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Teaching language across the secondary curriculum using a teaching and learning cycle

Introduction

Halliday's model of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday 1994) has underpinned the teaching of English as a second language in South Australian schools for sometime. While this model provides a rich theory of how meaning is made through language, it is often a challenging step from this to the practical applications of the model as a teaching tool in the classroom. In South Australia, primary school teachers first began to experiment, adapt and apply the theory as a methodology commonly referred to as functional grammar. It is more recently that the power of functional grammar is being realised by secondary schools, in particular as a way of moving students from spoken language to more written, abstract and academic language.

When first learning the theory of systemic functional linguistics, teachers have many questions such as:

- Where do I start with functional grammar?
- How do I know which grammar to teach and when to teach it?
- How do I turn this theory of grammar into classroom practice?

This paper will address these questions in the context of teaching genre, since the fundamental difference between functional grammar and other approaches to grammar teaching is the analysis of language in context (Halliday 1994). Functional grammar is used not so much to teach the rules of language but to show how language works to make meaning in texts. That is, to show the grammatical patterns which are formed to achieve different purposes. The discussion here will develop around one text from the nature oriented subjects and one text from the society oriented subjects. The decision to refer to texts from different learning areas is to demonstrate the importance for all teachers to explicitly teach the language of their subjects through the content. Indeed language development is every teacher's business.

Through the exploration of a descriptive information report and an

exposition¹, ways of teaching students to write these two genres will be revealed. Both genres have been written on the same topic, great white sharks, to demonstrate that it is far more than the topic that determines the language patterns of a text. While students may have knowledge of a topic, if asked to provide evidence of their understanding through writing, they also need to have knowledge of:

- The purpose of the text
- How the text should be organised
- The level of technicality required in the language
- Who the text is written for
- Whether to choose objective or subjective language

Each of these aspects of the descriptive information report, *The White Shark*, and the exposition, *Should we cull white sharks to save human life*, will be explored in contrast, in order to substantiate the need for these elements to be explicitly taught to students.

The functional model of language in the classroom

The following table shows the variation between two texts which have the white shark as the main subject matter.

	<i>1. The White Shark</i>	<i>2. Should we cull sharks to save human life?</i>
Cultural attitudes	Scientist: respect and biological interest	Beach walker, environmentalist (husband works for Tourism SA)
Genre and purpose	Provide biological information	Persuade others that sharks are not dangerous to humans
Subject matter	The white shark	The white shark
Roles and relationships	Specialised audience, others interested in the field	The general public, in particular beach users
Mode and medium	Written, journal, text book etc	Written, newspaper, online blog
Language choices	Technical, objective, impersonal	Everyday, emotive, persuasive, personal

1. See appendix 1 and 2

When contrasted, it becomes clear that the many variables considered here will influence the choice of language for each text. The cultural context for each text differs in that the report is part of the discourse of science, a community of readers who are interested in the biology of sharks. The fictional author for the exposition is described as a beach walker (a person who perhaps prefers not to venture into the ocean) whose husband works for the office of tourism in South Australia. Sharks are very much a tourist attraction for this part of the world. We can derive two points from this. Firstly, beach walkers are not at risk of shark attack and secondly, her family income would benefit from the protection of sharks, rather than the culling of them. Clearly this context influences the position taken up by the author and indeed, the author's purpose for writing. While the report is solely to provide information of a factual or scientific nature about the white shark, the exposition is written to persuade and encourage a target audience to take a stance against the culling of white sharks to save human life.

The roles taken up by these authors and their relationships with their readers are again different. The science writer would be expecting a specialised audience made up of those interested in the field of biology, in particular white sharks. The author of the exposition is appealing to the general public, in particular those who enter the water for recreational purposes and who may hold fears of shark attack. To reach the different audiences, the texts require different mediums for publication.

It becomes obvious then that all of these differences will affect the language choices of the authors. It is expected that the author of the report would choose impersonal, objective and technical language, while the author of the exposition would choose more personal, emotive and persuasive language.

