

The Findings of Written Discourse Analysis how they are Articulated in
Learning English for Academic Purposes

WD/05/06 Select an intermediate or advanced English coursebook commonly used in your teaching context. Discuss the extent to which the book takes into account of the findings of written discourse analysis and suggest ways in which it could be improved.

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A. Introduction

In 1966, Robert Kaplan stated that discourse analysis is the study of language in use extending beyond sentence boundaries (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). It is “a dynamic process of meaning creation” (Widdowson, 1979:129) that is deeply affected by genre, register and mode of expression (spoken or written) and is, therefore, culturally bound.

Since learning a language means adding to and readjusting our native language strategies (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000), it is not difficult to see why English may prove problematic for learners of other languages. For example, if their world schema is different from the one they experience in Canada, reading and writing will prove especially difficult. From these students’ perspectives, our texts may seem incoherent or culturally irrelevant, thus rendering the message awkward or incomprehensible since they are “sensitive to the contexts and purposes in communication” (Arndt, Harvey and Nuttall, 2000:57). It is therefore important that we teach learners about written discourse, since:

Good and effective reading must, (therefore,) be viewed as combining both rapid and accurate recognition and decoding of letters, phrases, words, collocations and other structural cues and sensible, global predictions related to the text as a whole (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000:123).

The purpose of this paper is to explore the issues relevant to discourse analysis as they pertain to written communication. Genre, clausal relationships and patterns are key areas to consider (McCarthy, 1991) as are lexical and grammatical cohesion (Winter, 1994). In Section B, I will introduce and provide examples of these features and in Section C I shall introduce a text I used in my last University Preparation course. Section D will include examples of how the author introduces the aforementioned components of written discourse analysis and include innovations regarding ways I added to the text.

B. The Findings of Written Discourse Analysis;

1. Genre

In an academic setting, genre consists of cultural constructs, recounts, reports, expositions, narratives and procedural texts. These academic texts have “culturally determined and socially acceptable” written structures (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000:125) that are organized accordingly (Nuttall, 2000) (Van Dijk, 1996) and lexis, format, register and modality all play important roles in helping students identify and reproduce specific genres (Coulthard, 1977) (Van Dijk, 1996) (Luke, 2005).

For example, in figure 1 below, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain introduce a basic pattern which long academic passages generally follow:

Figure 1: (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000)

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. announce or identify the topic 2. state the facts or provide support for the main topic 3. show similarities or differences 4. identify an event (in other words, provide specific examples) 5. point out the false assumption or lack of evidence 6. conclude |
|--|

This format is also introduced in pre-university courses, as well as for TOEFL or MELAB, but in a much simpler version.

2. Textual Patterns

Since “one of the important features of a well-formed text is the unity and connectedness” (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000:152) that bind sentences together, academic textual patterns are essential for university-bound learners to be able to recognize and replicate. These organizational patterns “make significant contributions to the overall coherence of the discourse” (Arndt, Harvey and Nuttall, 2000:84) by signposting logical connections between ideas, dividing text into chunks of information and drawing attention to themes and meaning with lexical choices. This can be done through textual patterns: problem/solution, general/specific, claim/counterclaim and

question/answer and through signaling devices, such as specific lexical choices and antonym use. As McCarthy states,

Both readers and writers need to be aware of these signaling devices and to be able to use them when necessary to process textual relations that are not immediately obvious and to compose text that assists the reader in the act of interpretation (McCarthy, 1991: 31).

2.1 General/Specific Pattern

This common text pattern moves the reader from general to specific information (Olshtain and Cohen, 2003) and is commonly seen in university placement exam texts such as the TOEFL or IELTS. An example of this pattern can be seen in figures 2a and 2b.

Figure 2a: (McCarthy, 1991:159 from Cambridge Weekly News, 22 September, p.11)

<p>Two-wheel solution Thousands of acres of the countryside are buried for ever under ribbons of concrete and tarmac every year. Every few months a Government study or statement from an authoritative body claims that our motorway network is inadequate and must be extended. Week by week the amount of car traffic on our roads grow, 13 percent in the last year alone. Each day as I walk to work, I see the ludicrous spectacle of hundreds of commuters sitting alone in four or five-seater cars and barely moving as fast as I can walk.</p>

Figure 2b: (Adapted from McCarthy, 1991:159 from Cambridge Weekly News, 22 September, p.11)

<p>Explanation: General: Thousands of acres of the countryside are buried for ever under ribbons of concrete and tarmac every year. Specific including 'Expert' Opinion: Every few months a Government study or statement from an authoritative body claims that our motorway network is inadequate and must be extended. More Specific, including Statistics: Week by week the amount of car traffic on our roads grow, 13 percent in the last year alone. Specific Personal Example: Each day as I walk to work, I see the ludicrous spectacle of hundreds of commuters sitting alone in four or five-seater cars and barely moving as fast as I can walk.</p>

As demonstrated in figures 2a and 2b, the specific examples support and enhance the general statement.

2.2 Problem/Solution Pattern

Problem/Solution patterns include a: situation, problem, solution and result or evaluation and can be signaled through tense, lexical signals and position. According to McCarthy, “discourse organizers often contribute to our awareness that a problem-solution pattern is being realized” (McCarthy, 1991:78). See figures 3a and 3b for an example and its explanation.

Figure 3a: (McCarthy, 1991:30)

Most people like to take a camera with them when they travel abroad. But all airports nowadays have x-ray security screening and x-rays can damage film. One solution to this problem is to purchase a specially designed lead-lined pouch. These are cheap and can protect film from all but the strongest x-rays.

