the modifications are discussed, some mention of the lack of formal feedback from students and parents regarding their (the students and parents) thoughts and opinions of the CALM program are warranted. The discussions so far have all centred around the teachers of the program. Some students comments have been included, but not enough to suggest the comments are representative of the population of students who underwent the CALM program. The fact there was no formal questioning of parents or the students via Triangulation is an error that is fully acknowledged. The following chapter deals with the ramifications of the data and suggestions for modifying and/or improving CALM.

As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a number of changes were recommended to be made to the CALM program. The recommendations

arose directly from the weekly summaries discussed in Chapter 4. Following, is an outline of the changes which will be made before the CALM program is used again.

DISCUSSIONS REGARDING MODIFICATIONS TO CALM

Design of Narrative Writing unit

The way in which the Narrative Writing booklet was designed, steered students through exercises which enabled them [the students] to understand the process of writing simple sentences and paragraphs, rather than completing exercises which required just comprehension of the processes. Even though only a few of the students mastered "A" grade work during the research period, other students, given more time, may well have mastered higher-order thinking exercises as well.

Behaviour in the classroom

There had been no major behaviour problems during the course of the nine weeks of CALM's implementation suggests CALM had a positive influence on students' behaviour(s). In years previous to CALM's introduction, teachers had experienced major problems regarding student behaviour(s). The main problems arose because of a number of reasons. Some students were not capable of doing/completing the work. There was no pre-testing of students' abilities. Rather, the teachers relied upon primary school teachers' assessments of students' abilities, which were often inaccurate or over-inflated. The six-week

school holiday, which pre-empted entry into high school, may have seen sentences and paragraphing skills eroded due to lack of practice.

That inappropriate behaviour(s) were not as evident as previous years, may be directly attributable to CALM's ability to meet the academic and psychological needs of the students. Both of which had been addressed by the implementation of Glasser's (1984) control theory. The other theoretical underpinnings upon which CALM was designed (contract teaching, Bloom's (1968, 1976) higher order thinking skills taxonomy, and learning styles) may also have served to improve the student's behaviour.

The use of classroom time

The concern over the lack of target-times for the completion of work needs to be addressed. The modified CALM English program requires modifying so specified target-times for units of work to be completed in school time, to at least a "C" grade standard, are made clear to teachers parents and students. This staggering of assessment offers positives as well as negatives.; especially regarding time spent on homework. If the C grading is not realised by the end of the target-time, then the work will be completed for homework. If students completed C grade work before the target-time to complete a unit, then the rest of the time can be used to complete the work for a higher grade. When the target-time for a unit expires and students still have not completed the work to a satisfactory level, or want to pursue a higher grade, then the unit can be worked

on at home and marked when completed at any time during the term and/or Semester. This situation will give ultimate flexibility and will not disadvantage students who are slower workers, students who do not have conducive home backgrounds or students who do not have good homework facilities.

The staggered-system will allow the slower students who need more time than was available in class to complete to at least a C grade. The more capable students will not be held back because they can complete more advanced work either during the target-time for each unit, or at home as regular tasks for homework. Those students who complete all that is required will be given extension work to complete that is directed at higher order thinking. Students who do not meet the minimum requirements will re-do each unsatisfactory unit till it is satisfactory, unless there is some concern over the ability-levels of the students. Should some doubt exist as to students' are capable of doing the work, then the Special Needs unit will be contacted

Also, with the introduction of target-times for each unit, all Year 8 students will have been introduced to the core elements of each of the four units and achieved a minimum grade or above. The assumption being that the work in Grade Nine, which is an extension of the work in the Year 8, will be easier for students to understand because of what they achieved the year before. However, it is not to be assumed that the students will still have the same level of mastery after the six week recess. Therefore, a pre-test will be instigated in order that the

basic skills are still at an acceptable level. Where students do not meet an acceptable standard on the pre-test, negotiation will take place regarding how the problem areas are to be remediated so that the Grade Nine work itself is not compromised. Such a situation will be difficult to remedy and will require a great deal of extra work; especially if students have forgotten most if not all of what they [the students] learnt the year before. However, if students know that what they learn in one year, is essential, and will be tested in the next year, then the importance of mastering and maintaining the essential skills is reinforced.

During this time, teachers will take a more active teaching role with the students who are re-working units, because the students completing extension work will be expected to work without assistance for some, if not most of the time. Students who are completing extension work will complete a contract which will set-out negotiated levels of achievement and specific levels of behaviour.

The marking of work

The intensity and volume of the marking in the first two weeks of the program is a major concern. When the students' tasks become more complex and time consuming, the pace of marking drops, but what transpired in the first two weeks is unacceptable. The suggestions mooted in the planning phase were tried with but with limited success. One solution is to take the responsibility of all the marking away from teachers and make the students responsible for

marking some of their work. Answers for some of the exercises will be drawn up so students can mark their own work. The teacher will give out an answer card to students when certain exercises have been completed. When students have answers which do not match those on the answer cards, then teacher/student negotiation will take place regarding re-teaching or completing extra work in class or at home. Students need eighty percent accuracy, or above, to continue to the next exercise or unit of work.

Some concerns remain about cheating and the time it will take to draw up the answers, but answer banks will be designed and implemented for some of the exercises. If students are caught cheating, then Glasser's (1984) reality therapy counselling procedure will be used, which is in keeping with CALM's behaviour management strategies

The language of mastery

There is very little which needs altering pertaining to the mastery terms as they appear in the booklet. However, parent/teacher nights will be organised, so questions about CALM could be dealt with in a more organised capacity. The telephone conversations and meetings before or after school with concerned parents are adequate, but an evening meeting, officially organised by the school will be a better forum for all concerned.

The use of thinking skills activities

Both students and teachers have seen value in the thinking-skills activities and there will be more of them. The fact some students have volunteered to design their own activities for the class is clear testimony to promoting more “fun” thinking. The fun aspect of the activities is also viewed as a welcome relief from the day-to-day pattern that CALM follows.