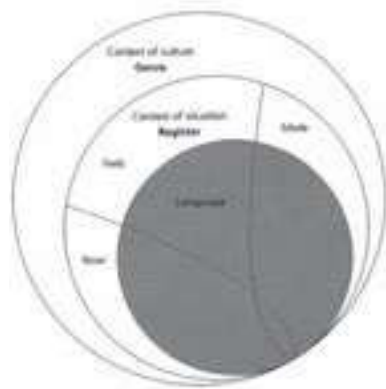


Figure 1. A functional model of language (DECS & SACCS 2004)

These multiple layers which influence the meaning-making resources employed in a text need to be considered prior to working through the genres with students. It is this knowledge of the text which informs the teacher about what to teach, and when to teach it. The previous genre comparison can help us to see Halliday's model (Halliday 1994) as it can apply to the classroom. What this model shows is that the language choices made in constructing a text are determined not only by the

subject matter, but by the roles and relationships between writers/speakers and their audience, whether the text is spoken or written, and the cultural environment or discourse community the author is operating in.

In order for students to access this model, it needs to be simplified. It can be described as four strands of a text which impact on language choices. The terms genre, field, tenor and mode are used to name the strands. Students understand that in order to produce a meaningful and purposeful text, they need to take into account genre, field, tenor and mode. They also learn that an understanding of these elements assist in the critical reading of texts.

Genre	The purpose and structure of the text
Field	The content/information of the text – <i>What?</i>
Tenor	The language expressing the relationship – <i>Who?</i>
Mode	How the text is communicated eg. written, spoken, visual – <i>How?</i>

The challenge, of course, is to assist students in developing this knowledge about texts and language, and furthermore, supporting students to apply this knowledge and extend their abilities to construct meaningful and purposeful texts in a range of contexts.

The teaching and learning cycle



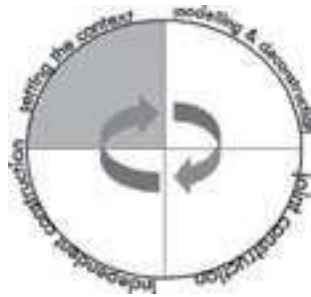
Figure 2. The teaching & learning cycle

The pedagogy used to extend students abilities with language is referred to as a teaching and learning cycle². The teaching and learning cycle is a four part cycle which underpins the process of planning, teaching and assessing the production of texts in the classroom. It is a model of scaffolding which leads students step by step through a number of carefully planned collaborative tasks, prior to independent text production (Hammond 2001). *Setting the context* is when the unit of work is first introduced to

2. The original curriculum cycle was developed by Callaghan and Rothery (1988).

students. A carefully sequenced series of activities is planned to find out what the students already know about the topic, provide them with an overview and introduce them to some of the new vocabulary of the topic. The *modelling and deconstruction* phase of the cycle is where much of the functional grammar is used to deconstruct a model text and explore the way the language functions to create meanings in the text in relation to genre, field, tenor and mode. This is essential if students are expected to be able to produce a meaningful, well structured text for a particular purpose and audience. The *joint construction* phase is when teacher and students together apply the new understandings of language and jointly construct texts or parts of texts. *Independent construction* is when students produce a text independently.

Setting the context



This stage of the cycle generally covers the kind of content knowledge that teachers are accustomed to teaching. Popular activities for the topic of sharks might be viewing documentaries, web searches and excursions to museums or aquariums. However, the importance of this stage of the cycle is firstly to establish what the students already know and bring to the topic. Secondly, it provides an opportunity to consolidate some of what they know using the oral language that they are comfortable with, prior to moving them along the mode continuum to written texts. This stage is vital for ESL students. Following is a classroom activity which could be used in both learning areas, and works very well with adolescent students.

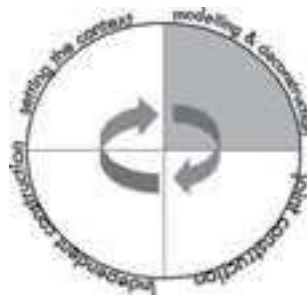
Guided Research

Students are divided into groups. Each group is provided with a research pack which has been pre-prepared by the teacher. The pack may include a brief accessible text on the topic, visuals including images, tables or graphs, interesting facts, maps etcetera. Each group has a different topic and the research packs are tailored to the topic. Within a short time frame, the groups discuss the information provided and use it to prepare a brief and entertaining presentation for the class. This may consist of role play, news report, cartooning, rap, poem, story etcetera. For example, a group which has the topic, *What do sharks eat?* may role play a TV interview with a

shark biologist, shortly after a shark attack on a surfer, to discover whether surfers are a shark delicacy, and if not – what do sharks prefer to eat? The purpose of this activity is to give the students an overview of the topic and also give them an opportunity to choose everyday language, along with other forms of communication to discuss and share information about the new topic. This provides a solid foundation for then moving the students along the mode continuum to written texts.³



