

Learning in linguistic contexts: integrating SFL theory with literacy teaching

David Rose

To appear in *Proceedings of the 36th International Systemic Functional Congress*, Beijing 2009.

I would like to suggest an alternative: that we might explore approaches to learning theory that are based on consideration of language... the theory would not dissociate the **system** from the **instance**: language from text, *langue* from *parole*, competence from performance...

Halliday 1993:93

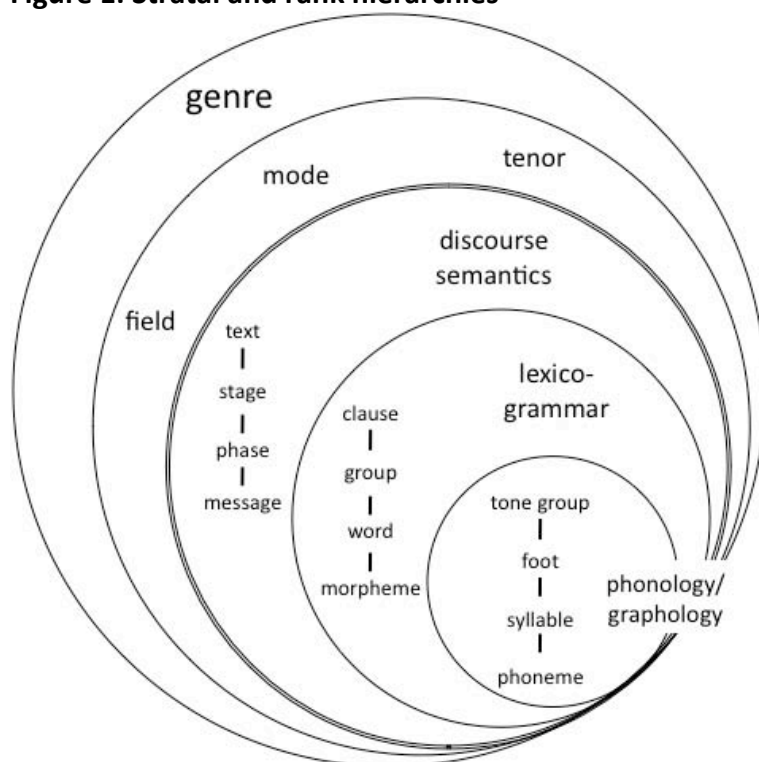
This paper contributes some further steps towards the 'language-based theory of learning' proposed by Halliday (1993), and follows Rose (2007, in press a). It focuses on the implications of two dimensions of systemic functional linguistic theory (SFL) for the design of literacy teaching methodologies: the stratified organisation of language as text-in-context, and the relation between language systems and instances in texts. The paper is intended to be useful to language educators and scholars, as it describes a range of practical language teaching strategies, and explains their efficacy in terms of the theory. It builds on the long involvement of SFL with language education, particularly the genre-based approach to writing developed in the Sydney School (Hyland 2007, Hyon 1996, Johns 2002, Martin 1998, 2000, 2006, Martin & Rose 2005, Rose 2008), and its foundation in work on language development, particularly Halliday (1975, 1993) and Painter (1984, 1996, 1998, 2004). The paper begins with a brief review of stratification and instantiation, and their roles in language learning. This is followed by a discussion of the design of genre writing strategies, that guide the learning of language from instances of text-in-context, followed by an outline of strategies developed in the *Reading to Learn* methodology, that are designed to enhance these processes (Martin 2006, Martin & Rose 2005, Rose 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, in press, Rose et al 2008, www.readingtolearn.com.au).

1 Strata and instances

Stratification refers to the organisation of language and its social contexts, as a hierarchy of levels or strata. The relation between strata is modelled in SFL as realisation. Thus patterns of meaning in texts (or discourse semantics) are realised (manifested/ symbolised/ expressed) by functions of words in clauses (lexicogrammar), which are realised by patterns of sounds or letters (phonology or graphology). Looking up the hierarchy to social context, language enacts social relations between speakers (tenor), construes the activities they are involved in (field), and plays various roles in doing so (mode). Collectively, field, tenor and mode are referred to as register (following Martin & Rose 2003/2007, 2008), and together realise the global social purpose of a cultural context, or genre.

Within each stratum, language is organised in compositional hierarchies known rank scales. Thus the social goals of a text are achieved by the sequence of generic stages that it goes through; each stage is composed of more variable phases of meaning (often expressed as paragraphs in writing), which are composed in turn of sequences of messages (often expressed as written sentences). Likewise the experiential, interpersonal and textual functions of a clause are realised by word groups or phrases, which are composed of words, composed in turn of morphemes. Within phonology each tone group is composed of rhythmic feet, composed of sequences of stressed and unstressed syllables, composed in turn of vowels and consonant clusters. Stratal and rank hierarchies are schematised in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Stratal and rank hierarchies



The realisational and compositional relations between strata and ranks provide a coherent framework for interpreting how learners develop repertoires of language features at each level. The coordinating principle for this development lies with the social goals of the genre. Recognition of the genre is the foundation for recognising the patterns of field, tenor and mode that realise it. For example, the goal of a child learning a simple domestic activity (pedagogic genre) involves a series of steps in the activity (field), a pedagogic relation between parent and child (tenor), and an interplay between demonstration, verbal instruction and manual practice (mode), each of which the child must recognise in order to accomplish the task.