The notion thinking-skills activities relieved the “boredom” of the CALM program, points to ways of making CALM more interesting for teachers and students. One way will be to conduct a survey with the students to get ideas from them as to how CALM can be made more interesting. Obviously, the survey will have to wait until the program is underway and everybody concerned has had a chance to evaluate how the program is working. A possible date could be in Term two. By then students and teachers should be over any organisational hurdles. More thinking-skills activities will be designed which will enable teachers to be more creative in the ways the booklet information is presented, developed and reinforced. Students do not have to just read the booklet and do the work passively.

A major concern is that the teachers feel as though they are not teaching, or doing their job properly because the students are working from a booklet and the teachers are not really involved. In Glasser's (1984) terms, maybe the teachers feel they do not belong in the classroom and have been divested of the power to

teach, at least in the way(s) they had previously viewed teaching. The main perceptions are that teachers need to become more involved with, and more creative about the way CALM's information is presented. Certainly, more thinking-skills activities are warranted, but they are not to be viewed as the only agent of change.

THE SEVEN GOALS REVISITED

In Chapter 1 of this report, seven goals were considered important to the design and implementation of the CALM program. Following, is a discussion with regard to the results of the seven goals' implementation.

1. The pre-test/post-test

A pre-test was designed which gave important information as to the basic writing skills of the Year 8 students involved in the program. The fact the same test was used at the end of the research period enabled both students, parents and teachers to see just what progress had been made during the eight weeks the program was implemented.

The pre-testing proved to be a useful, self-esteem-building ploy. A group of twenty students, who believed they were not capable of achieving, were pleased and presently surprised to see what they had learnt and remembered, when the results they received at the end were compared to the pre-test results. Thirty other students who had performed well above their self-imposed ceiling of

abilities felt empowered because they had achieved the result themselves.

Whilst acknowledging CALM's structure and activities as important, the fact they had been allowed some say in how they achieved their results was the most important factor for them.

2. Remediation and/or extension

The results of the post-test, saw a 70% increase in the number of the students who improved their simple sentence writing. Paragraph writing skills improved, so approximately 40% of students graduated to writing acceptable paragraphs. The skills of verb recognition improved by approximately 70% across the Year 8 students.

The fact the teachers had the time at their disposal to bring some of the less able students to realise success was due to the extension work other, more capable students, were completing. Having negotiated the contracts and behavioural expectations with the more able students, more time was created to spend with slower students who needed more teacher input.

All the students made some progress regarding the essential elements of simple sentence and paragraph writing skills. Twenty-five of the 125 Year 8 students completed the Narrative Writing unit (not all to the A grade level), whilst the other students were all at varying stages of the unit. However, those students who worked more slowly did not holdback more able students because

twenty five of the students completed the unit. The students who were quicker at their work and/or had better basic writing skills when they arrived at the high school were not penalised by having to wait for other students to catch-up.

3. Control theory

Empowering students with the right to make their own decisions about how and what they wanted to learn, may be a contributing factor to the lack of behaviour problems during CALM's implementation. The psychologically safe classroom, where students thoughts, ideas and needs are given due care and attention is seen as a vital component of CALM's philosophy, no matter what subject-matter is being taught.

4. Thinking skills

The fact that twenty five of the students completed the Narrative Writing unit, ten of whom achieved A gradings, indicated higher-order thinking skills were being used by at least twenty five students. It may be that the students had some mastery of these skills before coming to high school. However, the CALM program includes specifically designed activities for higher-order thinking and does offer ample opportunity for students to prove their mastery of the various thinking skills required for more effective, long-term learning.

5. Self-paced learning

By the virtue of the contracting system, students were able to work at their own pace. However, as has already been discussed, the lack of timelines for the completion of work allowed some students to work rather aimlessly. Therefore the inclusion of class timelines was considered to be a necessary adjunct to CALM.

6. Contract teaching

Along with student empowerment goes student responsibility. The contracting system worked well, with the majority of students abiding by, and completing contract requirements. The contracting system also enabled students, teachers and parents to see what students achieved during the research period.

The fact students could re-negotiate the grades they wished to achieve, enabled some less-able students to complete work they thought they were not capable of completing when the program began. Consequently, some students exhibited a more positive attitude to learning as they successfully completed more of the set tasks.

7. Learning styles

The fact there is only one activity directed at a specific learning style is considered a weakness in the Narrative Writing unit of the CALM program.

This concern has already been discussed in a previous section and the weakness will be rectified. However, the learning style activity written into the Narrative Writing unit was used effectively

The seven goals had all been incorporated successfully into the CALM program. Most of the information available from the teachers suggested each of the seven goals had some value individually and that together they formed a useful and workable program that did seem to help students improve their basic writing abilities. With the discussed modifications in place, CALM will be better and more user-friendly program for both teachers and students. However, one of the only certain things in life is change; therefore, CALM will continue to evolve to keep pace with an ever-changing educational environment

WHERE TO FROM HERE ?

If teachers are to become more involved and be more creative in the CALM program, then perhaps Butler's (1994) learning styles can be utilised more effectively. In the Narrative Writing unit, only one activity directed towards a specific learning style is included (see Appendix A). If more activities are included which offer a more comprehensive cover of learning styles, then more students will become more interested and involved in the program. Teachers can also adopt different learning styles when teaching the content of the program.

Incorporating Butler's (1993a) learning styles more comprehensively into CALM will have three advantages. First, teachers will become more creative in their teaching because each learning style has its own unique strategies which teachers can build into their own repertoire of teaching skills. Second, all the students' learning styles will be catered for at some time during the program which will help them [the students] personalise the content so the information is more meaningful. Third, when teachers and students are aware of their learning styles, then assignments and other school tasks can be designed around the learning styles which suit each student best. However, Butler (1994) makes the point that students and teachers need to be exposed to all the learning styles and not just the ones [learning styles] which are seen as learning strengths in order to get a proper balance between the ways information is presented and learnt.

