

## Chapter 5

# *Towards a pedagogical grammar*

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... no literacy education program is worthy of that name if it ignores the richest and most effective resource which resides in the lexicogrammar. (Hasan and Williams 1996: xvi)

### 1 Introduction

The systemic functional model of language has had an enormous impact on educational contexts in Australia. From its origins in the work of the 'Sydney school' (Painter and Martin 1986, Reid 1987, Cope and Kalantzis 1993), the influence of this model has spread to the point where the curricula of all the states of Australia draw on the theory in some major way. We could also say that despite its controversial beginnings, genre-based pedagogy is now a widely accepted part of many teachers' practice, as reflected in curriculum documents and in the kinds of resources produced for teachers. It has been embraced so readily because teachers were convinced by the argument that they needed to teach a much broader range of texts than narrative and personal responses. They have also found invaluable another of its central ideas, making explicit the generic structure of key curriculum texts.

In South Australia, as in other states of Australia, a genre-based pedagogy had a major impact. Helped along by conferences organized around this theme, significant professional development, and the increasing availability of resources such as *Exploring How Texts Work* (Derewianka 1990), teachers began to take on a 'genre approach'. Typically, this meant incorporating a range of factual genres (Martin 1985) in the curriculum and making explicit to students both the purpose and the schematic structure of different genres. Not only were these genres given more prominence but teachers also began to think about when students should be introduced to them. This new discourse around text was a revolution in itself.

Despite this major shift, it cannot be said that another fundamental element of a genre-based approach, the teaching of grammar as part of an explicit pedagogy around language, has been taken up anywhere near the same extent. So while teachers welcomed this new approach to teaching about text, a key piece of the pedagogy went missing. The idea that there was a systematic connection between genres and their lexicogrammar and that these patterns could be taught was ignored by most teachers. Instead, what took its place was a somewhat superficial teaching around 'language features' that was neither systematic nor functional even though functional annotations in a range of resources were available to teachers. This is not through any lack of intent by those who developed the theory. They clearly intended a focus on the grammar as part of any literacy pedagogy (Martin 1999). However, the educational and political climate of the nineties in Australia made it difficult for teachers to be positively disposed to taking on functional grammar.

This is where the South Australian experience might be useful to those interested in an explicit pedagogy that sees grammar as central to that pedagogy. Unlike many other parts of Australia, a significant number of South Australian teachers are engaging with functional grammar in a meaningful way. Considerable interest and expertise in this area has been built up over the last decade and this is reflected in the fact that over 2000 teachers have done a 27-hour course focussing on the classroom applications of functional grammar, that numerous South Australian teachers have presented at state, national and international forums on how they teach functional grammar, and that a major document for reporting and assessing ESL students is now used by both the state and Catholic sectors. It is also reflected in the widespread and continuing demand for and provision of professional development in literacy that is based in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

While this chapter focuses on the South Australian context, we address general issues around a linguistically-based explicit pedagogy. We are not concerned here with developing arguments about the value of functional versus traditional grammar, or how useful it is that children and teachers develop a shared metalanguage: this is taken as a given. The focus, instead, is on

the means through which teachers might learn to use functional grammar as a professional resource, not only in teaching students about language as part of a literacy curriculum but also for a wide range of other educational purposes, including the assessment of children's language development. (Hasan and Williams 1996: xix)

We begin by describing the development of Language and Literacy: Classroom Applications of Functional Grammar<sup>1</sup> (Dare and Polias 2004), which has been crucial to building teachers' understanding of the model and metalanguage. This is followed by descriptions of how some of these teachers have recontextualized functional grammar in their classrooms. These include teachers working with students just beginning their schooling to those in the middle years. All this points to the rich potential of the educational applications of SFL and gives some sense of what we can teach, where we can teach it, how far we can go, and some possible directions for future research. Finally, we focus on a reporting and assessment tool that is underpinned by SFL and that has been widely accepted by teachers despite its having a certain degree of technicality.