Figure 3b: (Adapted from McCarthy, 1991:30)

Explanation:

1. **Situation:** Most people like to take a camera with them when they travel abroad.
2. **Problem:** *But* all airports nowadays have x-ray security screening and *x-rays can damage film*.
3. **Solution:** One solution to this problem is to purchase a specially designed *lead-lined pouch*.
4. **Evaluation:** *These* are cheap and can protect film from all but the strongest x-rays.

‘*But*’ in line two is a discourse organizer that indicates contrasting ideas. Nonetheless, in the example above, there are discourse features that can cause confusion for readers. For example, the pronoun, ‘*these*’, is pluralized to make a general statement but ‘*lead-lined pouch*’ is singular. Also, the problem is addressed directly in the third sentence, but it is only inferred in the second sentence with, ‘*x-rays can damage film*’.

2.3 Claim/Counterclaim (Hypothetical/Real) Pattern

The claim/counterclaim pattern introduces two different ideas which contrast with one another. One point is raised and then disputed or reneged. This is often demonstrated through the use of vocabulary, as seen in the figure below.

Figure 4: (McCarthy, 1991:80 from New Society, 28 August 1987, p.10)

Historians are generally agreed that British society is founded on a possessive individualism, but they have disputed the origins of that philosophy.

There are many words that help identify the claim/counter-claim pattern. One such list follows in figure 5.

Figure 5: (in McCarthy, 1991:80 from Jordan 1984:148)

according to	estimated	might	seems
apparently	evidently	old wives' tales	should
appears	expected	perhaps	signs
arguably	forecast	potential	so-called
believes	imagine	probably	speculation
claimed	likely	promises to be	suggests
considered	look	reported	thought
could	may	says	

Being familiar with and using these words in writing ensures the textual pattern is adhered to when contrasting ideas.

2.4 Question/Answer Pattern:

The question/answer pattern is also common in academic texts. A question is posed somewhere within the textual framework and is then answered “with evidence or authoritative support” (McCarthy 1991:158). For example:

Figure 6: (McCarthy, 1991:158 from Moneycare, October 1985, p.4)

London - too expensive?

It's no surprise that London is the most expensive city to stay in, in Britain: we've all heard the horror stories. But just how expensive is it? According to international hotel consultants Horwath and Horwath's recent report, there are now five London hotels charging over 90 pounds a night for a single room.

In this piece of text, the question '*But just how expensive is it?*' is posed and answered. '*According to consultants Horwath and Horwath's recent report*' in the third line is an example of the writer providing 'authoritative support'. Providing data, '*five London hotels charging over 90 pounds a night*', further quantifies this.

3. Clausal Relations

In order for paragraphs to make sense, the relationships between sentences cannot be haphazard or random (Winter, 1994) (Hoey, 1996). Clausal relations "signal the place of the clause in its sentence with respect to clauses in adjoining sentences" (Winter, 1994:46) and are signaled by conjunctions, subordination, lexical connections, repetition and modality (tense and aspect) on the clause level.

In English, clauses are typically organized according to sequence (logical) relationships or matching relationships.

3.1 Sequence/Logical Relations

Sequence relations signal time, cause and effect, instrument and purpose. They are anti-directional and involve change in time or logic. Because of their nature, they rarely need repetition to maintain topic continuity (Hoey, 1991). Examples of logical sequences are: phenomenon-reason, cause-consequence and instrument-achievement. An example of a phenomenon-reason clausal relationship follows in the figure below since the first sentence is explained by the second.

Figure 7: (McCarthy, 1991:28 from The guardian, 27 October 1988:24)

The stress is on documentary and rightly so. Arty photographs are a bore.

3.2 Matching Relations

Matching relations signal contrasting ideas, compatibility and equivalence and generalization. They are bidirectional, involve no temporal or logical changes and there are clear parallels of syntax and lexis. Repetition is common and usually necessary to provide the pattern needed to compare and contrast (Hoey, 1991). An example follows in figure 8.

Figure 8: (McCarthy, 1991:30 from The Sunday Times Magazine, 30 December 1979:14)

In Britain, the power of the unions added an extra dread, which made British politics a special case/; on the Continent, Margaret Thatcher was regarded as something of a laboratory experiment, rather like a canary put down a mine-shaft to see if it will sing.

In this figure, although the first part of the text up to the / is an example of a logical clausal relation, the second half of the text, from '*on the Continent*', contrasts with the first, making this an example of a matching relation as well.

4. Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion and coherence are also cultural constructs, which can be expressed both grammatically and lexically and provide signals that are considered crucial to the message the writer wishes to convey (Winter, 1994) (McCarthy, 1991).

4.1 Grammatical Cohesion

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), grammatical cohesion refers to pronominal referencing (pronominalization), ellipsis/substitution and conjunction and all are essential to texts (McCarthy, 1991). However, modality (verb tense and aspect) and voice are also important for grammatical cohesion to take place (Raimes, 1983). Celce-Murcia and Olshtain further state:

In order to be able to identify old and new information in the text and thus evaluate the writer's position and intention and recruit his or her own relevant schema, the reader must employ linguistic knowledge that grammatically signals such distinctions (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000:129).