Other changes which will be considered for CALM will be the way in which the program is presented. One of the changes already underway is the assimilation of the Accelerated learning and Super-learning teaching philosophies and strategies (Ostrander and Schroeder, 1994; Rose and Nicholl, 1997), into CALM because, "as we progress into the 21st century, teaching strategies will need to change in order to reflect the increasing knowledge about the brain and how it learns best" (Nicholl, p. 30).

Another change envisaged is to introduce CALM into a primary school setting, rather than a high school. If the skills of basic writing can be mastered at

an earlier stage than Year 8, then students will have a better chance of developing their writing skills even further as they progress through to Grades 11 and 12. Such a situation will see students improve their grades and become more employable as a result, which are two of the reasons why CALM was envisaged.

This study has shown that given an appropriate psychological framework, the chance for students to decide what they want, as opposed to what teachers and parents want for them; the recognition for skills already acquired and a sociable, well organised environment, students can successfully master new skills and extend skills already mastered. Teachers may still use whole-class instruction, when and if required. However, when using CALM, teachers will have more time to be available to a greater proportion of students than would normally be the case.

IN CONCLUSION

The thematic concern of improving the sentence and paragraphing writing of a group of Year 8 students was achieved. The five elements of the CALM program combined successfully to construct a program that had a significant effect upon the students' abilities to master certain nominated aspects of the English curriculum. The five major elements (mastery learning, contract teaching, higher-order thinking skills, learning styles and control theory) are not unique in themselves as educational learning strategies. However, this study has

made a significant, educational contribution by combining all five of the elements to design an effective paradigm of learning, which, if applied to other areas of education could help other students learn more effectively.

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Incorporating Butler's (1993a) learning styles more comprehensively into CALM will have three advantages. First, teachers will become more creative in their teaching because each learning style has its own unique strategies which teachers can build into their own repertoire of teaching skills. Second, all the students' learning styles will be catered for at some time during the program which will help them [the students] personalise the content so the information is more meaningful. Third, when teachers and students are aware of their learning styles, then assignments and other school tasks can be designed around the learning styles which suit each student best. However, Butler (1994) makes the point that students and teachers need to be exposed to all the learning styles and not just the ones [learning styles] which are seen as learning strengths in order to get a proper balance between the ways information is presented and learnt.

Other changes which will be considered for CALM will be the way in which the program is presented. One of the changes already underway is the assimilation of the Accelerated learning and Super-learning teaching philosophies and strategies (Ostrander and Schroeder, 1994; Rose and Nicholl, 1997), into CALM because, "as we progress into the 21st century, teaching strategies will need to change in order to reflect the increasing knowledge about the brain and how it learns best" (Nicholl, p. 30).

Another change envisaged is to introduce CALM into a primary school setting, rather than a high school. If the skills of basic writing can be mastered at

an earlier stage than Year 8, then students will have a better chance of developing their writing skills even further as they progress through to Grades 11 and 12. Such a situation will see students improve their grades and become more employable as a result, which are two of the reasons why CALM was envisaged.

This study has shown that given an appropriate psychological framework, the chance for students to decide what they want, as opposed to what teachers and parents want for them; the recognition for skills already acquired and a sociable, well organised environment, students can successfully master new skills and extend skills already mastered. Teachers may still use whole-class instruction, when and if required. However, when using CALM, teachers will have more time to be available to a greater proportion of students than would normally be the case.

IN CONCLUSION

The thematic concern of improving the sentence and paragraphing writing of a group of Year 8 students was achieved. The five elements of the CALM program combined successfully to construct a program that had a significant effect upon the students' abilities to master certain nominated aspects of the English curriculum. The five major elements (mastery learning, contract teaching, higher-order thinking skills, learning styles and control theory) are not unique in themselves as educational learning strategies. However, this study has

made a significant, educational contribution by combining all five of the elements to design an effective paradigm of learning, which, if applied to other areas of education could help other students learn more effectively.

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Appendix A

UNIT 1: NARRATIVE WRITING UNIT

The CALM program which follows, contains the changes suggested in the previous section. It should be noted that the information below is not presented exactly as it appears in the booklets which were given to the students, because the process of up-dating information and exercises is a continual process. Therefore, the pictures/illustrations which are included in the booklets to make them more visually interesting do not appear in the following unit outlines.

OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
FOR NARRATIVE WRITING UNIT

ITEM	BASIC (KN - COM) 50 < 69% E < C+	ENGAGED (APP - AN) 70 < 89% B- < B+	DYNAMIC (SYN - EV) 90 < 100% A- < A+
SENTENCES (M / UNITS 1-3)	NOT ACCEPTABLE FOR MASTERY	complete units 1-3	complete units 1-3
MASTERY UNIT: (4) PARAGRAPHS (Topic Sentences)	recognise topic sentences in given paragraphs.	Recognise topic sentences in given paragraphs.	Recognise topic sentences into given paragraphs.