## **2 Adding to the genre-based pedagogy: Language and Literacy**

In our view, there appear to be three major reasons for teachers across Australia initially resisting functional grammar, apart from the political ones as mentioned. One lies in the fact that most teachers had limited knowledge of any grammatics let alone functional grammar. Older teachers often had understandings of more traditional descriptions and younger teachers had little or no access to any grammatical descriptions at all. The 'effacement of language knowledge' in Australian education (Rothery 1996: 86) had left its legacy. Another reason can be located in the lack of a pedagogical grammar around functional grammar (Derewianka 2001: 241). Such a complex and elaborate theory would demand considerable recontextualization if it were to be meaningful and accessible to teachers. A third reason relates to the adequacy of the professional development provided. The negative experiences of New South Wales teachers, where only eight hours of professional development were provided to each teacher, showed that a more comprehensive approach was required.

What we did not want in South Australia was a pedagogical grammar that was 'a mere caricature' (Derewianka 2001: 242) of functional grammar theory. For us, the main question was: Could a functional model of language with its elaborate and complex theory of language be mediated in such a way that teachers would understand it well enough to apply it meaningfully in their classrooms. A closely related question was: What kind of professional development would give teachers time to understand the theory and help them to apply it in their classrooms?

In order to begin addressing these two key issues, we set up intensive week-long courses tutored by people whom we felt could do the 'pedagogic grammar' well. We invited a number of interstate colleagues, Robert Veel, Rick Iedema, Suzanne Eggins and Louise Droga, to present the courses, which filled quickly despite being held during school holidays. These more theoretical courses were then supplemented by workshops run by Geoff Williams and Ruth French, who provided teachers with insights from their own pioneering research in teaching functional grammar to children (e.g. Williams 1998, 2005). Through these early professional development programs, many teachers were inspired to begin their own explorations in teaching functional grammar and to document these (Athanasopoulos and Sandford 1997, Hamilton 1998). While the English as a Second Language (ESL) programs we were part of provided some funding for these activities, we were, to some extent, working at the margins.

To make serious inroads into changing literacy pedagogy in South Australia, we felt we needed to come up with an approach that would allow us to build on the work described above. It would be an approach that would do a number of things. First, it would give teachers the chance to understand all the salient features, including the metalanguage, of the functional model. Second, it would be an approach firmly grounded in practice so teachers could see how this metalanguage could be taken up in the classroom. Third, it would use a model of professional development that would give teachers both the time and the means to learn and then apply what they had learned in the course.

Using a successful model of professional development, one which is delivered in modules over nine weeks and which provides the opportunity to further develop understandings through between-module readings and between-module activities, Language and Literacy was developed. The nine modules of the course work systematically through the various strata: genre, register and language. Taking each metafunction in turn, various elements of the lexicogrammar are explored. As these elements are covered,

the question of application remains a central concern. Large numbers of teachers in Australia and the rest of the world have now completed the course. The evaluations have been consistently excellent, indicating that teachers find it a valuable professional development program that significantly enhances their understanding of functional grammar, their ability to apply it in the classroom and underlines for them the relevance of a metalinguistic understanding in learning.

As the word spread, increasing numbers of teachers enrolled in the course and many of these teachers later took up key literacy positions. In addition, teacher research projects funded by Language Australia and the Spencer Foundation allowed us to mentor teachers in exploring and reflecting on their practice. It was through these research projects that we began to expand on how the teaching of grammar could be contextualized within an explicit pedagogy. State and national conferences allowed other teachers to learn from and draw on the experiences of these teacher researchers and others (Ashton 1999, Pryor 1999, Williams 1999). Their work dispelled a number of the usual grammar myths being promulgated, such as: it cannot be taught and it has no value even if it is, it cannot be taught to young children, and it is boring and dry. These arguments seemed to evaporate as people took on the ideas, tried them out and saw the effectiveness in so many different spheres.

The teachers whose work we describe in the next sections have been chosen in order to illustrate teachers and students working with different areas of the grammar and contexts that include a range of students, in terms of age, social location and whether they are learning through a second language. Another common feature is that the grammar is not taught in isolation but as part of a wider framework of teaching and learning about language. We have tried to capture some of that holistic flavour of the teaching-learning cycles in these classrooms. We believe these examples underscore the value of an explicit pedagogy in which teachers and student build a shared metalanguage as an integral part of learning about language.