In such a context, the text the child acquires is a type of procedure. Two stages in the procedure may include assembly of the necessary materials, followed by steps in the activity. Each step may involve an exchange - a phase in the overall pedagogic interaction - in which the parent models and/or directs the child in a component of the task, and provides guidance and feedback as it is performed. Each of these moves in the exchange is of course realised by clauses consisting of groups/phrases consisting of words, some of which will be new to the child, but which she is guided to comprehend and use in the context of the shared activity. As part of this, the articulation of new words will naturally be modelled and guided by the parent. Thus features of language at each rank and stratum are acquired in the context of their functions at higher levels, all the way up to the social goals of the genre.

We may contrast the 'top-down' contextualisation of natural language learning with the 'bottom-up' sequence of traditional language teaching. This venerable practice derives from what Halliday (1996: 21) refers to as the 'bricks-&-mortar model' of traditional language descriptions. Thus it is assumed that learners must first acquire the phonemes and graphemes of a language, followed by some vocabulary and elements of syntax, in order to start constructing simple sentences, gradually building up to paragraphs, and later perhaps whole texts. The starting point here is with the smallest phonemic 'bricks' which

are literally meaningless, until they are put together into words, which only become functional in the context of sentences in texts.

Instantiation refers to the relation between features in language systems and instances of meaning in actual texts. Where realisation between strata and ranks is a hierarchy of abstraction, with each lower level pattern realising a higher level feature, instantiation is a hierarchy of generality (Martin 2009). Thus each genre and its attendant register variables (field, tenor, mode) is a specific instance of the language system as a whole. Within each genre we can then distinguish more variable sub-types, and each text is recognisable as an instance of one these types. Instantiation occurs at all language levels, for example, sequences of activities in a procedure instantiate options in field systems, sequences of word groups in a clause instantiate grammatical systems, and sequences of phonemes in a word instantiate phonological systems.

What gets instantiated are meanings at each level. From the system perspective, the meaning of each feature derives from contrasts with alternative options (closed/open, statement/question, narrative/procedure, etc.). But when the feature is instantiated, it is meaningful in contrast to preceding and following elements as texts unfold. Thus the Complication stage of a narrative contrasts with its Orientation and its Resolution, the process in a clause with its participants and circumstances, a vowel with the consonants that precede and follow it in each syllable.

In natural language learning, it is these structural contrasts between unfolding instances that the learner experiences. Each new feature occurs in two contexts that facilitate its comprehension: of other familiar features in the unfolding sequence, and of familiar meanings at higher ranks and strata. From these twin contexts, learners can begin to infer the meaning of the new feature, that is, its place in the language system. Each time the feature is experienced, its meaning is clarified and reinforced. In other words, learners infer systemic contrasts from repeated experiences of instances in context.

Each structural feature typically instantiates multiple intersecting systemic options, for example, a word may simultaneously instantiate options in lexical systems, and in transitivity roles in grammatical systems, and so on. These intersections can both support and complexify the learning task. Overwhelmingly the instantial acquisition of the system is unconscious, but comes to consciousness when the intersection of systemic contrasts is not clear. At these points the learner may pause to ponder a meaning, or be guided by a parent or teacher (or a reference book). (Painter 1993) gives an example of a child recognising the inappropriateness of an adjective, and being guided to use an abstract noun to instantiate the lexical meaning he wants:

Father: This car can't go as fast as ours.
 Child (4.8): I thought - I thought all cars could - all cars could go the same - all cars could go the same (pause) fast...
 Mother: The same speed.
 Child: Yes, same speed.

Again, this mode of learning language systems through experiencing repeated instances in context may be contrasted with traditional language pedagogies that isolate features from texts and teach them as systemic contrasts. Examples range from phonics programs designed to teach systems of sounds and letter patterns to young children, to grammar exercises in academic English programs, designed for students to practise contrasts in various grammatical systems. As grammar exercises are typically informed by the bricks-&-mortar language model, they tend to focus on relatively low level systems such as

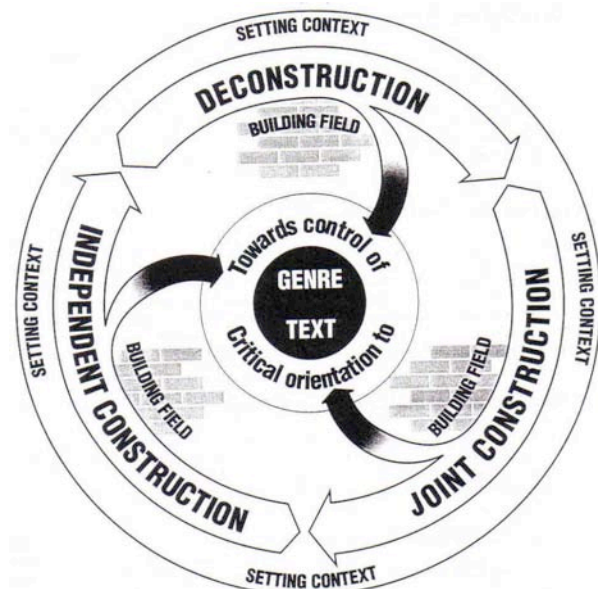
English tenses or classes of vocabulary items. Students are expected to memorise contrasts by applying them to invented sentences, before attempting to use them in actual texts. These practices are very old, originating perhaps with the first descriptions of written languages in the classical era, and maintained down the centuries by formalist linguistic traditions.

By the 1960s and 70s, dissatisfaction with the traditional pedagogic focus on decontextualised low level language systems had grown in English speaking education circles, leading to a major shift in focus towards social contexts of language learning. Learning activities were designed instead to mimic the assumed features of natural communication. In adult English language programs this was known as the 'communicative approach', in which learners were expected to acquire language more naturally by attempting to talk with each other, or to read whole texts, and grammar and comprehension exercises were used as preparation and extension activities. In schools it was known as 'whole language', in which children were expected to acquire written language skills by attempting to write from their personal experience and talking about their efforts. In its extreme form, all explicit teaching of language features was rejected from both the classroom and teacher training, leading to generations of students and teachers without the rudimentary knowledge of language afforded by traditional school grammars.