PARAGRAPH WRITING BOOKLET	COMPLETE PARAGRAPHING BOOKLET be able to write paragraphs of 5-6 sentences - topic sentences - relevant sentences - topic development	COMPLETE PARAGRAPHING BOOKLET be able to write paragraphs of 7-8 sentences - topic sentences - relevant sentences - topic development. be able to analyse whether given paragraphs are good/poor examples.	COMPLETE PARAGRAPH BOOKLET be able to write paragraphs of 8-10 sentences: - topic sentences relevant sentences - topic development.- be able to evaluate given paragraphs using an appropriate graphic organiser.
STORY T: (5) USES	complete given exercises.	complete given exercises.	complete given exercises.
STORY T: (6) ECT ECH	complete given exercises	complete given exercises	complete given exercises

MASTERY UNIT: (7) JOURNEY INTO SPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sequence story into correct order - write story using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - appropriate paragraphing. -appropriate topic sentences. - appropriate tense. - appropriate direct speech. - <p>If students show evidence of proper use of all the above, then go to the Snowman story. If not, reteach, then go to the 'Pie' story.</p>	achieve a B grade for all relevant items on marking sheet.	achieve an A grade for all relevant items on marking sheet.
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MASTERY	be able to organise pictures	be able to organise pictures	be able to organise pictures
UNIT: (8)	into paragraphs, using time,	into paragraphs, using time,	into paragraphs, using time,
SNOWMAN	change of place, change of	change of place, change of	change of place, change of
Teachers may use	speaker and change of	speaker and change of	speaker and change of
their discretion as	person as prompts.	person as prompts.	person as prompts.
to how much of	-		
the Snowman			
story students			
need to complete			
to show mastery.			

C*A*L*M

Contract/Ability-Level/Mastery

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

The innovative English program students will be experiencing this year, is designed to give students the best possible opportunity to do well. We would ask you to read this information, carefully, so you understand completely what will be required for successful completion of Year 8 English.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Each unit of work has specific criteria which must be passed. You will find the criteria listed at the front of each unit of work. If students believe they have the skills already, they may sit a test. If they pass the test, then they will be credited with the respective unit(s). They may then start the next unit.

CONTRACT LEARNING

Every unit, after units 1-3, allows students to select the grade they wish to achieve. The grades range from C < A+. As you might expect, the work required for an A grade is more challenging than the work required for the grade of C.

The contract system is used because it allows students to work at their own pace and at a level which will bring them success. Students wishing to go on to tertiary education should try to achieve the higher levels where possible. They will also need to complete substantial work at home:

The higher the grade required, the more work will be required to be completed at home. Students who do not require tertiary entrance, may choose the C strand. However, whatever grade students choose, hard work is necessary to achieve any of them.

HOMework

Some homework should be completed every night of the school week. Teachers will, at times, set specific homework tasks. However, students and their parents will now know what work has to be completed for each unit, depending on the achievement level selected, so there will always be work to complete at home. We stress again, that students wishing grades above C will need to complete substantial work at home.

TIMELINES FOR YEAR 8 ENGLISH:

UNIT 1 - NARRATIVE WRITING

The global outcomes of this unit are as follows. Students will be able to:

- (a) write an acceptable narrative story.
- (b) edit a collection of narrative stories gathered from all Year 8 English classes.
- (c) publish a collection of the best narrative stories written in Year 8 English.

Term 1: Sentences, paragraphing, tenses, direct speech and Snowman story - SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT.

Term 2: Diary writing, letter writing (personal and letter to the Editor):

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT.

Term 3: Newspaper writing and poetry - SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Term 4: Thematic unit: * novel and drama.

During this time, students will be re-visiting the work from Terms 1-3 and will be working towards the end of the year grade for English.

* Students whose reading abilities will not allow them to study a novel, will be given more suitable reading material, but will still be expected to undertake the same assessment tasks as other students. When the timelines have expired, students who have not completed the terms' work to the minimum C grade may start the next unit, but must continue to work on problem areas in the next unit. An example of this situation follows:

If, at the end of Term 1, some students have not mastered writing proper sentences they will be marked INCOMPLETE for Term 1: They may go on to the Diary unit, but must continue to work on proper sentences, as well as basic diary tasks, using sentences from the Diary

unit as the examples of proper sentence writing. If, at the end of the Diary unit they are still not writing proper sentences, INCOMPLETE will be given again. The problem will continue to be addressed in the Newspaper unit.

There are two reasons for using this process. The first lies in the fact that at the end of the year every students, regardless of their abilities, will have been exposed to the all the genres required of the Year 8 program, albeit at different levels: The more learning disadvantaged learners will have been exposed to each generic model even though they may not have studied them in-depth. Therefore, teachers who have the students in Year 9 will know they would have been taught the basics, if nothing else.

INCOMPLETE TASKS

Students who have INCOMPLETES for units of work, may re-visit the units in Term 4, when other students are completing the Thematic unit. Using this time for extra 'teaching-of-the-basics' may help more students achieve the bare minimum required for a satisfactory result for English at the end of year.

The second reason for this process is to protect the self-image of learning disadvantaged students. If they can see themselves moving to

other units at the same time as other, more capable students, they may not feel so left behind.

MASTERY UNIT 1

VERBS/SUBJECT

CRITERIA TO BE ACHIEVED FOR MASTERY OF THE UNIT.

SECTION A	<p><u>Student will be able to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- define the term verb correctly.- write ten verbs from memory.- write ten sentences, using each verb correctly.- recognise and underline each verb.- <u>be able to recognise verbs in given sentences</u> <p><u>80<100% of the time.</u></p>
SECTION B	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- define the term, subject of a sentence, correctly. <p><u>recognise and underline subjects in given</u></p> <p><u>sentences 80<100% of the time</u></p>
SECTION C	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- to recognise and underline subjects and verbs, in given sentences, 80<100% of the time.

Complete the following tasks, neatly, in your notebooks.

SECTION A: VERBS

1. Write down what you think a **verb** is.
2. Write down ten **verbs** you know.
3. Write a sentence for each of the ten **verbs**.
4. Underline the **verb** in each sentence.

TEACHER COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION B

1. Write down what you think is the **subject** of a sentence.
2. Underline the **subject** in the sentences you have just written.

TEACHER COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION C: VERB/SUBJECT PRACTICE

1. Copy the sentences below into your notebooks: Underline the **subject**, and circle the **verb** in each sentence. Here is an example:

The man spent his money on a present for his wife.