### 3 Explaining how milk gets from the cow to the consumer

In this first example, two teachers in a school located in a low socio-economic area of Adelaide, South Australia, introduced their 7-year-old students to a number of aspects of the grammar as part of a unit of work on milk production. The main aim of the unit was to teach students how to write a sequential explanation. Within this, the classroom teacher, Louise Ferris, and ESL co-teacher, Donna Riethmuller, wanted to introduce the students to some of the key grammatical features of this genre. A feature of this class was not only the age of the students but the high proportion of ESL learners in the class, over 70% in fact. There has been scepticism about the value of explicitly teaching any grammar to children of this age, particularly ESL children but the outcomes of this work surprised many people, not the least Donna and Louise.

In the early part of the teaching-learning cycle (about 10 weeks in all), the teachers ensured that the children built the field knowledge needed to write their sequential explanations as 'experts', a term which was used frequently to remind the students of the tenor of the text they would eventually be writing. A range of activities were undertaken, such as watching videos, visiting relevant websites, and cutting out pictures of dairy products and discussing the kinds of products they were made from. They read a big book on how cows produce milk and deconstructed an explanation of milk production. They sequenced photos from a milk factory that they visited later in the unit when the teachers felt they had built up a level of technical understandings to really understand what was happening at the milk factory. They also used flow charts, which they added to as they built up their technical language, such as suction cups, refrigerated delivery trucks, homogenised, pasteurised. Earlier work done on other genres proved very helpful in helping students understand the purpose and schematic structure of sequential explanations.

Within that rich context of exploration and slow building of field knowledge, and using a set sentences, such as in Figure 1, Donna and Louise developed the children's abilities to identify and name the functional groupings of participant, process and circumstance.

The trucks	take	the milk	to the factory
Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance

Figure 1: An example of a sentence used by the class to analyze for process, participant and circumstance

To identify these elements, the class used prompt questions, starting with the process—What action is going on here?—then participants—Who or what is taking the milk to the factory? The trucks take what to the factory?—and finally the circumstances—Where does the truck take the milk? These and other key questions were revisited on many occasions in order to consolidate the children’s understanding, so that, in time, they identified the groupings independently. Colour coding of these three functional groupings—red for participants, green for processes and blue for circumstances—was introduced as an additional way of drawing students’ attention to these categories.

Once students had a solid understanding of these categories, they engaged in a number of activities to explore the mobility of each of these groupings. Figure 2 was used as the basis for looking at what Donna and Louise identified at this point ‘varying sentence beginnings’.

The dairy farmer	milks	the cows	early in the morning
Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance

Figure 2: A sentence used with children to explore the possibility of moving functional groups within the clause

After jointly analyzing for participants, processes and circumstances, the students wrote each grouping on coloured card; participants on red, processes on green and circumstances on blue. In small groups, they used the cards to arrive at different versions and then, as a class, wrote these versions on the board. This and similar activities served to highlight not only the mobility of circumstances but to introduce the students to the notion of theme (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). Donna and Louise decided eventually that it was easier to use the technical term rather than ‘what comes at the beginning of the sentence.’

The class moved on to looking at the use of active and passive voice, which Donna and Louise knew had an important role in establishing the flow of information in a sequential explanation. Beginning with, The farmer milks the cow, the students did a similar exercise to that above, using prepared cards and, of course, realized, to their great amusement, that the version, The cow milks the farmer, is not possible. The students were then asked to turn over the green process card, milks, to reveal is milked by. Flipping the red participant card with the farmer on one side, the students saw that it changed to by the farmer. They discussed how the process ‘got bigger’ and also the role of ‘helping words’ when changing sentences around like this. Donna and Louise then showed how the ‘doer’ of the action, the farmer, could be removed and you could still have a sentence. As a further step, the notions of ‘doer’ and ‘done to’ were introduced in order to consolidate the children’s understanding of active and passive voice.

With an understanding of active and passive voice, the class was able to explore thematic choice in sequential explanations: the way the theme often takes up some element of the previous rheme. Figure 3 was used as a means of exploring the ‘zig-zag pattern’ so common in sequential explanations.

Theme	Rheme
The milk	flows to the refrigerated tankers.
The refrigerated tanker	delivers the raw milk to the factory.
At the factory	the milk is pasteurized in the pasteurization plant.
In the pasteurization plant,	the milk is heated to kill off germs.