Modelling & Deconstruction



At this stage of the cycle the students are introduced to the genre that they will use to provide their evidence of learning. Depending on the students' prior knowledge of the particular genre, all four strands of the functional model of language, genre, field, tenor and mode can be addressed here.

Genre: the purpose and structure of the text

There is quite a difference between the purposes of the report and the argument, so it stands to reason that there will be a difference in the way the texts are structured. It is important that students realise that the structure of any text is designed to realise the purpose of the text; the structure is rhetorical.

3. For early ideas about field, tenor and mode being language continuums, see Martin (1984).

Descriptive information report	Exposition
Purpose: To provide accurate and relevant information about our living and non-living world.	Purpose: To present arguments on an issue, persuading that certain action should be taken.
Structure: – Introductory general statement and description classification – Sequence of descriptive facts, grouped logically through paragraphs and/or subheadings – Labelled illustrations/diagrams etc	Structure: – Introduction: background, thesis and preview – Arguments with elaboration (may include tables/graphs etc) – Summary of arguments and restatement of position

Exploring Text Purpose

Divide students into groups. Provide each group with several examples of information reports (preferably from the field of science). Each group must address a question:

1. Why have these texts been written? What do you think is the author's intention? (Establishing text purpose)
2. Who do you think wrote these texts? What interest do you think the author has in the topic, for example, social, professional etc? (Establishing cultural discourse)
3. Who would read these texts? Why would people choose to read them? Can anybody understand these texts or do the readers need to have some prior knowledge of the topic? (Establishing relationship between author and audience)
4. Do you notice anything similar about the different texts in their appearance, topics, kind of language that is used? (Establishing generic features)

Each group takes it in turns to report back. Teacher notes key points on the whiteboard. Class interacts in whole group discussion offering any further observations. Students take notes from board (unless it is electronic, in which case they can be saved).

Again this task focuses on oral language development as students are able to discuss and share their understandings of the purpose and obvious generic features of a text. As field, tenor and mode are explored, students will be required to rehearse some of the written features of the text type.

Exploring text structure

Once students are aware of the nature of genre, there are many activities which can be used to familiarise students with the structure of texts. A popular activity is to jumble the stages of a text for students to reconstruct in the correct sequence. This kind of activity provides the opportunity to engage students in conversations about how they know which stage comes before another, what are the clues to sequencing the information and what does this say about their own production of the same text type.

Another useful activity is to have students annotate the texts, identifying and naming each stage and comparing the way in which different genres are organised. Once again this enables rich conversations about why texts are ordered the way they are, how the ordering impacts on the reader and how this contributes to the text fulfilling its purpose.



Exploring Text Structure: Information Report

The report genre as shown here is quite a simple structure. Sometimes with reports, depending on the context and also the length of the report, the text is organised with a complex system of headings and subheadings. If students have to produce such a text, and they do sometimes in the senior years in Australia, it is important to spend some time looking at the organisational systems available, to develop students' understanding of how these systems work.

This can be achieved by providing students with some subheadings taken from a report on a related topic. In groups ask them to predict what would be included under each subheading. Once they have brainstormed and shared their answers, provide them with the complete text to read. Discuss whether their predictions were accurate and if the report is well organised (i.e. the information in each paragraph is relevant to its subheading).

Ask students to think about how reports are read compared to novels. Reports are often skimmed, using subheadings to locate specific

information, while novels are read from start to finish, to enjoy the developing narrative. Discuss why the report genre uses subheadings, that is, *How* do we read reports? Students need to be able to answer the question *How can organising a report with subheadings assist the reader?*

Exploring text structure: Exposition

The exposition model is very similar to the way any general essay is structured in an Australian school. Once students have mastered this structure, they can then concentrate on the content of their writing and the other persuasive techniques they need to learn.