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) The river was flooding the land. | (e) The birthday party went well. |
| (b) Peter ran quickly down the road. | (f) His father asked him to mow the lawn. |
| (c) The house was burnt to the ground. | (g) Anne's dog bit the postman. |
| (d) The dog jumped the fence. | (h) At school, we work hard every day. |
| (i) During the bank robbery, the robber fired his gun. | |
| (j) Paula and Josh went to the school disco last night. | |

MASTERY UNIT 2

PREDICATE and ANALYSIS OF SENTENCES.

REVISION OF UNIT 1

**This revision work must be completed before you start Unit
Complete the following tasks neatly in your notebooks**

- (1) Explain what is meant by the term subject of a sentence
- (2) Copy the following sentences, neatly, into your notebooks: underline the subject and circle the verb(s) in each of the sentences:

- (a) My father gave me ten dollars. (f) The sun rises in the east every morning.
- (b) The sun was shining brightly. (g) At the end of the afternoon, we can go home.
- (c) As it turned the corner, the car rolled over. (h) The holidays are almost here.
- (d) I really want to go home. (i) **own sentence.**
- (e) After it had bitten the man, the dog ran away. (j) **own sentence.**

PREDICATE and ANALYSIS OF SENTENCES CRITERIA FOR MASTERY OF UNIT.

SECTION A	<u>The student will be able to:</u> - explain the meaning of the term predicate of a sentence. - recognise the predicate of given sentences 80<100% of the time.
SECTION B	- use a table to analyse any given sentences correctly into subject, verb and predicate, 80<100% of the time.

SECTION A: PREDICATE

1. Explain the meaning of the word **predicate** of a sentence.
 2. Copy the following sentences, neatly, into your notebooks, and place a dotted line under the **predicate**.
- (a) The cake was too hot to handle. (b) My father went to buy food.
- (c) The boy was sorry for hitting his friend. (d) Tomorrow is Sunday.
- (e) My mother told me to go straight home after school. (f) Motorbikes travel at great speed.
- (g) Coalminers spend a lot of time underground. (h) The bushfire burned quickly.
- (i) In Australia, the summers are hot. (j) **own sentence.**

TEACHER COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

SECTION B

PREDICATE/SUBJECT/VERB: ANALYSIS

1. Draw a table, like the one below, neatly, into your notebook. When you have drawn the table, rewrite all the sentences from the list above into the table. An example has been completed for you.

SUBJECT	VERB	PREDICATE
The cake	was	was hot to handle

2. Say whether these word groups are sentences or not. **If you say some are not sentences, then you must give your reason(s) for saying WHY they are not sentences.**

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. A book about cats. | 2. Under the tree |
| 3. I have a book about cats. | 4. In the rain |
| 5. The house in the rain. | 6. Under the tree in the rain |
| 7. By the door. | 8. We ran home. |
| 9. Helping him run. | 10. On the 2nd January |
| 11. We rushed. | 12. eating his toast for breakfast |

3. When you have completed Exercise 2, you must then complete each word group, which is not a sentence, by adding what is necessary to make each one into a proper sentence.

THEME LESSON

LEARNING STYLE CONSIDERED

SEVEN INTELLIGENCES CONSIDERED

In order for information to be learnt effectively, the information has to be processed in different ways, transferred to other situations and continually reviewed. control theory, learning styles, modalities and intelligences may play a vital role in the way students learn and process information.

If all of the above affect the way students learn and remember, then they each need to be addressed regularly. Presenting a Theme Lesson each week, during which the content of the units is reinforced in group situations, may go some way to facilitating more effective, long term learning. If the lesson were viewed by the students as fun, then a vital student need would also be addressed.

Following is an example of a theme lesson which may be used. The theme lesson concentrates on verb, subject and predicate

reinforcement and uses a cooperative learning technique as well as one of Butler's (1994) learning style and one of the seven intelligences.

THEME LESSON

VERB/SUBJECT/PREDICATE.

This lesson may be used to:

- (a) reinforce the content contained in Mastery Units 1, 2 and 3.
- (b) begin formative assessment of group work.

TASK

In groups of six, write six sentences which have verbs, subjects and predicates, and then present to the class.

PROCEDURE FOR CO-OPERATIVE STRATEGY

CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUE: DOVE

LEARNING STYLE: ABSTRACT RANDOM

INTELLIGENCE: BODILY/PHYSICAL

1. Write six proper sentences on the piece of paper supplied.
2. Each sentence may have only six words.
2. Members of group check for accuracy of sentences.
3. Write each word of each sentence on a separate piece of card.
4. Each sentence will be presented to the class, with each member of the group holding up one word of the sentence.
5. In each sentence, the verb, subject and predicate must be highlighted.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. Observation Checklist: monitor how well students co-operate, listen to each other, take responsibility for roles.
2. Lateral Thinking: How would the world be different if sentences had not been invented?

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. Learning log:

- (a) What were the key ideas to be learnt from the unit ?
- (b) How can I link these ideas to what I already know?
- (c) Things I do not understand!

2. Metacognitive reflection:

- (a) In this activity, what were you expected to do?
- (b) What did you do well?
- (c) If you had to do this task again, what would you have done differently?
- (d) Is there anything you do not understand, or still need to work on?

IF YES:

What are you prepared to do about the situation?

UNIT 3

TOPIC SENTENCES

Complete the following revision tasks in your log.

- (1) Without looking back at Units 1 and 2, write down all you can remember about verbs, subjects and predicates.
- (2) Now check the accuracy of your memory by looking back at Units 1 and 2, and see how well you remembered. Make a note of any information you did not remember. Be sure to study that information **again**.
- (3) Why do you think it is important to be able to write, and recognise, proper sentences?
- (4) What would the world be like without sentences?

SECTION A: TOPIC SENTENCES

1. What is a topic sentence?
2. Where would a topic sentence be found?
3. Read the paragraphs below. The sentences are not in the correct order.

You must find the topic sentence for each paragraph and then write it into the appropriate box. You will also need to give a reason for choosing each topic sentence. You must then rewrite the paragraph putting all the sentences in the correct order.