Figure 3: A text extract used to teach theme-rheme patterns in sequential explanations

So quickly and easily were the children developing some control of these grammatical concepts that, towards the end of the unit, the class was shown how to use included clauses (typically, relative clauses that interrupt a clause) to elaborate a technical term. For example, the children were given sentences, such as Raw milk is pumped to the tankers, on card and then shown how to insert a relative clause, such as which is milk straight from the cow, immediately after the technical term, Raw milk. They did this by cutting up the card with the original sentence and inserting the included clause, which was written on another coloured card strip.

Figure 4 reveals the very significant gains made over the ten week period by two students. The first is from one of the weaker writers in the class. Before this unit of work, he was only able to make limited, commonsense meanings about milk production. By the end of the unit, his writing is of a very different order.

### **Before**

How milk gets from the Cow to Us

The farmer milks the cow then the farmer bring the milk to the supermute then the people by them.

### **After**

Cows which are to have had a calf befor been milked by automatic suction cups. After the cow has been milk, the milk is stored and pumped into silos.

Now the milk is delivered to the factory to be homogenized and pasteurized to kill chse and bucteryer. The milk is made into skim milk and flavoured milk. Next the truck is washed before it delivers the milk to the deli and the supermarket. Last the supermarket is selling the milk to the people.

Figure 4: A student's writing before and after the unit of work

Figure 5 reveals that significant gains were also made by the better writers in the class.

How milk gets from the cow to us

The cow eats grass. The farmer uses suction cups to milk the cow. The raw milk which is milk straight from the cow flows into the vats. The tanker comes and the milk flows to the tanker. The tanker driver tests the milk. The tanker deliveres raw milk to the factory every day. At the factory the raw milk is tested. The tanker is washed inside and outside. The raw milk is now pasteurised which is heating the milk up and homogenised which is spreeding the cream. The milk is flavoud. The milk is placed into cartons. The cartons are placed into crats and puted into the cold room. Folk-lifs cary the crats to the refrigerated delivery trucks. The truck delivers milk to the supamaketa and the deli.

Figure 5: A student's writing after the unit of work

These seven-year-old children have a clear understanding of how milk gets from the cow to the consumer and how to express that in a sequential explanation. Both use the language patterns of technical sequential explanations: technical lexis, appropriate use of the passive voice, and examples of elaboration through dependent clauses. These significant improvements in the children's texts were replicated across the class and were clearly evident in their sequential explanations written later in the year with much less scaffolding than was provided here.

## **4 Spooking up narratives**

In this context, the English teacher, Monica Williams, scaffolds her 12-year-old students in extending their understanding about how to write a 'spooky story'. Drawing on *Spine Chilling Stories* (Rothery and Stevenson 1994), she focuses on key structural elements of the narrative genre: orientation, foreshadowing, complications and resolutions. Other key features explored were the evaluation stage, which can surface at different points in the narrative, and the notion of building tension. Throughout this unit, Monica drew on the grammar work she had already undertaken with the students (e.g. different process types) and extended that knowledge through a focus on nominal groups.

One of the challenges for Monica with this class of 31 was their wide ranging abilities in writing narratives. Some already had a high degree of control whereas others would struggle even with the simplest of narratives. As a way of ascertaining the students' capabilities, Monica collected samples of all the students' independent writing of a 'spooky story'. Later, these were compared with the texts produced after explicit teaching of the lexicogrammatical elements outlined above.

An early focus in this unit was the dual function of evaluation in a narrative—expressing the thoughts and feelings of the characters and creating tension—and the lexicogrammatical resources for expressing those meanings. The class discussed the role of different process types in a narrative, exploring the function of mental processes in evaluation and the way particular choices of action processes create tension.

This metalinguistic focus then shifted to the nominal group; the function of nominal groups in narratives and in written language, and the structure of the nominal group itself. Examples from various texts were analysed according to the nominal group's functional elements: deictic, epithets, classifiers, the head noun and qualifiers. Monica mediated these more technical terms with more commonsense ones: pointer for deictic and describer for epithet. The class also compared the length of nominal groups from more spoken texts with more written ones. This kind of metalinguistic conversation became a central part of their talk around how particular texts are constructed.

As with other students mentioned here, these students managed the technicality of the metalanguage with ease once they were explicitly taught it, as is evident from Figure 6.

**Student 1**

This story is really terrible. The first thing you notice about it is the orientation. All it tells us is that one night someone called Alana went for a ride on her bike, When was it set? Who is Alana and how old is she? What kind of bike was it? Why was she going for a ride? It doesn't make you want to read on. Also it has no foreshadowing or evaluation.