2 Genre pedagogy

Genre based writing pedagogy presents an alternative to both traditional and progressive language pedagogies (Martin 2000). As its name implies, this kind of pedagogy begins, not with low level language features, nor with a generalised notion of communicative contexts, but with the specific social purposes and staging of written genres. Furthermore its starting point is not with decontextualised language systems but with instances of actual texts. In the teaching-learning cycle designed by Joan Rothery and colleagues (Rothery 1994), an instance of a genre is 'deconstructed' by the teacher and students, by reading it together and guiding students to recognise its stages and key relevant language features. After deconstructing the model text, teacher and students then jointly construct a new text, using similar organisation and key language features, but writing about a field that they have built up together. These layers of preparation – building field, deconstructing genre, and jointly constructing a text, prepare all students for the task of constructing a new text of their own, schematised in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Teaching-learning cycle (Rothery 1994)



An instance of one genre that lends itself admirably to these purposes is an autobiographical recount summarising the stages of Nelson Mandela's life, in the last chapter of his book *Long Walk to Freedom*, extracted here.

I was not born with a hunger to be free. I was born free - free in every way that I could know. Free to run in the fields near my mother's hut, free to swim in the clear stream that ran through my village, free to roast mealies under the stars and ride the broad backs of slow-moving bulls. As long as I obeyed my father and abided by the customs of my tribe, I was not troubled by the laws of man or God.

It was only when I began to learn that my boyhood freedom was an illusion, when I discovered as a young man that my freedom had already been taken from me, that I began to hunger for it.

At first, as a student, I wanted freedom only for myself, the transitory freedoms of being able to stay out at night, read what I pleased and go where I chose. Later, as a young man in Johannesburg, I yearned for the basic and honourable freedoms of achieving my potential, of earning my keep, of marrying and having a family - the freedom not to be obstructed in a lawful life.

But then I slowly saw that not only was I not free, but my brothers and sisters were not free.

I saw that it was not just my freedom that was curtailed, but the freedom of everyone who looked like I did. That is when I joined the African National Congress, and that is when the hunger for my own freedom became the greater hunger for the freedom of my people. It was this desire for the freedom of my people to live their lives with dignity and self-respect that animated my life, that transformed a frightened young man into a bold one, that drove a law-abiding attorney to become a criminal, that turned a family-loving husband into a man without a home, that forced a life-loving man to live like a monk. I am no more virtuous or self-sacrificing than the next man, but I found that I could not even enjoy the poor and limited freedoms I was allowed when I knew my people were not free.

Freedom is indivisible; the chains on any one of my people were the chains on all of them, the chains on all of my people were the chains on me.

Mandela 1995: 751

Aside from its political significance and accomplished writing style, this text is useful as an exemplar because it is extensively analysed in Martin & Rose (2003/2007), so that interested readers can explore its language patterns in more detail there. The core stages of the autobiographical recount genre, instantiated by this text, are an Orientation, which typically provides background about the writer's early life, and secondly a Record of the major events in the writer's life (or Life stages for short). Here Mandela orients the story with the activities, places and people of his childhood. Then each following stage of his life is signalled for the reader by a re-setting in time, using marked Themes or conjunctions. These re-settings include:

It was only when I began to learn
 At first as a student
 Later as a young man in Johannesburg
 But then I slowly saw
 That is when I joined the African National Congress

This is one example of a discourse semantic pattern that is typical for the genre, that students can be shown in the Deconstruction phase, and then use to construct new texts of the genre.

The crucial bridge from deconstructing the model to independently re-instantiating the genre is the Joint Construction phase of the genre pedagogy. The pedagogic principle here has been summed up as 'guidance through interaction in the context of shared experience' (Martin 1999), derived from careful observations of language learning in the home, particularly by Halliday (1975, 1993) and Painter (1984, 1996, 1998, 2004). In practice the model text is projected in the classroom so that all can see it, and the teacher can point to each of its relevant features and discuss them with the class, as it is deconstructed. Indispensable to this discussion are explicit metalinguistic terms for the genre and its stages. A new instance of the genre is then jointly constructed on the class board, typically with the teacher scribing and the class contributing ideas for new content, which the teacher guides the class to shape into appropriate patterns of written language.

Shared experience refers both to the interactive nature of deconstruction, so that the features of the genre become shared knowledge, and to shared knowledge of the field that is built up prior to and during the reading and writing process. The text to be written is embedded within a lesson sequence focused on a particular curriculum topic (referred to in Figure 2 as 'setting context'). Mandela's text for example, would be chosen, not only to exemplify the autobiographical recount genre, but as part of a study of the man at least, and the history and politics his life was a part of. A new text jointly constructed on this model may then draw on the personal experiences of the class, synthesised into a shared virtual autobiography. The same principle is also applied to jointly constructing fictional stories, modelled on literary narratives, but with new plots, settings and characters created by the class. With factual texts on the other hand, the field of the model may be re-instantiated in the jointly constructed text, in new wordings, along with other information built up as the topic is studied by the class. With arguments and text responses, the class would have been studying an issue or a text. The model text exemplifies the genre to be written but its field may be different from the topic under study. The class then jointly constructs a new text of the same genre, about the issue or text they have been discussing.

So the Joint Construction modelled on Mandela's text would minimally include the stages, named as Orientation and Life Stages, and within the latter a sequence of events that are signalled by conjunctions and marked Themes. The field would begin with childhood experiences, followed by significant personal events. Having been guided through deconstructing one instance of this genre and field, and constructing a second instance, most students would be well prepared to re-instantiate the genre from their own experiences of life. For other genres, such guidance prepares students to explain, classify and describe fields they have been studying, to argue for positions around issues, and to evaluate texts they have been reading or viewing.