JUMBLED PARAGRAPHS

PARAGRAPH A

We struggled to the water hole. I was really thirsty. It had been a long, hot journey. John's camel had died. Some of us were very sunburnt. So the other had to carry its gear. The sun was at its most powerful. We were glad to see the city in sight.

BOX A

The topic sentence for this paragraph is:

The reason I have chosen this sentence is because

PARAGRAPH B

All the presents were under the tree. It was a wonderful Christmas Day. Christmas dinner was really nice. There was lots of noise. We all got up at six in the morning. We played lots of games. It was a lovely day.

BOX B

The topic sentence for this paragraph is

The reason I have chosen this sentence is because

We wanted to go home. Bats and spiders were everywhere. As we entered the house we felt scared. The doors creaked loudly when they were opened. Strange noises could be heard down the hall. The place smelt horrible.

BOX C

The topic sentence for this paragraph is

I have chosen this sentence because

TEACHER COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Appendix B

Questions asked of five general teachers (one from each Department in the school) and the English Head of Department, relating to the basic writing skills of Grade Eight students.

1. Why do you think Grade Eight students have poor basic writing skills when they arrive at high school?
2. Do you have the time to teach basic writing skills to Grade Eight students in your classes?
3. Whose responsibility is it to teach basic writing skills to Grade students attending high school?

Questions asked of the English Head of Department.

1. How long have you been aware of the problem relating to the poor basic writing skills of Grade Eight students?
2. How concerned are you that the results of last year's Q.C.S Creative Writing Task placed this school's students below the State average for writing?
3. In the past, what action had been taken to help Grade Eight students who came to the school with poor basic writings skills abilities?
4. Is anything being done now to help Grade Eight Students who have poor basic writing skills abilities?
5. Did Grade Eight students who had poor basic skills, still have to follow the same programs as students who did not have problems with the basic skills of writing?
6. Why had not a program been designed and implemented to help Grade Eight students with basic writing skills weaknesses?

Appendix C

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read the following question carefully. When you have read the question, please answer as honestly and fully as you like. The more information you can give the school about how we can make lessons more **interesting, relevant** and **fun** will help us a great deal. We will share the information that is collected with you as soon as possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

Question: How can we make the teaching of basic writing skills (verbs simple sentences and paragraphing) more **interesting, relevant** and **fun** for you and the rest of Year 8?

CALM: MASTERY PLACEMENT TEST

NAME: **CLASS:**

DATE: / / '9

RESULTS

	<i>Sentences</i>	<i>S/V/P/</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Direct Speech</i>	<i>letter</i>
<i>Result</i>					<i>N/A</i>
<i>%</i>					<i>N/A</i>

PART A: SENTENCES

Write four (4) important things you know about writing a sentence.

- (1).
- (2).
- (3).
- (4).

Read the following sentences. Decide which of the sentences are proper sentences (Y) and which are not proper sentences. (N). For all of the sentences you must right your reason(s) for deciding (Y) or (N). A practice sentence is completed for you.

The boy down the road quickly. (Y) or (N). The sentence does not have a verb in it.

- (1) *The car stopped with a bang. (Y) or (N)*
-
- (2) *I hurt my leg. (Y) or (N)*

.....
(3). *On Saturday. (Y) or (N)*

.....
(4). *Because she was mad. (Y) or (N)*

.....
(5). *Six grey elephants the creek bank. (Y) or (N)*

.....
(6). *Did you like my singing? (Y) or (N)*

.....
(7). *Around the bend floated the ship. (Y) or (N)*

.....
(8). *The bird sat in the tree. (Y) or (N)*

.....
(9). *sat on the ground. (Y) or (N)*

.....
(10). *After the fireworks. we went home. (Y) or (N)*

.....
(11). *She cried. (Y) or(N)*

.....
(12). *The horse. (Y) or (N)*

PART B

SUBJECT OF A SENTENCE

Do you know what subject of a sentence means? (Yes) or (No). If you answered (Yes), then please write what you think subject of a sentence means.

Circle the subjects in each of the following sentences

- (1). Five lemons hung on the tree.
- (2). To get the prize, Michael and Scott had to work correctly.
- (3). Jill sat beside her mother.
- (4). I want to go now!
- (5). Kate went to the library before she went home.

PART C

VERBS

Do you know what a verb is? (Yes) or (No). If you answered (Yes), then please write what you think a verb is:

Underline the verb(s) in the each of the following sentences

- (1). The bird flew from its nest
- (2). It was Saturday, so everybody slept in.
- (3). Tom sat in the hot sun as he waited for his father to arrive.
- (4). The apple hit the ground with a splat!
- (5). It is three weeks till my birthday.

PART D

PREDICATE

Do you know what the predicate of a sentence means? (Yes) or (No). If you answered Yes), then please write what you think predicate of a sentence means.

Underline the predicate in each of the following sentences

- (1). *The ship sailed into the sunset.*
- (2). *Three cows and a horse escaped from Mr Williams' farm.*
- (3). *At six-o-clock dinner will be ready.*
- (4). *John fell off the roof.*
- (5). *Susan gave her best friend a brooch for her birthday.*

Circle the subject, underline the verb(s) and put a dotted line under the predicate of these sentences.

- (1). *Wendy bought a new dress at the K Mart sale.*
- (2). *We found some money in the main oval.*
- (3). *Two Magpies sang after the rain had stopped.*
- (4). *After the footie match, we went home.*
- (5). *Sue was two centimetres taller than her big sister.*

HOW DO YOU THINK ARE DOING ?

KEEP WORKING HARD !