**Student 2**

I certainly have quite a few criticisms to make because this particular story does not explain things well such as 'the ghost melted'. I think that they could have added more intense epithets to increase the suspense and horror ... I would've written something like 'the pale terrifying ghost melted away before my eyes into thin air' if I were the author.

Figure 6: Student evaluations of narratives

Both these students have started critically analyzing the choices of authors and have a grammatical basis for doing so. They have moved beyond commonsense understandings to what Macken-Horarik (1996) calls 'specialized domains', where the students are taking on the role of 'incumbent expert' and are doing so with the confidence developed through their understanding of how the grammar is working to make particular meanings. This ability to reflect on their own and other's use of language was achieved by all the students in the class.

The development of nominal groups, inclusion of evaluation, and repetition to reinforce an unusual event is clear when comparing two narratives by an ESL student, written four months apart (Figure 7).

**July**

One day, her mother was go to the bookroom and get the key. She looking at the door, then she see the fire, she said very loudly 'help! help!' but no-one hear her ...

**November**

At midnight the horrible, deep wailing sound began again, it was getting louder and louder, deep and deeper. I opened my eye. 'Yh.' The horrible ghastly face setting on my eyes ...

Figure 7: Extracts from two narratives written four months apart by an ESL learner

What became apparent to the teacher and students by the end of this explicit linguistic focus on narratives was that all the students had much more control of their narrative writing and were able to create suspense and horror, as an extract from another student shows (Figure 8).

The crisp sound of Matt's jumpy feet on the grass and the old rusty swinging chair on the balcony were the only sounds Matt heard through the suffocating darkness of the night. He ignored the thick dripping sound and the sudden warmth of another person at his back.

Figure 8: Extract from a student's narrative showing developed command of epithets

How did the students respond to this level of technicality and focus on lexicogrammar from a functional perspective? Did it stifle their creativity, a claim that has been levelled against the teaching of grammar? Figure 9 presents one student's evaluation.

I really enjoyed everything we did leading up to writing the story and I believe it did help me a lot to make my second story much more exciting than my first story. In my second story I had built up my nominal groups a heap more than in my first story and that gave it more description and I think more tension.

Figure 9: Evaluation by a student after the explicit work on the narrative genre

And the last word from Monica: 'These stories were by far the most imaginative, tightly constructed texts I had read by students in my twenty years of teaching.'

## 5 Setting up an argument

This next example describes the work of a science teacher, Julie McPhee, who, after working with Monica and then attending the *Language and Literacy Course*, set out to support her 12-year-old students improve their written arguments.

The class was looking at the issue of deforestation and, as part of their activities, the students were put in the position of taking a stance, pro or con, with regards to this issue. Time was spent developing the students' field knowledge so that they had more than a commonsense understanding of the main arguments. It was clear that, while the students had a lot to say about the topic, they were unable to organize their ideas into a clear argument. As a consequence, there was a focus on two aspects of the lexicogrammar in this particular teaching-learning cycle (Rothery and Stevenson 1994): introducing the notions of macrotheme (introduction) and hypertheme (topic sentence) (Martin 1992) as a way of teaching the organization in the argument genre, and teaching nominalization as a way of moving students' writing to the more written end of the mode continuum.

Figure 10 is a typical example of a written argument that the students were producing before any explicit work had been done.

I'm for deforestation. I believe that we rely on the destruction of rainforests for more land. Land will provide opportunities for farmers and other farming issues including crops which provide food and medicines. Land is also used for housing. The trees of the rainforests provide building products so as trees are cut down, the land provides area for houses which are built from the trees cut down. Houses need to be built for the growing population so that they can have shelter away from the cold winter conditions and the hot summer conditions in Australia's climate.

For children to have a good education they need to go to school to learn. To learn you need paper to write on and read from. Paper is made from trees which need to be cut down. Fuel is also provided from the destruction of rainforests. Trees are cut down by loggers. If there was no destruction of rainforests then loggers would be out of a job and would not get paid. Deforestation helps Australia's economy with they buying and selling of rainforests products. Therefore deforestation can benefit many people.