The introduction of the exposition comprises three parts, the background, the thesis and the preview. The preview introduces the three main arguments which are taken up in the following paragraphs, just as a movie preview provides highlights of what will be seen in the film. A useful activity for students is to identify the three arguments in the preview, highlighting each one in a different colour. Corresponding colours can then be used to highlight the arguments as they are taken up in the topic sentences of the next three paragraphs. The arguments can be found again in the conclusion. Once students can recognise the pattern, they are able to understand how the author uses this to guide the reader carefully through her arguments, gradually building and reinforcing a particular stance on the issues of shark culling. It is also useful for students to see how the repetition of arguments can be quite subtle by juxtaposing the preview arguments and the topic sentences in a table:

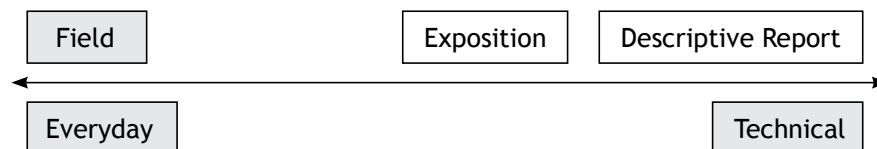
Preview	Topic sentences
The wild oceans and shores are after all, the natural habitat of the white shark and humans are not part of a shark's natural diet.	A compelling reason for not culling sharks to protect humans from attacks is that humans are not particularly appetising to sharks.
The odds that a human will actually become shark food are extremely low.	Furthermore, thousands of Australians die each year due to misadventure or accident, motor vehicle accident being the most the most common cause.
[The odds that a human will actually become shark food] certainly don't stack up against the benefits of the sharks to the Australian Tourism Industry.	While in some circumstances great whites are a danger to humans, humans are apt, as they are with most things, to exploit the great white shark for profit.

The table provides fuel for discussion on the way the author presents the argument in slightly different terms each time, including elaborating slightly on the preview arguments to build the assertion.

Field: The content/information of the text – What?

The field language is the language which expresses the content of the topic. In English, there is a continuum from everyday language to more specialised and finally to more technical language. The purpose of communication determines the point of the continuum from which language is chosen. The field continuum represents movement from everyday, conversational language through to more specialised fields, such as the language of sport, then on to more technical fields, such as the fields of education, such as science humanities and so on.

The descriptive information report is written for a narrow audience and it is assumed that the audience has an interest in, if not knowledge of, the biological sciences. Therefore it tends more towards the technical end of the continuum. Because the argument is directed at a wider audience who may have quite diverse backgrounds, the language is less technical. However, there are some facts and statistics needed to support the arguments presented, and the author would like to demonstrate some level of authority on the matter, so it is not everyday language either.



For these two genres, the features which relate to the level of technicality in the text are listed in the table below. While the texts share some features such as nominalisation and expanded noun groups (these are key features of most texts at secondary level), the information report contains a higher level of technical vocabulary which needs to be explicitly taught.

Descriptive information report	Exposition
Technical vocabulary Nominalisation Noun groups	Nominalisation Noun groups

Developing technical language

One of the most difficult things for ESL students to develop when writing information reports, is the appropriate level of technicality required for this type of text. It is important to support students in recognising technical vocabulary as well as understanding it and using it appropriately. Students are often provided with glossaries and word lists, however, unless the students have engaged cognitively with the language, they do not always remember the vocabulary needed. The following activity helps to engage students with considering the meaning of words and drawing on their knowledge of root words, spelling patterns, similar words in their first language or deducing meaning from the context. While reading the model text, students highlight any new vocabulary. Students enter the vocabulary into the table below making predications about what words may mean. Students then use a dictionary or glossary provided by the teacher to check their predictions.

Word	Prediction	Definition
caudal keel		
pinniped colonies		
ambient water temperature		

Nominalisation

A key feature of written English is the use of nominalisation, which quite simply put, is the process of naming things. English, written in a formal, objective style, is less about happenings, and more about things. This makes the grammar of written English quite different from the everyday spoken English. In written English verbs are changed to nouns, adjectives to nouns and even conjunctions to nouns. For example:

- *To educate* becomes **education**
- *Long becomes* **length**
- *Because* becomes **cause** or **reason**

Some teachers believe that academic English is a foreign language for all students, not just those learning English as an additional language.