4.1.1 Referencing (Pronominalization)

Referencing refers to how we connect text, in this case through pronouns, and needs to be maintained throughout written texts (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000). Endophoric referencing is contained within the text and exophoric referencing refers to things outside of the text. For endophoric referencing, cataphoric pronouns refer to text not yet mentioned and anaphoric pronouns to those previously mentioned. A simple example of anaphoric referencing can be seen in the figure below.

Figure 9: (McCarthy, 199:38)

And the living room was a very small room with two windows that wouldn't open and things like that. And it looked nice. It had a beautiful brick wall.

'*Living room*' is referred to two times through the use of the anaphoric pronoun, '*it*'.

4.1.2 Ellipsis and Substitution

Ellipsis is the omission of elements "the writer assumes are obvious from the content" (McCarthy, 1991:43) and substitution refers to words we use to signal the omission of some other word (Parrott, 2000). Figure 10 provides an example of both.

Figure 10: (Hoey, 1991:6)

Q- Does Agatha sing in the bath?
 A. No, but I do. (*substitution*)
 B Yes, she does. (*ellipsis*)

Both A and B are examples of ellipsis but A is also an example of substitution. A substitutes '*I*' for '*Agatha*' while B eliminates '*sing in the bath*', since it would be understood by the interlocutor and the receiver.

4.1.3 Conjunction

Conjunction generally refers to coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, nor, for, so), subordinators (although, however, therefore etc.) and adverbial phrases (as a result, as a consequence etc.), although lexical items that are found within clauses can function in the

same manner. An example of how these different forms of conjunction are used follows (figure 11).

Figure 11: (McCarthy, 1991:47)

Conjunction: He was insensitive to the groups' needs. *Consequently* there was a lot of bad feelings.

Adverbial Phrase: He was insensitive to the groups' needs. *As a consequence* there was a lot of bad feelings.

Lexical Item within the Predicate of the Clause: The bad feeling was *a consequence of* his insensitivity to the group's needs.

Their use assumes a textual sequence and signals a relationship between sections of discourse and requires a basic understanding by the reader or incoherent writing will result (McCarthy, 1991).

4.1.4 Modality (Tense and Aspect) and Voice

Tense and aspect markers “create intersentential cohesion” (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000:131) and different genres typically use different tenses. For example, scientific texts often use the passive voice, since it distances the writer. As McCarthy states,

In specialist and academic texts such as scientific articles, correlations are often observable between discourse segments and tense and aspect choices (McCarthy, 1991:60) (but) tense and aspect vary notoriously from language to language and are traditional stumbling-blocks for learners (McCarthy, 1991:62).

To demonstrate how modality can alter a text, refer to figure 12.

Figure 12: (McCarthy, 1991:85 from Cambridge Weekly News, 22 September 1988: 11)

Inevitably, objections will be raised to the promotion of the motor cycle as the saviour of our environment.

It is dangerous: it **can** be but three-fifths of all serious motor cycling accidents are caused by cars. So, by transferring some drivers from cars to motor cycles, the risk **can** immediately be reduced.

Department of Transport statistics have **shown** that a car driver is nine times more **likely** to take someone else with him in an accident than a motor cyclist, so riding a motor cycle is **actually** making a contribution to road safety.

These words: *inevitably*, *can*, *shown*, *likely* and *actually* carry important information about the writer's feelings regarding his or her message and provide meaning over and above the sentence level. In the above example, the writer argues for more people to drive motor cycles since he feels they are less dangerous than cars. This is conveyed by use of the modal '*can*' and the adverbs '*inevitably*' and '*actually*'.

4.2 Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion generally refers to reiteration and collocation but also refers to Winter's (1977) Vocabulary 3 or Lexical Signaling (Harmer, 2004) words. "Work on lexical signaling and collocational patterning in naturally occurring texts is of considerable importance" (Carter, 1987:78) in order for readers to understand text.

4.2.1 Reiteration

Reiteration is "the dominant mode of creating texture" (Hoey, 1991:9) because it ensures that our writing is not redundant, and is considered "the single most important form of cohesive tie". It includes: repetition, synonyms and near-synonyms, lexical sets and hyponymy (Hoey, 1991).

4.2.1.1 Repetition

The majority of English vocabulary is learned through repetition (Nagy, 1997), but this does not only refer to the exact replication of a word; it also includes members of its 'word family'. Repetition allows the writer to repeat herself in order to add new information (Hoey, 1991) and to assist with lexical inferencing (Hedge, 2001). Some examples of repetition can be seen in figure 13.

Figure 13: (McCarthy, 1991:68 from News on Sunday, 2 August 1987, p. 15)

Dozing guards allowed a group of peace **campaigners** to breach a missile security cordon yesterday.
 The women protesters claimed to have walked right up to the *cruise launchers*.
 As *sentries* slept, they tip-toed past *sentries* at 3am and inspected a *cruise convoy* in **a woody copse** on Salisbury Plain.
 Greenham Common **campaigner** Sarah Graham said "For the sake of making things more realistic, **the copse** was protected by soldiers dug into foxholes".

Words that are repeated are often not repeated identically. The repetition in figure 13 can be seen in the use of pluralization and word family (*campaigner* vs *campaigns*) and with definite and indefinite articles and adjectives (a *woody copse* vs *the copse*).

4.2.1.2 Synonyms and Near-Synonyms

Synonyms and near-synonyms are words which have similar meaning. They add texture, provide subtle nuances and help sequence and organize the text by enabling “a writer to summarize and refer back to the items in the text” (Willis, 2003:135). Using the same text as in figure 13, we can see a number of examples of synonym and near-synonym use.