However, Deconstruction and Joint Construction do more than draw students' attention to a text's staging and a few selected language features. The repeated experience of various other language patterns in context supports students to acquire them, with or without

explicit discussion by the teacher, as in the natural language learning processes described above. Some of these newly acquired language patterns may re-appear in the text that each student constructs independently, along with the features that have been explicitly modelled. More importantly, the guided activity of looking closely at patterns of language in texts, and then borrowing them into one's own writing, supports students to develop a conscious orientation to recognising and appropriating new language features as they read. This is perhaps the fundamental skill that distinguishes students who succeed in school, and are able to matriculate to and succeed in further education. It is not well facilitated by drills in decontextualised language features, nor by simply providing texts or situations to explore with minimal guidance. Rather it requires repeated explicit detailed guidance in the activities of reading and writing texts.¹

3 Reading to Learn

Extending the principle of guidance through shared interaction, the *Reading to Learn* methodology is designed to further enhance learners' acquisition of written language patterns through experience of instances in context. The focus of activities in *Reading to Learn* goes beyond the overall features that are typical of the genre, to focus intensively on more variable patterns instantiated in the particular text being studied. Teaching strategies developed in this program provide several levels of support for students to recognise and appropriate patterns of meaning.

The starting point here is the phases in which the text's field unfolds within each generic stage. Where each genre unfolds through certain obligatory stages, such as the Orientation and Life Stages of the autobiography, phases are more variable smaller segments within each stage. In Mandela's text, these include the phases in which his awareness and conception of freedom expand through his life, beginning with the freedoms he could know as a child, followed by the freedoms he wanted for himself as a young man, followed by a mature conception of freedom extending to all of his people. In the recount, each of these phases of his life is followed by a comment on his growing awareness of freedom.

Orientation

childhood
freedoms

I was not born with a hunger to be free. I was born free - free in every way that I could know. Free to run in the fields near my mother's hut, free to swim in the clear stream that ran through my village, free to roast mealies under the stars and ride the broad backs of slow-moving bulls. As long as I obeyed my father and abided by the customs of my tribe, I was not troubled by the laws of man or God.

growing
awareness

It was only when I began to learn that my boyhood freedom was an illusion, when I discovered as a young man that my freedom had already been taken from me, that I began to hunger for it.

¹ For children of tertiary educated parents this orientation to written patterns of meaning begins with parent-child reading in the home, involving up to 1000 hours of 'talk-around-text' before the child starts school (Adams 1990, Rose 2004, in press a, Williams 1999). These students are well prepared to benefit from the talk around text characteristic of classroom learning, even where it does not involve such explicit identification of language features as in genre based deconstruction and joint construction. They are also best prepared to benefit from decontextualised language drills, as they already have the meaning base to synthesise the explicit focus on language features with reading and writing actual texts. Indeed a raft of traditional language activities, including the grammar translation exercises of classical language studies, undoubtedly evolved to enhance the language orientation such students bring with them to school.

Life stages

youthful freedoms	At first, as a student, I wanted freedom only for myself, the transitory freedoms of being able to stay out at night, read what I pleased and go where I chose. Later, as a young man in Johannesburg, I yearned for the basic and honourable freedoms of achieving my potential, of earning my keep, of marrying and having a family - the freedom not to be obstructed in a lawful life.
growing awareness	But then I slowly saw that not only was I not free, but my brothers and sisters were not free. I saw that it was not just my freedom that was curtailed, but the freedom of everyone who looked like I did.
mature freedom	That is when I joined the African National Congress, and that is when the hunger for my own freedom became the greater hunger for the freedom of my people. It was this desire for the freedom of my people to live their lives with dignity and self-respect that animated my life, that transformed a frightened young man into a bold one, that drove a law-abiding attorney to become a criminal, that turned a family-loving husband into a man without a home, that forced a life-loving man to live like a monk. I am no more virtuous or self-sacrificing than the next man, but I found that I could not even enjoy the poor and limited freedoms I was allowed when I knew my people were not free.
growing awareness	Freedom is indivisible; the chains on any one of my people were the chains on all of them, the chains on all of my people were the chains on me.

Such an analysis of phases is used in *Reading to Learn* to enhance Deconstruction and Joint Construction activities as follows. Firstly it informs a 'Preparation before Reading', in which the teacher gives an oral summary of the text's field as it unfolds through the genre. This preparation thus provides more than a synopsis of the genre and field, but a verbal roadmap specifying how it will unfold, with signposts for each phase. Students are then able to consciously recognise the steps in which the text is organised, as it is read. The Preparation before Reading technique also makes it possible to work with texts that may be well beyond the reading ability of some students, as they can follow the text with general understanding, without struggling to recognise what is going on at each step. Reading the text aloud can then further reduce their cognitive load, as they need not struggle to decode unfamiliar words, but can attend to the meanings as the teacher reads.

Preparation and reading is then followed by an enhanced Deconstruction of the genre, in which both the stages and phases of the model are identified and labelled, on the projected class text, and in students' individual photocopies. Metalanguage for discussing text organisation is thus extended beyond names for genres and their stages, providing a more specific and supportive framework for writing as well as reading. Types of phases expected in each genre have been identified and named as the methodology has developed (Rose 2006, Martin & Rose 2008). Teachers are trained to identify these phases in the texts they select for students' reading and as models for their writing.

Joint Construction then follows precisely the same phasal patterns as the model, re-instantiating the genre's generic features, together with the variations of the text sub-type and the specific choices of the model's author. This approach provides a relatively high level of support for learners to appropriate the choices of an accomplished author into their own writing, but more importantly to consciously practise the technique of doing so, as all accomplished writers do themselves, more or less deliberately.