The following table provides an example of the nominalisations in the two model texts:

Descriptive information report	Exposition
to classify – classification to mark – markings long – length to inhabit – habitat deep – depth strong – strength to behave – behaviour to situate – situation to sight (see) – sighting	to respond – response to attempt – attempt to implicate – implication to benefit – benefits to occur – occurrences to cull – the culling to chance – chance to risk – risk to populate – population to expect – expectancy to threaten – threat to attract – attraction to prevent – prevention

There are a number of activities students can do to help them become proficient at using nominalisations. Sometimes sentences with nominalisations are taken from the model texts, and students are asked to rewrite them using the verb form:

Descriptive Information Report

In baited situations, divers are advised to remain inside a shark cage.

When bait is hung (situated) in the water to attract sharks, divers are advised to remain inside a shark cage.

When nominalisations are removed from sentences, the result is a sentence with a greater number of words. Students learn that the word from which the nominalised form was derived is not always used. Sometimes there is quite a long way to get to the point.

Students are sometimes asked to make the opposite change. That is to take a sentence which is very 'spoken like' and nominalise it.

Exposition

The great white shark is not only named because of how it looks but also because it is so powerful. It is a natural predator.

The great white shark, named not only for its appearance but its awesome power, is a natural predator.

Students are also asked to work with longer stretches of text, so that they understand the difference between a text which is highly nominalised and one that is not. The main difference is that so much more information is packed into much fewer words when nominalisation is used. Often, as with the previous example, two sentences become one.

Expanding noun groups

Once we have nominalised a word – changed it to a noun, information can be built up around it, in a noun group. Below are two examples of noun groups from the report text:

- large triangular serrated **teeth** in both jaws
- a coastal and offshore **shark** of continental and insular shelves

The key nouns here are teeth and shark. The group of words simply gives us more information about these key nouns.

It is possible to show students how noun groups are constructed by using a table. The noun group enables us to point to, count, describe, classify and qualify the key noun. Here the noun shark is classified:

Pointer	Counter	Intensifier	Describer	Classifier	Thing (Noun)	Qualifier
a				coastal and offshore	shark	of continental and insular shelves

The following nominalisations are from the information report text:

- strong – strength
- to threaten – threat
- to situate – situation

The table below shows how information has been built up around these nominalisations as a noun group:

Pointer	Counter	Describer	Classifier	Thing (Noun)	Qualifier
The white shark's		muscular		strength	
		baited		situations	
a	minimal			threat	to human life

The following nominalisations are from the information report text

- to respond – response
- to chance – chance
- to occur – occurrences
- to attract – attraction

The table below shows how information has been built up around these nominalisations as a noun group:

Pointer	Counter	Describer	Classifier	Thing (Noun)	Qualifier
an		emotional		response	to cull these magnificent creatures
these		tragic but rare		occurrences	
a	1 in 84			chance	of dying in a car accident
a		popular		attraction	off the coast of Port Lincoln, in South Australia

Understanding nominalisation and expanding noun groups are important when writing in English. Students require opportunities to practice manipulating the language and opportunities to discuss the impact of changing the sentence structure, both on the meaning of the sentence and the relationship with the reader.

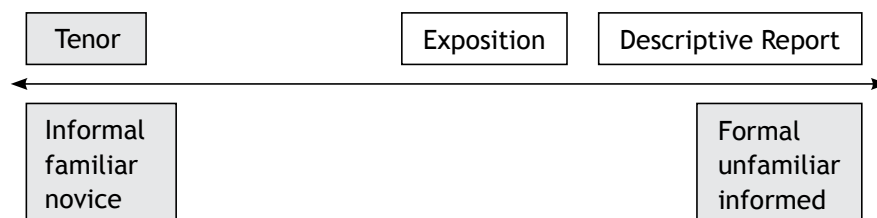
By this stage of the modelling and deconstruction phase, students may have drafted some paragraphs to practice text structure. Using these drafts, identify sentences which would benefit from nominalisation, that is would move along the continuum to a more written, less spoken grammar. Display the sentences (providing students with a copy of the paragraph) so students can discuss which words would be best nominalised. Allow them to work on sentences in pairs. Once they have rewritten the sentences, display the noun group grid.