Figure 14: (McCarthy, 1991:68 from News on Sunday, 2 August 1987, p. 15)

Dozing **guards** allowed a group of *peace campaigners* to breach a missile security cordon yesterday.
 The women *protesters* **claimed** to have walked right up to the *cruise launchers*.
 As **sentries** slept, they tip-toed past **sentries** at 3am and inspected a *cruise convoy* in a woody copse on Salisbury Plain.
 Greenham Common campaigner Sarah Graham **said** “For the sake of making things more realistic, the copse was protected by **soldiers** dug into foxholes”.

Guards and *sentries* are synonyms for *soldiers*. Other examples are: *claimed* and *said* and *slept* and *dozing*, although the last example is not of the same aspect. *Peace campaigners* and *protesters* could be considered to be either synonyms or near-synonyms depending on whether the word ‘*protester*’ is seen by the reader as being peaceful or violent.

4.2.1.3 Hyponymy

Hyponymy refers to words that are connected under a hierarchical ‘umbrella’ word or general term and is an important feature of reiteration because connections can easily be built from it (figure 15).

Figure 15: (From *The Chronicle Herald, Elias, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 26 July 2005*)

Researchers took saliva and blood samples from six *cats* including a *tiger* and a *cheetah* and found each had a useless gene that other *mammals* use to create a sweet receptor on their tongues.

In this case, ‘*mammals*’ is the umbrella word and ‘*cats*’ is a slightly more general word. ‘*Tiger*’ and ‘*cheetah*’ are provided as specific examples.

4.2.1.4 Lexical Sets/Chains

Lexical sets, or chains, are words which are connected by theme. Since understanding text is often “dependent on a recognition of lexical items belonging to the same lexical set and realizing a topic about which the writer and reader have to have shared knowledge” (Carter, 1987: 77), it is important for readers to be able to recognize them (figure 16).

Figure 16: (McCarthy, 1991:66)

There was a fine old *rocking-chair* that his father used to sit in, a *desk* where he wrote letters, a nest of *small tables* and a dark, imposing *bookcase*. Now, all of this furniture was to be sold, and with it his own past.

‘*Rocking-chair*’, ‘*desk*’, ‘*small tables*’ and ‘*book case*’ are all part of the lexical chain of ‘household furniture’. Recognizing one word means we are better able to guess the meaning or at least the context of the surrounding words.

4.2.2 Collocation

According to Halliday and Hasan, collocation is “the name given to the relationship a lexical item has with items that appear with greater than random probability in its (textual) context” (Hoey, 1991:7). They can be ‘restricted’ or ‘unrestricted’ (McCarthy, 1991). ‘Restricted collocation’ refers to lexical relations that are culturally fixed and ‘unrestricted collocations’ are those which are more negotiable and less-fixed. Some examples of collocational restrictions can be seen in figure 17.

Figure 17: (Carter, 1987:133)

Collocational Restrictions:

Unrestricted collocation, e.g. *keep*,: *keep house, a diary, a shop, a hotel, pets, a job, a boat, etc.*

Restricted collocation, e.g. *dead drunk, pretty sure, stark naked, gin and tonic, cream tea, etc.*

'*Cream tea*' is a 'restricted collocation' because it is very specific. It is unlikely to be heard outside of a localized area and therefore, may not be understood by everyone.

4.2.3 Vocabulary 3/ Lexical Signalling

Winter's Vocabulary 3 words "establish certain semantic functions in the connection of clauses or sentences in discourse" (Carter, 1996:75). Similar to conjunctions, they move the reader forward by creating expectations of future text. According to Carter, their use allows the writer to compact a great deal of information into the clause or sentence (Carter, 1987).

For example:

Figure 18: (Carter, 1987, pg. 75)

(1) I <i>chose</i> wood rather than aluminum or steel for the structure.
(2) There is a <i>difference</i> between George and David's respective characters.
(3) One <i>condition</i> for the success of the team is obvious.

Each of the three italicized words fulfils the function of anticipation and focuses the reader on relationships in previous or sequential clauses.

An abridged version of Winter's Vocabulary 3 list can be seen in figure 19.

Figure 19: (Carter, 1987, pg. 75)

action	event	reason
cause	expect	result
compare	fact	situation
conclude	kind	solution
condition	manner	specify
contrast	point	thing
differ	problem	way

C. Justification for the Evaluation of Learning English for Academic Purposes

Learning English for Academic Purposes, called LEAP by its authors, uses authentic Canadian texts and was written to “bridge the gap between EAP classes and content classes” (Williams, 2005: iii). Since “the organization of written discourse in English is culturally determined” (Raimes, 1983, pg. 115), and “social institutions such as schools and universities are comprised by and through discourses” (Luke, 2005:3), I considered LEAP because it: was a recent publication (2005), had Canadian content, was available in Nova Scotia, used a task-based framework, was written specifically for EAP students and because I had used it with one class and wanted to examine it in more depth.

While the majority of the tasks are based on written text, there are also a number of taped lectures, so some of these tasks are mentioned briefly.

The students in my University Preparation course came from Asia, South and Central America, Europe and Arabic nations, ranged in age from 17 to 26 and their productive and receptive skills varied despite the fact that they all began the course with a minimum of a 6.5 IELTS. They all needed help with reading strategies and using different textual patterns.