However, following Deconstruction of the model, and prior to Joint Construction of a new text, further layers of support can be provided by activities known as Detailed Reading and Rewriting. In Detailed Reading the teacher guides students to identify specific wordings within each sentence of a short text or extract. A highly designed mode of teacher-class interaction is used to prepare all students to identify each word group, which they highlight as they go. As each word group is identified, its meaning may be elaborated with definitions, explanation or discussion (Martin 2005, Martin & Rose 2005, Rose 2004, 2007,

2008, in press a). Detailed Reading enables all students to read with complete understanding, a text that may be well beyond their independent reading skills. Furthermore it enables them to recognise each of the language choices its author has made, and to apply these in their own reading and writing.

The focus of language patterns for students to identify in Detailed Reading varies with the type of text and the purposes for teaching. With factual texts it may be on the key information in each sentence; with literary texts on the language that authors use to engage readers; and in arguments and text responses on the language used to evaluate points of view, issues or texts. For example, if the goal of reading Mandela's text is for students to understand its field, and use the information for writing about his life, the Detailed Reading focus may be on the lexical choices that realise his growing awareness and conception of freedom. Students would highlight these wordings in their own copies as follows, discussing their significance as each wording is identified. For example, in this extract his conceptions of freedom are highlighted in bold, and the associated activities underlined.

I was not born with a hunger to be free. I was **born free** - free in **every way that I could know**. Free to run in the fields near my mother's hut, free to swim in the clear stream that ran through my village, free to roast mealies under the stars and ride the broad backs of slow-moving bulls. As long as I obeyed my father and abided by the customs of my tribe, I was not troubled by the laws of man or God.

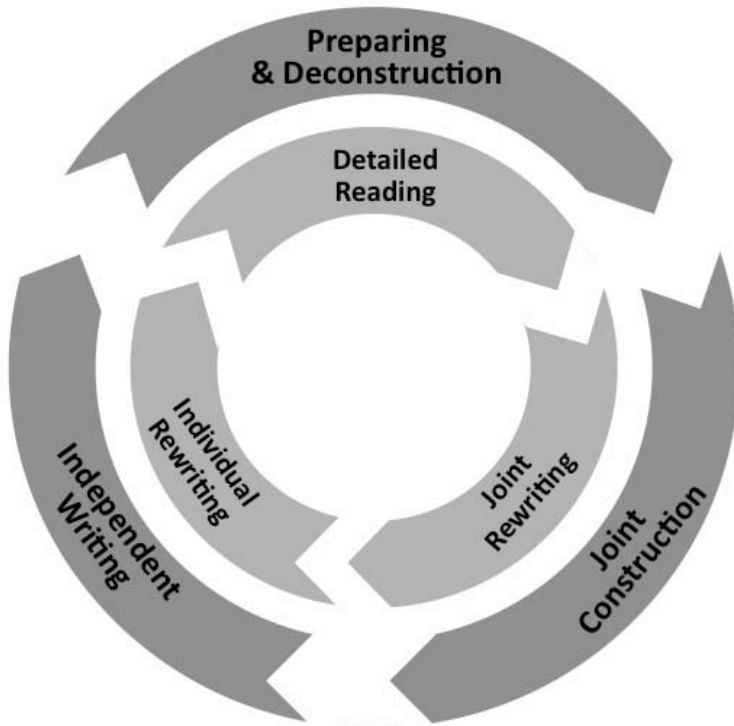
It was only when I began to learn that **my boyhood freedom** was an **illusion**, when I discovered as a young man that **my freedom** had already been **taken from me**, that I began to hunger for it.

At first, as a student, I wanted **freedom only for myself**, the **transitory freedoms** of being able to stay out at night, read what I pleased and go where I chose. Later, as a young man in Johannesburg, I yearned for the **basic and honourable freedoms** of achieving my potential, of earning my keep, of marrying and having a family - the **freedom not to be obstructed in a lawful life**.

Following Detailed Reading, students may make notes of the wordings they have highlighted, to prepare for writing. This can be done as a class activity in which students take turns to write notes on the board, as other students dictate the wordings that have been highlighted, and how to spell them. Notemaking provides further opportunities to discuss meanings as the notes go up, and to practise skills in articulation, listening, spelling and handwriting, again as instances in context. The teacher then guides the class through a Joint Rewrite, using the notes to construct a new text which re-instantiates the same field but with different grammatical patterns. These activities provide intensive support for students to practise key research skills, of identifying key information, making notes, and re-expressing the field in their own writing. The support is provided by the shared knowledge of the field, by the structure of stages and phases given by the model, and by the teacher's guidance in selecting new wordings to write.

Joint Rewriting is then followed by Individual Rewriting, in which students may practise using the same notes to write their own version of the text, again with as much teacher guidance as necessary. Alternatively Detailed Reading and Joint Rewriting may be conducted on the beginning of a text, and students will then complete Detailed Reading and Rewriting of the text, either in groups or individually. Figure 3 displays the two levels of support provided by the strategies described so far.

Figure 3: Levels of support in *Reading to Learn*



Note the critical difference here, between Detailed Reading and Rewriting on one hand, and Deconstruction and Joint Construction on the other. The focus of the latter activities is on recognising and using the organisation of the whole text, its stages and phases; the focus of Detailed Reading and Rewriting is on recognising and appropriating the patterns of language within and between sentences. Thus the activities just described for factual texts may focus on experiential word choices, on unpacking and repackaging technical and abstract wordings, and on the textual structure of sentences, as starting and end points of new sentences, as information is repackaged in Rewriting. At the same time a raft of other language choices can be identified, modelled and practised in context, from articulation and spelling, to lexical choices, to tense, agreement and nominal group structures, that are traditionally practised in decontextualised grammar and vocabulary exercises.