Invite students to add the nominalisations to the grid and build the information around them, referring to the categories in the noun group. Finally ask students to rewrite the original paragraphs and share them with the class.

Tenor: The language expressing the relationship – Who?

Whether or not it is appropriate to use more abstract and densely packed language depends mainly on the audience, or more specifically, the relationship between the author and the audience. There are not many situations in everyday life that require a high level of formality, so explaining to students the need for formality in written texts can be the most difficult of all. Depending on the cultural and social context of a text, students need to adjust their choice of language to suit the situation from the everyday, here and now, face to face language of familiar topics with a known audience, to much more abstract and formal language choices, for new learning and a distant, unknown audience. Students also need to know how to choose objective language when the purpose is simply to inform, or choose more subjective language when the purpose is to persuade.

The purposes and audiences of the two model texts have already been established as different, therefore it is expected that the tenor will also be different.



Descriptive information report	Exposition
Formal Objective Impersonal No colloquial or evaluative language	Formal Subjective Evaluative Modality

The challenge with the descriptive information report is that many documentaries which can be viewed to support student learning often take on a more informal tenor in the narration in order to engage the viewers. Also, with so much more information available on the internet, it is very easy to find poor examples of information reports, but not so

easy to find good ones. The challenge with the exposition is that although the text is expressing personal opinion and is subjective by nature, this subjectivity is hidden behind objective language in order to maintain a level of formality as well as to add weight to the arguments by making them appear as factual rather than opinion.

Subjective and objective language

Teaching students to choose formal and objective language can be achieved through examining texts and discussing the effectiveness of the choices the author has made.

It is natural for students to want to use subjective language when discussing a topic. When we first learn to speak, and throughout our everyday conversations, we speak subjectively about the 'here and now' and personal experiences. As students move through the years of schooling, they are required to become more and more objective. Many students need to be taught the structures of objective language.

Subjective to objective structures: making writing less personal

When writing objectively students need to:

- Omit any evaluation of the topic
- Remove personal pronouns
- Use passive Voice
- Nominalise
- Use an authority or expert to hide their opinion

Using the text below, ask students why the underlined words and phrases are too subjective for a descriptive report. Compare it to the model text and discuss the difference. Students then rewrite the text making it more objective – more like the model text.

It is thought that sharks almost certainly evolved from placoderms, a group of primitive jawed fishes. It took a long series of successful and unsuccessful mutations with fin, jaw positions etc. to give us all the different designs of sharks around today. Asked to draw a shark most people would draw a shape along the lines of the whaler shark family, tigers or a mackeral shark such as a porbeagle. However many people do not realize the sheer diversity in the shape of sharks, or that rays are really sharks

Modality

Modality expresses the writer's judgement on the credibility of the 'facts'. As a descriptive information report is factual, there is no need for modality, which is why the previous text example seems odd. However, when the

purpose is to persuade the reader to take on a point of view as if it were fact, high modality is required.

The table below shows four main areas of modality which can be adjusted according to our opinions and our desire to persuade, these are bolded.

Certainty how certain something is	may, can, usually, definitely, perhaps <i>could result in</i>
Obligation how necessary something is	may, must, have to, should <i>they have to use their teeth</i>
Inclination how much someone wants to do something	willing, would like, want <i>Humans are not particularly appetising to sharks</i>
Frequency how often something happens	often, always, never <i>on rare occasions</i>

In the second column there are some examples of how modality can be expressed through the verb. There are also examples, in italics, taken from the exposition text. When first using modality, students often want to use very high modality. However this is not always the most persuasive. The writer needs the audience to agree. High modality invites a counter attack:

Sharks are *definitely* a danger to surfers.

It is *beyond doubt* that sharks are a danger to surfers.

.....*but many surfers see sharks without ever being attacked!*

The audience is more likely to agree if the modality is toned down a little. There are many activities which can be used to help students master the use of modality. Role plays are often used where students are given the characters and a point to be persuaded, for example a teenager asking permission from the parents to go to a party. Identifying the modality in texts and discussing why particular choices were made can also be useful.

Display the following excerpt from the model exposition.