5. Organization of the Textbook

Chapters in LEAP follow a very specific pattern (Appendix 1). There are eight chapters which relate to four main themes. Every two chapters connect topically, and the chapters increase in difficulty. The text also accommodates different learning styles by including a wide variety of subjects, texts and task types. Receptive tasks are provided according to different text types, including: charts, lists, surveys and jigsaw readings, as well as taped lectures. Controlled practice tasks include: multiple choice, listing, ordering, short answer and varied note-taking tasks and productive tasks include: pair and group discussions as well as a wide variety of writing tasks, such as persuasive and expository essays, reports, surveys and summaries. At the back of the book, there are also sample texts for students to refer to.

D. Evaluation of Learning English for Academic Purposes with regards to Discourse Analysis and Suggestions for Innovation

6.1 Genre

There are many aspects of discourse analysis evident in this textbook. Since, as Lewis states, “written language is highly conventionalized” (Lewis, 1996:155), and needs to be learned, specific genre should be, and are, included in this text.

For example, the second chapter in LEAP introduces a survey, which is further exemplified at the back of the text. Williams explains how to organize a survey (figure 20a), then she provides an example (figure 20b) and demonstrates what the end results could look like (figure 20c).

Figure 20a: (Williams, 2005:202)

A survey is designed to collect information from people (respondents/participants). To create a survey, you should:

- decide what information you want to gather (limit yourself to finding out one or two pieces of information);
- select two different groups of respondents you want to find out information about ...etc.

Figure 20b: (Williams, 2005:202)

Hypothesis: Older people use more water than younger people

1. How old are you?
O 13-30 O 31 and over
2. How many showers or baths do you take per day?
O less than one, or one O Two O More than two
3. On average, how many times do you flush the toilet per day?
O one-three times O four or five times O six times or over

Figure 20c: (Williams, 2005:203)

Table: Summary of survey results

Questions	Total number of 13-30 (10)			Total number of 31 and over (10)		
1. How old are you?	% total 50%			% total 50%		
2. How many showers or baths do you take per day?	<1 or 1	2	> 2	<1 or 1	2	> 2
	7	3	0	10	0	0
3. On average, how many times do you flush the toilet per day?	1-3	4-5	6	1-3	4-5	6
	0	8	2	0	4	6

The topic of the survey, education, is relevant, as it allows learners to draw on their personal schemas while processing what they have read. True to task-based learning frameworks tasks are provided where learners create questions to ask their colleagues. They listen to similar texts where they are expected to notice the similarities between their questions and those asked by the Canadians on the tape. They are then provided with the opportunity to report to their colleagues (Willis and Willis, 1996),.

Suggestions for Innovation

A further opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of the genre is by having them create poster presentations. This ensures that all learners' sensory learning styles are actively engaged and that they remember the learning process better (Oxford, 1990). It also supports the task-based framework introduced in the text by providing the opportunity for learners to present to their peers (Willis and Willis, 1996).

6.2 Textual Patterns

6.2.1 General/Specific Pattern

There are a number of tasks related to textual patterns in LEAP. In chapter one, learners are encouraged to take notes and read for meaning on various texts going from general to specific (see below).

Figure 21a: (Williams, 2005:19/20)

Task:

1. Read the title of the article. Predict the topic of the article
2. There are three examples of child athletes in the first paragraph. What opinion do you think the author has of these three cases?
3. Who are the two role models the author uses as examples of young successful athletes? (paragraph 2 and 3)
4. Why does the author think they are good role models? (paragraphs 4 and 5)

Figure 21b: (Adapted from Williams, 2005:19/20)

Explanation:

General: 1. Read the title of the article. *Predict the topic* of the article

Specific: 2. There are *three examples* of child athletes in the first paragraph. What opinion do you think the author has of these three cases?

More Specific: 3. *Who* are the *two role models* the author uses as examples of young successful athletes? (paragraph 2 and 3)

Personal Comment: 4. *Why does the author think they are good role models?* (paragraphs 4 and 5)

Providing learners with specific questions helps them notice patterns and consolidate their skills (Harmer, 2001).

Suggestions for Innovation

Although there is no extensive writing activity following these tasks, asking students to summarize the text using their notes and comparing it with a partner's would ensure they recognize the important features of the pattern.

6.2.2 Question/Answer and Problem/Solution Patterns

All of the chapters in LEAP provide students with a number of texts which offer contrasting opinions. Many are in the form of the question/answer pattern, such as in figure 22a, and many others follow the problem/solution pattern, as seen in figure 23.

For example, the second text in chapter three is organized as a jigsaw reading, with three different athletes being introduced. In the first text, (figure 22a), the opening line provides the question.

Figure 22a: (Williams, 2005:36 from Bergman, B, 2004, August23, National Sport, Calgary, Macleans's, 117:34)

Athlete's ABC's

What do short-track speed skater Alanna Kraus, freestyle skier Deidra Dionne and hockey player Jennifer Botterill have in common? In addition to being Olympic medal-winning athletes, all are graduates of National Sport School. Building on the legacy of the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, the National Sport School was founded in that city in 1994 as a way of giving aspiring elite athletes a chance to complete their high school education while meeting their training and competition commitments.

The text then provides details about the school, which is meant to answer the question and provide evidence of the general statement in the first paragraph. The second paragraph, (figure 22b) introduces the general/specific pattern previously mentioned.

Figure 22b: (Williams, 2005:36 from Bergman, B, 2004, August23, National Sport, Calgary, Macleans's, 117:34)

Operated jointly by the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Olympic Development Association, the public school serves 100 students, ages 14- 19, from more than 20 sports. Class sizes are small, homework deadlines are negotiable and tutorial and online services are available for when student athletes are otherwise occupied – which is much of the time.