Moreover the study of language features is integrated with comprehension through Detailed Reading. In carefully planned 'scaffolding interaction cycles' the teacher prepares all students to identify each wording, using semantic cues, and then elaborates on its meaning, deepening students' understanding of the field, and/or the writer's language choices. These elaborations are reinforced and extended through the Notemaking and Joint Rewriting activities, until all students develop total control of the field and language features of the texts they are reading and writing.

As metalanguage for genres, stages and phases is introduced and reinforced through the cycles of Deconstruction and Joint Construction, so metalanguage for relevant discourse semantic and grammatical features is introduced in Detailed Reading elaborations, and reinforced through Notemaking and Joint Rewriting. This intensive talk-around-text exponentially enhances the processes of natural learning through experiencing instances in context. It is thus exponentially more effective than attempting to teach decontextualised language systems. Students' literacy growth through the *Reading to Learn* methodology is consistently double to four times the growth rates of other teaching practices (McRae et al 2000, Culican 2006, Rose et al 2008).

However a text such as this autobiography is selected in order to do more than study its field. Mandela uses a rich variety of language resources for engaging his readers, and aligning them with his point of view, and Detailed Reading allows students to recognise these resources and borrow them into their own writing. As with stories in general, a major resource Mandela uses to engage us is the processes of his inner life - his hunger, yearning, desire for freedom, his beginning to learn, slowly seeing, then finding and knowing, and the effects of his desire for freedom – animating, transforming, driving and forcing him to change. Secondly Mandela uses negation and concession to negotiate the expectations of his readers. Here the processes of his inner life are in bold, and negation and concession are underlined.

I was not born with a **hunger** to be free. I was born free - free in every way that I **could know**. Free to run in the fields near my mother's hut, free to swim in the clear stream that ran through my village, free to roast mealies under the stars and ride the broad backs of slow-moving bulls. As long as I obeyed my father and abided by the customs of my tribe, I was not troubled by the laws of man or God.

It was only when I **began to learn** that my boyhood freedom was an illusion, when I **discovered** as a young man that my freedom had already been taken from me, that I began to **hunger** for it.

At first, as a student, I **wanted** freedom only for myself, the transitory freedoms of being able to stay out at night, read what I **pleased** and go where I **chose**. Later, as a young man in Johannesburg, I **yearned** for the basic and honourable freedoms of achieving my potential, of earning my keep, of marrying and having a family - the freedom not to be obstructed in a lawful life.

But then I slowly saw that not only was I not free, but my brothers and sisters were not free.

I saw that it was not just my freedom that was curtailed, but the freedom of everyone who looked like I did.

That is when I joined the African National Congress, and that is when the **hunger** for my own freedom became the **greater hunger** for the freedom of my people. It was this **desire** for the freedom of my people to live their lives with dignity and self-respect that **animated** my life, that **transformed** a frightened young man into a bold one, that **drove** a law-abiding attorney to become a criminal, that **turned** a family-loving husband into a man without a home, that **forced** a life-loving man to live like a monk. I am no more virtuous or self-sacrificing than the next man, but I **found** that I could not even **enjoy** the poor and limited freedoms I was allowed when I **knew** my people were not free.

Freedom is indivisible; the chains on any one of my people were the chains on all of them, the chains on all of my people were the chains on me.

Mandela continually counters what both he and the reader may expect. Firstly, despite our possible judgements of such a man, his hunger for freedom was not innate. It only emerged with his awareness of the world beyond his community, in which his freedom had already been taken before he knew of it. Still he initially wanted freedom only for himself, not to be obstructed. But countering his own expectations, he found he was no more free than everyone else who looked like him. Then counter to our expectations he denies his own moral uniqueness, but presents his motives as inevitable in the situation he was placed in. If we are the next man, Mandela is no different from us.

Furthermore, Mandela extensively elaborates both meanings and wordings, particularly with parallel grammatical structures that are repeated two, three or four times. He exemplifies the freedoms of childhood, youth and adulthood, the mature desire for the freedom of his people, and the final interpretation with series of parallel clauses, as follows.

born free

- = free in every way that I could know.
 - = Free to run in the fields near my mother's hut,
 - free to swim in the clear stream that ran through my village,
 - free to roast mealies under the stars
 - and ride the broad backs of slow-moving bulls.

my boyhood freedom was an illusion,
= my freedom had already been taken from me

freedom only for myself,

- = transitory freedoms
 - = stay out at night,
 - read what I pleased
 - and go where I chose.

basic and honourable freedoms

- = achieving my potential,
- earning my keep,
- marrying and having a family
- = the freedom not to be obstructed in a lawful life.

desire for the freedom of my people... animated my life,

- = that transformed a frightened young man into a bold one,
- that drove a law-abiding attorney to become a criminal,
- that turned a family-loving husband into a man without a home,
- that forced a life-loving man to live like a monk.

Freedom is indivisible;

- = the chains on any one of my people
- were the chains on all of them,
- = the chains on all of my people
- were the chains on me.

This extent of grammatical parallelism is an outstanding feature of this text, but parallelism is also common in written texts across genres and field. Students are supported to identify patterns such as these in Detailed Reading, highlighting them and discussing their functions as they go. In consequence, students are not only thoroughly familiar with Mandela's perspective on his life and the meaning of freedom, but also with the language resources he has used to represent his life and negotiate his view of freedom and responsibility.