The odds that a human will actually become shark food are extremely low and certainly don't stack up against the benefits of the sharks to the Australian Tourism Industry.

Ask students to identify the expressions of certainty in the text.

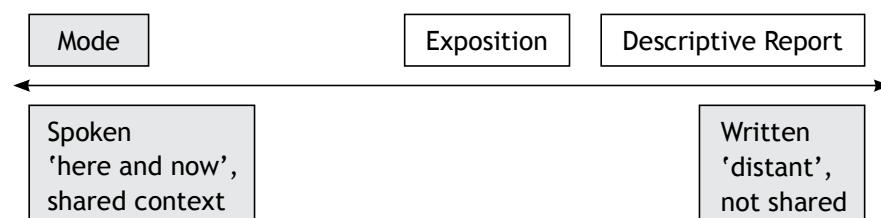
The *odds* that a human will *actually* become shark food are *extremely low* and *certainly don't stack up against* the benefits of the sharks to the Australian Tourism Industry.

The audience for this text is mainly people who enjoy recreational activities related to the beach: surfing, swimming, fishing and sailing. Australia is a very sporty nation and for many people, sport generally involves recreational gambling such as football tipping, horse racing, etcetera. So using a gambling metaphor to talk about certainty is a strategic choice made to engage the audience.

Divide students into small groups with each group rewriting the text with varying degrees of certainty and with or without the metaphor. On completion ask students to grade the completed texts from least persuasive to most persuasive, discussing what they think about the different degrees of certainty.

Mode: How the text is communicated, e.g. written, spoken, visual – How?

Mode refers to the mode of delivery of a text and the conventions which are appropriate to the chosen form of presentation. For example, a casual spoken text has very different conventions to a written formal text.



The mode features of the two model texts are shown below:

Descriptive information report	Exposition
Foregrounds: topic – non human Present tense Vocabulary patterns to build cohesion Includes illustrations or diagrams	Foregrounds: topic – human and non human, generalisations, abstractions, text connectives Present tense with modal auxiliaries Referencing to build cohesion Includes tables or graphs

Foregrounding

The first aspect of mode which differs in these texts is the foregrounding. Foregrounding occurs at the beginning part of a clause, sentence, paragraph or whole text. It prepares the reader for what the writer will elaborate on in the latter part of the clause, sentence, paragraph or whole text. Here is a comparison of the foregrounding from the first paragraph of the two model texts.

Descriptive Information Report	Exposition
The white shark It There is The male This shark The teeth of the upper jaw	The ocean Often referred to as the living fossil, The great white shark Unfortunately, on rare occasions This has resulted in If these people, mainly zealous surfers The wild oceans and shores The odds that a human will actually become shark food

The foregrounding in the information report is topical and is usually a specific noun. The teaching point with this is to make sure students are not too repetitive with their foregrounding. On the other hand, the exposition text is heavily foregrounded with opinion, through the use of noun groups and dependent clauses which immediately provide a context for the following main clause. Through the foregrounding, the author is positioning the reader to accept the new information from a particular viewpoint. *Often referred to as a living fossil* provides the shark with an unusual status, worthy of respect. The readers will have this in mind as they read the information that follows, influencing their interpretation. Foregrounding can be a clever device for persuading readers.

Just by observing the foregrounding in the introductory paragraph, we can see clearly how the author is setting up this text, encouraging the reader to take a particular stance and using her opinion to persuade, before she even explains the issue to be presented. The author is clearly positioning the reader to believe that sharks should not be culled. This kind of text deconstruction with second language students is absolutely vital if they are to both understand and produce persuasive rhetoric.

Cohesion

One aspect of mode language features is to maintain cohesion throughout the text. One way this is achieved in English is through using the reference system. Reference words can include:

Personal pronouns	I me mine my, we us ours our, he him his, it its, you yours your, they them theirs their, she her hers,
Demonstrative	the this these that those here now there then
Comparison	same/different, other bigger/est, more/less

In this text the reference items have been circled and there is an arrow pointing to the word the reference item refers to.