Students are also asked to identify how this school is unlike other public schools. This question helps show how question/answer patterns can be a way of substantiating claims. The problem/solution pattern can be seen in figure 23.

Figure 23: (Adapted from Williams, 2005: 25)

Explanation:

Situation: *When I first started elementary school, I was sent to a public school where I was enrolled in a French Immersion program.*

Problem: *This meant that my class spoke and worked only in French for most of the day. My oral French became very good; however, although my teachers were excellent, my written French was not as strong as my oral ability.*

Solution: *However, my university professors used the communicative language teaching method which encouraged reading real French books and articles, discussing with small groups of students and writing that was graded for content rather than grammatical correctness.*

Result: *My oral ability remained strong, and my writing skills increased.*

Most of the relevant information is introduced in the first sentence of the first four paragraphs, which makes the pattern easy for students to identify.

Suggestions for Innovation

Asking learners to create their own text about an education system they are familiar with using one of the text models introduced would help them consolidate the pattern. At the end of the chapter, they could summarize the four different reading texts in the chapter using the second pattern.

6.3 Clausal relations

6.3.1 Matching Relations and Sequence/Logical Relations

Chapter six introduces criteria the student must listen for, take notes on and compare with a partner (figure 24). This information is useful as a way of explaining logical and matching sequences and the task which follows is typical; learners write a persuasive essay using the new information.

Figure 24: (Williams, 2005:145)

Title: Temporal versus causal relationships

- Today, parents worry about
- Years ago, parents worried about

“Listen to the information and take point-form notes in the outline below”.

Six criteria used by scientists to determine temporal or causal relationships:

1. Unique and specific outcome:
2. Positive association in animal experiments:
3. Alternative reasons for relationship
4. Demonstrable biological mechanism
5. Positive relationship in the frequency of events:
6. Likelihood of coincidence
 - A vaccine related example:

Logical/Sequencing Relations are introduced in many LEAP reading texts, though none of them are overtly pointed out to students. An example of a phenomenon/reason clause follows in figure 25.

Figure 25: (Adapted from Williams, 2005:25)

Explanation:

Phenomenon: *When exam time arrived, I passed the standardized exams with reasonable grades.*

Reason: I loved the teachers, the students and the athletics.

OR

Phenomenon: I was able to choose between a design career at a local college and an arts program at a university.

Reason: *When exam time arrived, I passed the standardized exams with reasonable grades.*

Suggestions for Innovation

Since most language learners spend time learning the structure of clauses in the new language (McCarthy, 1991), it would help to provide them with a number of paragraphs in which to identify and highlight the textual pattern being used. This would ensure they had recognized the necessary vocabulary (for example, Winter's Vocabulary 3), time markers and textual patterns. It is also helpful to have students brainstorm lexical sets they expect to find in the texts prior to reading or to doing any tasks related to them. This allows the teacher to check on their true understanding of the text, allowing students time to process the information and further aiding their retention of it (Oxford, 1990).

6.4 Grammatical Cohesion**6.4.1 Conjunction**

In chapter two, sentence variety is explored. Readers are provided with paragraphs which only use independent clauses and are expected to rewrite the text, using the language introduced (figure 26a).

Figure 26a: (Williams, 2005:32)

Working with another student, use your knowledge of how to combine independent clauses to make the paragraph more interesting.

Quohong and Peter were students in a university writing course. They were worried. They had heard that academic writing was different in North American than in their own countries. They had heard that copying was bad. Using ideas from another writer without identifying the writer was bad. It was called plagiarism. Plagiarism was not acceptable in their North American university. Students who plagiarized could be punished.

Suggestions for Innovation

To improve on this task, clearer guidelines, similar to the ones identified in figure 26b, could be provided to highlight the use of conjunction.

Figure 26b: (Adapted from Williams, 2005:32)

Quohong and Peter were students in a university writing course. *(use a coordinating conjunction to join 1 + 2)* They were worried. *(use a transition word to link 2 + 3)* They had heard that academic writing was different in North American than in their own countries. *(add an adverb and remove the personal comment)* They had heard that copying was bad. *(remove repetition and join these two sentences)* Using ideas from another writer without identifying the writer was bad. *(change the pronoun to a determiner)* It was called plagiarism. *(remove repetition by using a conjunction and pronoun)* Plagiarism was not acceptable in their North American university. *(add adverb phrase)* Students who plagiarized could be punished.

In my classes, I then provide my learners with a re-write which reads:

Figure 26c: (Adapted from Williams, 2005:32 by Sandee Thompson)

Quohong and Peter were students in a university writing course **and** they were worried **because** they had heard that academic writing was different in North America than in their own countries. **Apparently**, copying and using ideas from another writer without identifying the writer was bad. This was called plagiarism **and** it was not acceptable in their North American university. **In fact**, students who plagiarized could be punished.

This rewrite guides students to an acceptable reformulation of the text. Once this task has been done successfully, they can rewrite a second paragraph without guidance, which they then peer-correct before handing in for guided correction.

6.4.2 Modality (Tense and Aspect) and Voice

Williams includes a language awareness focus in each chapter. For passives, students are asked to do a transposing task for controlled practice (figure 27).

Figure 27: (Williams, 2005:180)

Task six: Moving from active to passive voice
Working with another student, convert these sentences from the active to the passive voice.