Figure 10: Student text before explicit teaching of the argument genre

This student has presented many of the issues around deforestation but the organization of the text is not as we would expect to see in a written argumentative essay. There is no significant ordering of ideas in the first paragraph that signals to the reader the arguments that will be taken up in subsequent paragraphs. Within the paragraphs, the ideas are not organized in an orderly manner with the writer rather expanding on her reasons for supporting deforestation in a superficial way. Also, the student tends to write in a more spoken way. For example, there is a focus on tangible objects (e.g. land, trees, houses), people (e.g. children, they, you, loggers) and actions (e.g. build, go, cut down) rather than issues to be argued.

In addressing these concerns, the class spent a number of lessons analyzing their writing, discussing it, deconstructing it and playing with various spoken texts to make them more written. After a number of lessons, the structure of the students' texts improved as did the degree of abstraction (Figure 11).

It is necessary for some rainforest areas to be removed to enable employment opportunities to increase and enable people to support themselves and their families. The clearing would provide more land for farming and housing and countries would benefit economically by the exportation and selling of products such as timber, furniture, medicines, food, firewood, fuel and other products which are produced.

An exceeding amount of employment opportunities would arise with the removal of timber from some rainforest areas. It is essential that people be employed for the removal and processing of the timber. Once the removal and processing of the timber has taken place, the designing, building and supervision of the houses or roads or the planting of the crops and the research of the plants removed needs to be achieved. This requires more people to be employed for these various tasks.

The removal of trees in some parts of the rainforests would produce efficient amount of land for farming and housing. Housing provides homes and farming can provide a wide range of meat, milk, wool and other foods and products. These are all necessities that are very important to the society. ...

Figure 11: Extract from a student's text after explicit teaching of nominalization and the generic structure of an argument

What is clear is the improved organization of the second text where, unlike Figure 10, there is a clear macrotheme with clearly linked hyperthemes. The opening paragraph signals that the main arguments centre around employment opportunities, more land for farming and housing and that countries would benefit economically. Each of these arguments is taken up in the following paragraphs and the student has made good use of nominalization to synthesize her ideas. So we see abstractions such as opportunities, removal and clearance as head words in nominal groups. In contrast with Figure 10, this text unfolds more according to the issues to be taken up in the argument. Further analysis of these two texts shows, for example, the overuse of nominalization (an exceeding amount, the exportation and selling), but there is no doubt that, in a short space of time, the students in Julie's class made significant progress in their understanding of how a written argument works. This example highlights what many teachers have found when teaching students about writing arguments; that even a brief exploration of these key linguistic resources is extremely productive in improving students' writing.

## 6 A reporting and assessment tool: ESL Scope and Scales

One of the indicators in South Australia of a system-wide success of all the work in applying a functional model of language, and which is exemplified by the work of the teachers described above, is the ESL Scope and Scales (Polias 2003<sup>2</sup>). This document is a resource intended for reporting—to parents, other teachers and the education system—on the language and learning development of second language students. It sets out the scope of that language and learning development and articulates 14 scales across that scope. There are four bands in all, with each band connected to the age of the student: Early Years Band for five to seven year olds, Primary Years Band for eight to ten year olds, Middle Years Band for eleven to fourteen year olds and Senior Years Band for fifteen years and beyond (Table 4).

**Table 4** The relationship between the Scales and the age of a student

Age				5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<b>Standards</b>						1		2		3		4		5
<b>Scales</b>														
Early Years	1	2	3	4	5	6								
Primary Years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9					
Middle Years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Senior Years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

The second row, 'Standards', shows the applicable curriculum standard or benchmark at the given age (used by the state education department to indicate what one could expect of any average-achieving native-speaker child of this age). The 'Scales' on the other hand were derived by looking at the linguistic skills needed by a student in order to achieve all the outcomes of all the subjects across the curriculum within each Standard. However, while the Standards are intended to assess native speakers, the Scales are aimed at assessing ESL students.

With its attempt to link language and learning development, the ESL Scope and Scales could be described as a linguistic tool for reporting on achievement in schooling. This resource is a core component of South Australia's curriculum renewal for schooling, South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework, begun around 2000.

The ESL Scope and Scales uses the SFL model of language and context for its organization and its descriptions of achievement. This has meant that the major organizational strands are 'Text in Context' and 'Language' and both of these are internally constructed according to Genre, Field, Tenor and Mode. Each scale consists of four pages: Table 5 shows the page on genre for the Middle Years Band version of the ESL Scope and Scales.