Detailed Reading, guided by the teacher, enables all students to recognise and understand the discursive functions of each of these semantic resources. Joint Rewriting then supports them to start using these resources in their own writing. The first step here is to generate a new field in Preparing before Writing. Typically the original passage is projected on the classroom wall and the teacher guides students to select fields that they could use to substitute the original field, scribing notes as students suggest ideas. Once the general features of the field have been generated, and noted on the board, the new text is written sentence by sentence, as students take turns to scribe on the board, and the class generates the wordings to use. The technique involves the teacher pointing out each of Mandela's language choices in the model text, and the class then choosing new wordings for the same structures. Each item may be offered by one or another student, but the class as a whole decides how it will be written, with the teacher's guidance.

In the following example, the new field is education in place of freedom. The writers are Australian Aboriginal students in a university preparation course. The field they have selected unfolds through phases of childhood, school and starting university, drawing on their own common experience. The stages and phases are analysed here.

Orientation

childhood learning As a child I did not yearn for knowledge. I was learning from the adventures of life. I learnt how to ride a bike in the backstreets of Redfern, how to catch crayfish with a stick down at the riverbank, how to make chewing gum from tar off the road, and how to play football with my cousins and friends. As long as I listened to my elders and respected them, I learnt everything I needed to know.

growing awareness It was only when I started school, and I had to learn a new set of rules, that I felt frightened and ignorant.

Life stages

school learning From my first day at school I wanted to learn simple things, everyday things like how to make friends, win fights, but stay out of trouble. Later, growing up as a teenager in high school, I longed for more important things, to succeed at schoolwork, to be treated equally, to go to parties and eventually leave school and get a job.

growing awareness But then it dawned on me that not only I needed an education, but my family also needed a role model. I discovered that it was not just my confidence and opportunities that were limited, but the future prospects of my people.

academic study That is when I decided to go to university, when the desire for my education became the greater desire for the education of my people. It was this urge to fulfil my potential, to live my life with confidence and respect, that gave me a goal in life, that transformed an intimidated person into a confident one, that drove an idle person to become a hard worker, that turned a lazy person into a motivated student, that forced someone who felt like a failure to become a success.

growing awareness Education is indispensable; failure in school closes down opportunities in life; until the schools learn to educate our children, life will be a struggle for our people.

As the patterns of elaboration used by Mandela have been studied closely in Detailed Reading, the students are well prepared to re-instantiate similar patterns in their own writing. This is an analysis of the choices they have made as the text is written on the board.

the adventures of life

= how to ride a bike in the backstreets of Redfern,
how to catch crayfish with a stick down at the riverbank,
how to make chewing gum from tar off the road,
and how to play football with my cousins and friends.

simple things,

= everyday things
= how to make friends,
win fights,
but stay out of trouble.

more important things,

= to succeed at schoolwork,
to be treated equally,
to go to parties
and eventually leave school and get a job.

this urge to fulfil my potential,

= to live my life with confidence and respect,
that gave me a goal in life,
= that transformed an intimidated person into a confident one,
that drove an idle person to become a hard worker,
that turned a lazy person into a motivated student,
that forced someone who felt like a failure to become a success

Education is indispensable;

= failure in school
closes down opportunities in life;
= until the schools learn to educate our children,
life will be a struggle for our people.

Once the Joint Rewrite is complete, students practise the same task individually. They now have two models to pattern their own text on, creating new fields and wordings of their own. The final step is then to return to the level of the whole text, when students

independently research and write their own texts, using the languages resources they have practised in Detailed Reading, together with the staging of the genre that was introduced at the beginning.

Conclusion

What I have described here are very effective techniques for enabling students to read complex texts with deep understanding, to recognise the rich variety of language resources that accomplished authors use to inform, engage and persuade their readers, and to appropriate these resources into their own writing. There is no limit to the range of language resources that can be practised, discussed and named through this method. Or rather the possibilities are only limited by the quality of the text selected for doing it. In Mandela's text for example, we could extend the discussion in Detailed Reading and Rewriting to its waves of periodicity, as each phase culminates with a hyperNew in which the author pauses to comment on his experience. Or we could focus on the text's increasing abstraction, as the mode develops through each stage from the relatively spoken language of Mandela's childhood exploits, to the nominalisation and classification of freedom in the later phases, together with the causal metaphors through which he elaborates his transformation into a hunted freedom fighter (see Martin & Rose 2003/2007 for these analyses).

The strategies of Deconstruction, Joint Construction, Detailed Reading and Rewriting are so effective because they are designed from close analyses of language learning processes, in which learners are guided to construe the systems of language from experiences of text-in-context. The pedagogy is informed by linguistic description, but its goal is the teaching of language, not linguistics. In this respect it contrasts with traditional language teaching approaches that start with drills in linguistic systems, that are then applied to texts, just as linguistics is traditionally taught. Secondly, the linguistic description that informs the pedagogy is a functional one, that explains language with respect to its social contexts, so the pedagogy explores texts from the perspective of social context. Again this contrasts with traditional approaches informed by formalist linguistic traditions that model language as 'bricks-&-mortar', starting with the smallest phonemic and lexical bricks to build syntactic structures. Thirdly, the informing description is metafunctional, in which language functions to enact social relations as well as construing experience, so that control of the language system emerges from pedagogic interaction, in contrast with cognitivist views of language that inform individuated learning activities. And fourthly, the immense complexity of language displayed by systemic functional description unmasks the folly of teaching systems of low level features in isolation. The only effective way to grapple with this complexity is to meet it in the meaningful context of unfolding texts, to build the system from its instances.