1. Farmers enjoy the benefits of GM foods.
2. The corn beetle, a major pest, damages corn every year.etc.

Suggestions for Innovation

This task is contrived as it is rare for native speakers to transpose active voice to passive. Parrott claims, “learners sometimes end up with the impression that passive constructions are some kind of optional, deviant version of active constructions” (Parrott, 2002), which is incorrect. It is better to provide learners with the key words needed for the passive sentences and have them create sentences by selecting the appropriate voice (figure 28).

Figure 28: (Adapted from Williams, 2005:180 by Sandee Thompson)

Decide which would be more appropriate, active or passive voice, and create sentences.

1. Farmers/enjoy/benefits/GM foods.
2. Corn beetle/major pest/damage/corn/annually etc.

Example of possible answers:

1. Farmers enjoy the benefits of genetically modified foods. (active voice)
2. Corn is damaged annually by that major pest, the corn beetle. (passive voice)

6.5 Lexical Cohesion: Reiteration and Collocation

6.5.1 Repetition

In chapter one, Williams explores repetition through the introduction of strategies. She includes an information box of ‘tips’ (figure 29), which learners should find to be useful.

Figure 29: (from Williams, 2005:9)

Characteristics of a word that is not important to the meaning of the reading	Characteristics of a word that is important to the meaning of the reading
1. The word isn't repeated often.	1. The word is repeated often.
2. The word is included in a list of examples	2. The word is included in the title or subheading(s) of a reading.
3. The word is an adjective that you can guess positive or negative	3. The word is highlighted or underlined in the reading.

Suggestions for Innovation

Although there are no follow up tasks following the ‘tips’ box, there are many examples of repetition that could be exploited with learners. For example, a sentence in paragraph 4 reads: “Coaches who are *too* controlling, *too* competitive and *too* much in need of success put enormous pressure upon their athletes, often humiliating and scaring them” (Williams, 2005:10). Students who understand that ‘*too*’ refers to excess will also notice that the word is used three times in one sentence, which further demonstrates its importance.

Learners could highlight these features in some way which would help most to process more completely since they would be actively doing something (Oxford, 1990). This would help readers to notice the various features of repetition, preparing them not only to read more accurately and thoroughly but also to write better. Below are further examples of negative reiteration that could be explored, in the form of repetition, figure 30a, and lexis, figures 30b and 30c.

Figure 30a: (Adapted from Williams, 2005:10...from Anderson, C, (2000:16/17) The Drawbacks of Youth Sports, in *Will you still love me if I don't win?*)

“Coaches who are **too** controlling, **too** competitive and **too** much in need of success put enormous pressure upon their athletes, often humiliating and scaring them”

Figure 30b: (Adapted from Williams, 2005:10...from Anderson, C, (2000:16/17) The Drawbacks of Youth Sports, in *Will you still love me if I don't win?*)

line 18 : ‘many young athletes are **emotionally damaged** by such coaches’.
 line 23: ‘**nothing is done** to help an athlete learn about his or her **emotional self**’
 line 29: ‘speaks to the **lack of emotional development** in competitive sports programs’

Figure 30c: (Adapted from Williams, 2005:10...from Anderson, C, (2000:16/17) The Drawbacks of Youth Sports, in *Will you still love me if I don't win?*)

line 13: 'leaving little time'
line 21: 'unbalanced'
line 22: 'nothing is done'
line 25: 'no consideration'

6.5.2 Synonyms and Near-Synonyms

Williams introduces synonyms and near-synonyms as a technique for eliminating redundancy and as an introduction to paraphrasing through a text on plagiarism (figure 31).

Figure 31: (Williams, 2005:135)

Paraphrase the answer to the question using the techniques that you have just learned.
--

Students are expected to read a text then paraphrase it using synonyms and near-synonyms.

Suggestions for Innovation

While the task in figure 31 is common and fairly useful, it is also tedious in its 'sameness'. Instead, learners could be given a couple of re-phrased paragraphs, one good and one bad, and be asked to distinguish between the two, identifying the synonyms, voice and sentence types used. Time could be allotted to discuss why they were or were not useful paraphrases. After this, in A/B pairs, students could be given two different texts to paraphrase. Each member of the pair would have a good copy of the other's text. They would then examine the texts together, in parody of what the class had done in the task before, and evaluate them.

Alternatively, an information gap task could be used where students have to dictate part of their text to their partner, and vice versa, to complete the whole text. This would be especially supportive of auditory learners prior to writing their own texts (Scarcella and

Oxford, 1992). Writers could also be provided with English-English dictionaries, such as the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Bullen, 2003) to check meanings and concordances (Morgan and Vickers, 2005).

6.5.3 Lexical Sets/Chains

In chapter two, learners are exposed to categorizing tasks. For example:

Figure 32: (Williams, 2005:25).

Read the following story and underline the vocabulary related to schools/education and teaching methods	
School/Education words	Teaching Method words
Elementary school Public school French Immersion program Etc.	Grammar drills Translation techniques Communicative language teaching Etc.