PARAGRAPHING

PART A

Please answer the following 3 questions as best you can

(1) Can you explain what a paragraph is? (Yes) or (No). If you answered (Yes), then please write what you think a paragraph is:

(2). Can you explain what a topic sentence is? (Yes).or (No). If you answered (Yes), then please write what you think a topic sentence is:

(3). Do you know where a topic sentence is placed in a paragraph? (Yes) or (No). If you answered (Yes), then please write where you think a topic sentence is placed in a paragraph.

PART B

Divide the following paragraph into sentences by using punctuation marks.

The storm clouds were black and it was getting dark a few spots of rain started to fall we decided to go home nobody wanted to get stuck in the storm

PART C

Choose one of the following beginning-sentences and write a paragraph. Try to write at least five (5) other sentences.

(1). I was really looking forward to the holidays.

(2). The body lay motionless on the road.

(3). The children were very excited as they waited for the bus.

4. Make up your own beginning sentence.

SECTION D

Re-write the passage below into separate paragraphs.

The road went on and on. Part of the bitumen was crumbling, so we had to drive on dirt. Every few metres signs told us to drive carefully. Rocks and other rubbish littered the road. Finally, we reached the cabin. It was surrounded by trees and there was a lake nearby. We quickly forgot the difficult drive. This was a beautiful spot for a holiday. I was first out of the car. I wanted to go exploring, but mum told me to wait. I had to help unpack first. When we had finished unpacking, I went to get changed. Mum said I could only explore for an hour, then dinner would be ready.

DIRECT SPEECH

PART A

Write out the following passage using speech marks and other punctuation marks where necessary.

Way to go yelled mum from the sideline keep running dad called look out for the tackle. Then I felt a thud. The next thing I knew I was in hospital. Hes coming round said the doctor. The nurse replied thats good I'll tell his parents. Where am I asked the doctor. Youre in hospital he said. Do you remember anything about what happened to you no I replied

PART B

Write a brief conversation between 2 or 3 people using speech marks and other punctuation marks. Write at least 6-8 lines.

NEVILLE NONSENSE AND THE SENTENCING.

CHARACTERS

NEVILLE NONSENSE - a criminal, who is believed to deliberately ruin the English language.

CECIL (CEASE ALL) CORRECTION - Neville's defence lawyer.

JUDGE FORY'SSELF - the judge presiding over the court case.

S. A. EXACTLY - the lawyer for the prosecution.

THE JURY - the members of the class. They must decide, given the evidence, if Neville is guilty beyond reasonable doubt.

THE JURY FOREPERSON - one member of the class to act as spokesperson for the jury.

SCENE.

A courtroom setting with the judge at the front of the room, behind a large desk. The judge is wearing glasses and a red cloak. He also has a gavel and a writing pad on which to make notes.

To the front and left of the judge sits the prosecutor. To the right and in front of the judge sits the defence. Both lawyers have their own desks, upon which are numerous pieces of paper and folders. When seated, they are side on to the jury.

The accused sits at a small desk to the left of the judge. The jury sits in the body of the classroom and can see all the characters.

JUDGE FORY'SSELF: Is the counsel for the defence, Mr Cease All Correction, present in court?

CECIL CORRECTION: I am, your Honour.

JUDGE FORY'SSELF: Is the lawyer for the prosecution, Mr S A Exactly also present?

S. A. EXACTLY: I am, your Honour.

JUDGE FORY'SSELF: Then we may proceed with the case.
The accused will stand.
Mr Neville Nonsense, you are charged that not just once, but on at least 6, and perhaps as many as 10 occasions, you did wilfully and maliciously destroy the English language.
How do you plead?

NEVILLE NONSENSE: Not guilty, your Lordship. [He grins.]

JUDGE FORY'SELF: Mr Correction, do you have anything to add before we proceed to discuss the subject?

CECIL CORRECTION: Nothing, your Honour, except to say that my client is innocent of all charges and this will be proven, beyond all reasonable doubt. [He looks pointedly at the prosecutor, then turns to smile at the jury.]

JUDGE FORY'SELF: Members of the jury, it is for you to decide the guilt or innocence of Mr Neville Nonsense, the accused. You must listen to the case, as it is put by the counsels for the prosecution and the defence. Based on the evidence presented, you must make your decision. Be aware that you must be utterly convinced, BEYOND ALL REASONABLE DOUBT, before you can decide his guilt or innocence. It will be for me to pass sentence.
Mr S A Exactly, you may proceed with your cross-examination of the accused.

S. A. EXACTLY: Mr Nonsense, where were you on the night in question? Mark my words, now, the night of February 29, 1996?

NEVILLE NONSENSE: Down the pub, with me mates.

S. A. EXACTLY: That would be "The Mastery Arms" Hotel, would it not?

NEVILLE NONSENSE: Yeah, what of it? I ain't done nothin', I was jus' drinkin' and talkin' with me mates, ain't no law against that, is there?

S. A. EXACTLY: We shall see. I submit Sentence Number 1, in evidence. Did you or did you not, at one stage during the night, say:
"Got it off the back of a truck. Was as easy as pie." Did you not also say, just a moment ago, "Down the pub, with me mates."?

NEVILLE NONSENSE: I mighta. So what?

S. A. EXACTLY: Were they, or were they not, sentences, Mr Nonsense? [Pointing at Neville.]

NEVILLE NONSENSE: [Unhappily] I dunno.

S.A. EXACTLY: I put it to you that they weren't sentences, at all!

CECIL CORRECTION: The prosecution seems unaware of the fact that not ALL sentences MUST have a subject, for them to make sense. It all depends on the context and what is understood by those listening.

A subject can be "understood"; as in, "Go! Get out of here!" The subject is not stated, but it is understood, by the listener to mean "You go! You get out of here!" The listener knows who is involved.

[Neville looks smug.]

S. A. EXACTLY: I agree with the defence, that in the case of a COMMAND, a subject is unnecessary, but Mr Nonsense was not giving a command!

[Neville looks at his defence counsel. He is somewhat confused! The defence counsel shrugs.]