**Table 5** Extract describing genre from Scale 9 for the Middle Years Band.

Scale 9	
Text in Context	Language
<b>Genre</b>	
Outcome 9.1 <i>Communicates in a wide range of social situations and small range of educational genres and reflects on these in an informed way.</i>	
<p><i>Examples of evidence include that the learner:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Demonstrates an elementary understanding of genre:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– reflects in simple terms on the purposes, the appropriate structure and common features of a range of elementary genres, such as personal and biographical recounts, simple narratives, procedures, descriptive reports, sequential explanations, simple arguments and summaries</li> <li>– begins to reflect on possible variations of the structure of a genre</li> <li>– contrasts texts of the same genre from different cultures in terms of structure but also in simple linguistic terms</li> </ul> </li> <li>▫ Constructs oral and written examples of a range of elementary genres having a number of stages or a series of events:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– writes and draws sequential explanations, such as life cycles and simple flow-charts, which begin to incorporate causal meanings</li> <li>– writes short factual texts drawing from more than one source and using a range of simple cohesive resources (ie language elements that make a text hang together)</li> <li>– constructs simple oral and written arguments based heavily on modelled and collaboratively constructed texts</li> <li>– writes and retells examples of story genres which have more than one complication to resolve.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>Examples of evidence include that the learner:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ Identifies and uses a small range of significant language features that set up the structure of a text:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– phrases foregrounded (ie placed at the front) in a range of genres:                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- time and place in recounts</li> <li>- time, place and manner in procedures</li> </ul> </li> <li>– sub-headings in a report</li> <li>– a new line to mark a change of speaker in a dialogue</li> <li>– conjunctions organising arguments: <i>Secondly, In addition, Later, Finally</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>▫ Identifies clauses and expands the information in a text by joining the clauses:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– forms complex sentences using a wide range of binding conjunctions: <i>because, if, since, because if</i></li> <li>– uses a small range of relative pronouns with varying accuracy: <i>'We come from Zagreb, which is the capital of Croatia', 'The boy which writes well is ...'</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>▫ Uses a range of simple language elements that make a text hang together (ie cohesive resources):                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– uses a narrow range of conjunctions to join sentences or paragraphs in a text: <i>So, However</i></li> <li>– uses reference items appropriately in longer, increasingly complex factual genres such as explanations: <i>'The woodchips are mixed with water to make a pulp. This pulp is ...'</i></li> <li>– uses a small range of synonyms and antonyms.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

It is clear from Table 5 that the user of the ESL Scope and Scales needs to have a working knowledge of a range of genres and their linguistic elements. This could be seen as being in conflict with one of the two major requirements of the writing brief we received from the state education department — that all teachers with an ESL learner in their class should be able to use it — but the trialing teachers demanded at least this level of technicality.

The other requirement in the writing brief was that the outcomes and indicators of achievement described in the document should link closely with outcomes from all the curriculum areas (expressed in the Standards of each curriculum area). This requirement has also had a profound impact on the resource itself and its application in schools. The result is that the learning outcomes of the various subjects are now described in broad linguistic terms and, because of this, the ESL Scope and Scales is a tool that connects what ESL students are choosing linguistically to what their first language counterparts are choosing. The ESL Scope and Scales, therefore, provides a continuum that links second and first language learning.

## 7 Conclusion

In all of the contexts described above, we can see a serious engagement with language and its role in teaching and learning, by teachers, teacher educators and students. One common feature of all these contexts is that as language is addressed, the 'the richest and most effective resource', the lexicogrammar, is addressed at the same time. We would say that this is perhaps the most heartening thing to come out of the work here in South Australia.

In elaborating on the work begun over ten years ago in our state, we hope that we have shown some of the potential of the functional model for influencing and shaping pedagogy that has knowledge about language as a fundamental principle. In particular, we hope that through the examples we have outlined above, others can be inspired to take up the challenge of developing understandings of the lexicogrammar as a central part of developing a set of semiotic tools for both teachers and students alike.

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## Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to [www.unlockingtheworld.com](http://www.unlockingtheworld.com) for details on the course and its availability.

<sup>2</sup> Contact John at [john@lexised.com](mailto:john@lexised.com) for an electronic copy. A hard copy is available from [www.unlockingtheworld.com](http://www.unlockingtheworld.com).