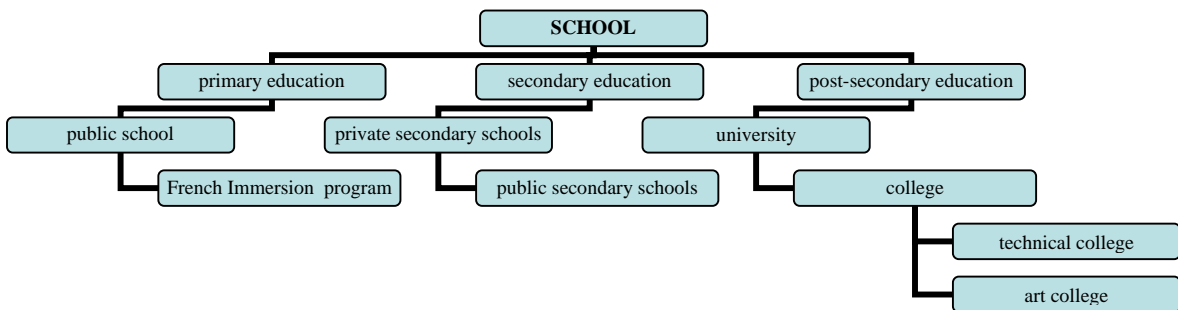
Students are later given the opportunity to question their peers about their educational experiences but are not asked to do anything further with the chart.

Suggestions for Innovation

Having learners add their partners’ information to their charts is a way to personalize this task and make it more meaningful and memorable (Willis and Willis, 1996). Open feedback could follow to allow learners the opportunity to share ideas as an entire class.

Hyponymy can also be explored with the help of computers to show the various school relationships explored in the readings and discussions, as the following diagram demonstrates:

Figure 33: (Sandee Thompson interpreted from Williams, 2005)



Repetition could be introduced with the word ‘school’. Students could locate it in its various forms in the text, for example, *public school*, *private secondary school*, *public secondary school*, and could then examine other forms of repetition, such as ‘public’, ‘private’, and ‘French’. They could compare the use of repetition and synonyms with that of their own languages and discuss it as a carousel discussion, where students repeat their information repeatedly to different people, which would further serve to solidify their views and allow learners the opportunity to speak about them accurately.

Since all learners have had some educational experience, this text would also lend itself to contrastive (claim/counterclaim) writing tasks.

6.5.4 Collocations

Students are introduced to unrestricted collocations connected to ‘time’ and ‘pressure’ in chapter one and are then provided with controlled practice tasks in the form of gap-fills (figure 34).

Figure 34: (Williams, 2005:11)

Example: *time commitment, time crunch, lack of time, leave little time for, loss of time*
 Example: *put (enormous) pressure on, high pressure, under (too much) pressure, to exert pressure on (someone)*

Fit the appropriate collocation into the blanks in these sentences:

1. All of the training _____ school, family and friends.
2. The coaches _____ the gymnasts until the athletes are exhausted.
3. Going to the skating rink six times a week was a _____ that his parents couldn't make etc.

They are also introduced to separable and non-separable restricted collocations in chapter eight.

Figure 35: (Williams, 2005:178)

Collocations: words that occur together	Collocation: words are separated
widespread acceptance leading expert	widespread public acceptance leading corn expert
<i>Match the words in the columns on the left with the words in the column on the right to create some of these collocations.</i>	
1. to have resistance	a. disease
2. all around	b. benefits
3. mad cow	c. resistance
4. consumer/agricultural	d. against
5. insect/pesticide	e. the world

This task is useful as it ensures the learners return to the text to locate collocations in the context presented. It promotes noticing and encourages learners to reread the text.

Suggestions for Innovation

Learners need freer writing practice of these terms in order to be able to reuse them later (Oxford, 1990). For example, collocations from chapter one could be revisited by creating a personalized text about their own sports experiences. Since “new knowledge can only be processed coherently in relation to existing knowledge frameworks” (McCarthy, 1991:168), this would make the task more meaningful.

Ellipsis and substitution could be introduced and practiced by having students write questions to demonstrate their comprehension of the text (figure 36).

Figure 36: (Sandee Thompson, adapted from Williams, 2005:75).

<p>Example: Write questions using ellipsis and substitution to demonstrate your understanding of the text.</p> <p>1. The coach put enormous pressure on the gymnasts until they were exhausted <i>Did the gymnasts' parents put pressure on them?</i> <i>No, but the coach did.</i> or <i>No, they didn't.</i></p> <p>2. Going to the skating rink six times a week was a time commitment that his parents couldn't make. <i>Could his parents make the time commitment?</i> <i>No, but I could.</i> or <i>No, they couldn't</i></p>

E. Conclusion

After reevaluating LEAP and the tasks set for students, it is clear that this text introduces many of the findings of written discourse analysis. The topics, and many of the tasks, are relevant to university-bound learners and will help provide them with the scaffolding they need in order to be successful in North American universities.

However, no single text can provide everything that the teacher, students and author believe is important. The tasks I suggested in section D worked with these particular students because they were an eclectic group. Bottom-up techniques (noticing and highlighting tasks and controlled practice tasks for accuracy) were needed for the analytical learners and top-down tasks (brainstorming and using topics from students' own schema) were used to ensure the global learners were engaged. Activating their sensory learning styles (kinaesthetic, visual and auditory) with innovations also helped to ensure that the texts were exploited to their optimum (Scarcella and Oxford, 1992).

As McCarthy states, "the best reading materials will encourage an engagement with larger textual forms but not neglect the role of individual words, phrases and grammatical devices in guiding the reader around the text" (McCarthy, 1991:168). Thus, providing learners with a variety of texts and tasks, explicit and implicit teaching, and ensuring that texts are understandable to them both when they read and write, as well introducing a comprehensible look at all facets of written discourse analysis through the use of genre, patterns, clausal relations, and grammatical and lexical cohesion will ensure students' writing is interesting, accurate, relevant and comprehensible.

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