References

- Adams, M.J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print: A summary*. Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois
- Culican, S. (2006). *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn, A Middle Years Literacy Intervention Research Project*, Final Report 2003-4. Catholic Education Office: Melbourne. [www.cecv.melb.catholic.edu.au/Research and Seminar Papers](http://www.cecv.melb.catholic.edu.au/Research_and_Seminar_Papers) (current 2009)
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1975) *Learning How to Mean: Explorations in the Development of Language*. London: Edward Arnold
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1993) Towards a language-based theory of learning. *Linguistics and Education* 5.2, 93-116

- Halliday, M.A.K. 1996. On Grammar & Grammaticals. In R. Hasan, D. Butt & C. Cloran (eds.) *Functional Descriptions: language form & linguistic theory*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1-38
- Hyon, S. (1996) 'Genre in Three Traditions: implications for ESL', *TESOL Quarterly* 30(4): 693-722.
- Hyland, K. (2007) Genre pedagogy: Language, literacy and L2 writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 16, pp148–164
- Johns, A. M. (ed.) (2002) *Genres in the Classroom: Applying Theory and Research to Practice*. Mahwah, NJ : Lawrence Erlbaum.
- McRae, D., Ainsworth, G., Cumming, J., Hughes, P., Mackay, T. Price, K., Rowland, M., Warhurst, J., Woods, D. and Zbar, V. (2000). *What has Worked, and Will Again: the IESIP Strategic Results Projects*. Canberra: Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 24-26 www.acsa.edu.au (current 2009)
- Mandela, N. (1995). *Long Walk to Freedom: the autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. London: Abacus
- Martin, J.R. (1998) Mentoring Semogenesis: 'Genre-based' Literacy Pedagogy, in F. Christie, (ed.), 123–155.
- Martin, J.R. (2000) 'Grammar meets Genre – Reflections on the 'Sydney School'', *Arts: the journal of the Sydney University Arts Association*. 22: 47-95
- Martin, J.R. (2006). Metadiscourse: Designing Interaction in Genre-based Literacy Programs, in R. Whittaker, M. O'Donnell and A. McCabe (eds) *Language and Literacy: Functional Approaches*. London: Continuum, 95-122.
- Martin, J.R. (2009). Semantic variation: modelling system, text and affiliation in social semiosis. M Bednarek & J R Martin [Eds.] *New Discourse on Language: functional perspectives on multimodality, identity and affiliation*. London: Continuum, 1-34.
- Martin, J.R. & Rose, D. (2003/2007). *Working with Discourse: meaning beyond the clause*. London: Continuum
- Martin, J.R. & Rose, D. (2005). Designing literacy pedagogy: scaffolding asymmetries. In R. Hasan, C.M.I.M. Matthiessen and J. Webster (eds.) *Continuing Discourse on Language*. London: Equinox, 251-280
- Martin, J.R. and Rose, D. (2008). *Genre Relations: Mapping Culture*. London: Equinox
- Painter, C. (1984) *Into the Mother Tongue: a Case Study of Early Language Development*. London: Pinter.
- Painter, C . (1996) 'The Development of Language as a Resource for Thinking: a Linguistic View of Learning', in R. Hasan and G. Williams (eds) *Literacy in Society*. London: Longman. pp50-85.
- Painter, C. (1998) *Learning through Language in Early Childhood*. London: Cassell
- Painter, C. (2004) 'The 'Interpersonal First' Principle in Child Language Development', in G. Williams and A. Lukin (eds) *Language Development: Functional Perspectives on Species and Individuals*. London: Continuum. pp133-153
- Rose, D. (2004) 'Sequencing and Pacing of the Hidden Curriculum: how Indigenous Children are Left out of the Chain', in J. Muller, B. Davies and A. Morais (eds) *Reading Bernstein, Researching Bernstein*. London: RoutledgeFalmer. pp91-107
- Rose, D. (2005). Democratising the Classroom: a Literacy Pedagogy for the New Generation. *Journal of Education*, 37:127-164 www.ukzn.ac.za/joe/joe_issues.htm
- Rose, D. (2006). Reading genre: a new wave of analysis. *Linguistics and the Human Sciences* 2(2),185–204
- Rose, D. (2007). Towards a reading-based theory of teaching. Plenary paper. *Proceedings 33rd International Systemic Functional Congress*. www.pucsp.br/isfc/proceedings/index.htm

- Rose, D. (2008). Writing as linguistic mastery: the development of genre-based literacy pedagogy. Beard, D., D. Myhill, M. Nystrand & J. Riley *Handbook of Writing Development*. London: Sage, 2008, 151-166
- Rose, D. (in press a). Meaning beyond the margins: learning to interact with books. Martin, J., Hood, S. & Dreyfus, S. (ed.) *Semiotic Margins: Reclaiming Meaning*. London: Continuum, to appear 2010
- Rose, D. (in press b). Beyond literacy: building an integrated pedagogic genre. Featured paper for *Australian Systemic Functional Linguistics Association Conference*, Brisbane, Oct 2009 www.asfla.org.au
- Rose, D. (in press c). Beating educational inequality with an integrated reading pedagogy. In F. Christie and A. Simpson (eds.) *Literacy and Social Responsibility: Multiple Perspectives*. London: Equinox, to appear 2010
- Rose, D., Rose, M., Farrington, S and Page, S. (2008). 'Scaffolding Literacy for Indigenous Health Sciences Students', *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 7 (3): 166-180
- Rothery, J. (1994/2008) Exploring Literacy in School English (Write it Right Resources for Literacy and Learning). Sydney: Metropolitan East Disadvantaged Schools Program. Republished 2008, Sydney: Adult Migrant Education Service
- Williams, G. (1999). The pedagogic device and the production of pedagogic knowledge: a case example in early literacy education. In F. Christie (ed.) *Pedagogy and the Shaping of Consciousness: Linguistic and Social Processes*. London: Cassell, 88-122