S. A. EXACTLY: I submit Sentence 2, as evidence. Mr Nonsense, you were overheard saying:
"Sam, in the lane, and Ronny, down by the gate." Again, I submit, that you failed to use complete sentences! This was a deliberate misuse of the English language! You are a criminal of the worst kind!

CECIL CORRECTION: Your Honour, the prosecution is browbeating my client into submission! He is VERBALLING Mr Nonsense!

JUDGE FORY'SELF: Mr Correction, cease all exclamations at once! I have no desire to correct you on that mark again.

CECIL CORRECTION: Yes, my lord.

S. A. EXACTLY: Mr Nonsense, I submit that in Sentence 2, you failed to add the most important part needed for a proper sentence. You deliberately failed to use the English language correctly. Now, if the jury would care to examine Sentence No. 3, while I read it out?
"Well, the other day, I was out fishing with me mates and we caught this whopper of a fish big as the boat it was fair dinkum and it took all four of us to land it but we did and then we had to take it to shore and gut it and fillet it and then divvy it up jeez it was huge."
Did you say this, Mr Nonsense?

NEVILLE NONSENSE: What if I did? It was a true story.

S. A. EXACTLY: Were you aware of the length of that so-called "sentence", Mr Nonsense? Are you aware of the crimes you committed against correct sentence construction, in just one breath?

And what of your comment earlier today?
"I ain't done nothin', I was jus' drinkin' and talkin' with me mates, there ain't no law against that, is there?"

NEVILLE NONSENSE [Spluttering]: What are you on about? I was telling the truth! You can't have me for lyin'!

[Looking at his defence counsel] Here, you say something!

CECIL CORRECTION:[Sarcastically] Perhaps, if the prosecution would be so kind as to lay SPECIFIC charges? Would the prosecution care to tell the court of what, EXACTLY, my client is accused?

S. A. EXACTLY:[Calmly] Your Honour, I am certain the jury has no difficulty at all in understanding the prosecution's point.

[Smiling at the jury] Do you, ladies and gentlemen? Now, if it please the court, I will submit the final item of evidence against Mr Nonsense, Sentences 4 & 5. On this occasion, the accused was heard to say, "Well, mates, I've gotta go. It's the big day tomorrow and I'll need to have me wits about me." A further example of improper sentence construction!

NEVILLE NONSENSE [Whining]: Oh, what's wrong with that?

CECIL CORRECTION [Indignant]: Your Honour, this is a trumped up charge! It is clear to see that the prosecution is struggling to present any real case, at all!

S. A. EXACTLY: Your Honour, Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury, it is clear to see that the accused, Mr Neville Nonsense, is guilty as charged. He has committed more than one CAPITAL offence against correct sentencing. His misuse of the English language could be the SUBJECT of prolonged and heated debate. As for VERBALLING, you know, in your minds, who was in the wrong there! I ask you, will you not bring Mr Nonsense's criminal activities to a FULL STOP? The matter rests in your capable hands.

JUDGE FORY'SSELF: The jury will now retire in order to reach its verdict. May I remind you to examine each piece of evidence carefully before you reach your decision. You must be certain, beyond all reasonable doubt, and your decision must be unanimous. Remember, you must reach a separate verdict for each sentence and one overall, on the count of malicious and wilful damage. The sentencing is a matter for me to decide.

[The jury retires. After reaching its verdict, the jury foreperson stands.]

JUDGE FORY'SELF: Members of the Jury, have you reached your verdicts?

JURY FOREPERSON: We have, Your Honour.

JUDGE FORY'SELF: Are your decisions unanimous ones?

JURY FOREPERSON: They are, Your Honour.

JUDGE FORY'SELF: Then, would you please state your verdicts, as I read the charges. Bear in mind, you will need to explain your reasons.

For wilful and malicious damage to the English language in:
Sentence Number 1, how do you find the defendant?

JURY FOREPERSON: We, the members of the jury, find the defendant

innocent of the charge because.....

guilty as charged because.....
[Explanations must be given.]

JUDGE FORY'SELF: For Sentence Number 2, what is your verdict?

JURY FOREPERSON: We find the defendant

innocent of the charge because....

guilty as charged because...[Explain]

JUDGE FORY'SELF: And in the matter of Sentence 3 ?

JURY FOREPERSON: We find the defendant, Mr Neville Nonsense...

innocent of the charge because....

guilty because.....[Explain]

JUDGE FORY'SELF: How do you find the defendant in the matter of Sentences 4 and 5?

JURY FOREPERSON: We find Mr Nonsense.....

innocent because.....

guilty because..... [Explain]

JUDGE FORY'SELF: And on the overall charge of wilful and malicious damage to the English language?

JURY FOREPERSON: We find the defendant, Mr Neville Nonsense,
guilty as charged because.....

innocent of all charges because.....[Explain]

JUDGE FORY'SELF: I thank the members of the jury for their
careful consideration of each charge and the
verdicts they have reached.

Based on these verdicts, I recommend that the
defendant, Mr Neville Nonsense, be.....

free to go and no conviction will be recorded
against him.

found guilty and that in a place, removed
from this court, he will be incarcerated and
sentenced to a MINIMUM of 350 words hard
labour, at a time and date yet to be decided.

This court will now be adjourned.

NOTES.

It is advisable that this play be performed, at first, by
"experts", so that students can "get a feel" for it.

As the jury, you may like to divide the class into "jury
sized" groups of 12, or, alternatively, smaller groups of 6.
Either way, each group will need a spokesperson, who can put
their case clearly and explain their reasons sensibly. The
whole aim of the play is to be able to analyse sentences in a
fun way.

The sentences used as evidence will need to be written on card
and given to jury members for them to view.

When the play has been performed once, the students may wish
to stage their own performance(s). Alternatively, the
students may wish to write their own play on another Mastery
topic, such as paragraphs, punctuation or direct speech. They
could then perform that.