The ocean is a vast wilderness to thousands of unique and amazing creatures including the great white shark. Often referred to as the living fossil, it has graced our oceans for some 400 million years. The great white shark, named not only for its appearance but for its awesome power, is a natural predator. Unfortunately, on rare occasions humans have met their fate in the jaws of a great white pointer. This has resulted in an emotional response to cull these magnificent creatures in an attempt to keep our beaches safe. If these people, mainly cautious surfers, considered the wider implications of this issue, they would undoubtedly think differently.

This is the first paragraph of the model text with reference items identified. A task for students is to identify reference items in the remaining text and draw an arrow to the words they refer to. Students need to be aware of using the referencing system appropriately in their own texts so they do not lose cohesion. Students learning English as an additional language may find that meaning is disrupted when reading, if they are unable to follow the referencing system in the text.

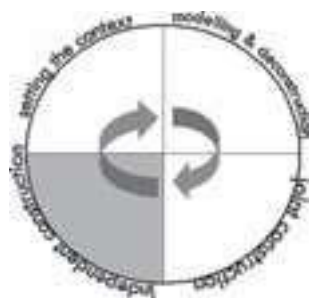
Joint construction



In order to pull much of the learning together from the modelling and deconstruction phase of the cycle, it is valuable to spend some time jointly constructing texts with students. This can be done using a white board and lead by the teacher. For example, the teacher records suggestions from the students, while drawing their attention to the language patterns that

were worked on earlier in the cycle. Students can follow up by writing short stages of texts in pairs or small groups. A dictogloss can also be a very helpful way of introducing joint construction of texts. Dictogloss is a practical way to help students master the register required for an objective, formal written text.⁴

Independent construction



Teachers who use the teaching and learning cycle have found that students are much more focused when writing independently, having been through the scaffolding process. This is because they know what to write and how to write it. There is no guess work. The final independent construction can be supported through the use of clear information about what the students will be assessed on, and a description of the criteria for success. Assessment rubrics can provide good guidelines for students.

Conclusion

To conclude this paper, it is necessary to return to the initial questions asked by teachers:

- Where do I start with functional grammar?
- How do I know which grammar to teach and when to teach it?
- How do I turn this theory of grammar into classroom practice?

To use functional grammar as an effective teaching tool, it should be part of a scaffolding process of deconstructing and reconstructing texts, such as the teaching and learning cycle. At the initial stages, teachers are usually comfortable with choosing a topic, however they must also decide which genre students will need to use to show evidence of their learning. A model text will need to be found or written and teachers must analyse the text to be clear of the language patterns which serve the purpose of the text. It is these language patterns which will be examined and rehearsed during the modeling and deconstruction phase of the cycle. The teacher needs to demonstrate how the grammar works to make meaning in the text in all four strands of genre, field, tenor and mode. In order to engage students

4. For detailed a detailed description of how to use a dictogloss in the classroom, see Gibbons (2002, p. 43)

in learning about the language, they should participate in collaborative hands on activities to practice the grammar.

The teaching and learning cycle is useful because it provides a rationale and a framework for decisions about the type and sequence of teaching and learning activities. It involves talk about texts, a shared understanding of the structure and grammatical patterns of the genre under focus, which involves learning about language in context. The scaffolding through the cycle ensures that by the time learners write independently, they have a clear understanding of the language choices they make and why they make them. The underlying pedagogy (scaffolding) moves students from being highly supported in the learning process to gradually becoming independent learners.

This approach should not be confined to the language classroom. It is valuable in every area of the curriculum. It is also important to note that all students benefit from this approach, not just second language learners. Teaching functional grammar within a teaching and learning cycle is about using language in new contexts for new purposes, requiring new language structures. It is a proven method of developing language across the curriculum, for all students.

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Appendix 1 The white shark

Classification:

The white shark *carcharodon carcharias* is also known as the white pointer shark or the great white shark.

Appearance:

The white shark is large with a heavy spindle-shaped body, conical snout, caudal keel and lunate caudal fin. It is slate brown to black above and white underneath. There is often a black spot at the pectoral fin axil and the undersides of the pectoral fins have black markings that vary among individuals.



The male begins to mature at 2.4 m [7.8 ft] and can grow to a length of 8 m [26.25 ft]. This shark has large triangular serrated teeth in both jaws. The teeth of the upper jaw are broad while lower jaw teeth are narrower.

[http://media.photobucket.com/
image/The%20great%20white%20
shark/thacien/great-white-shark-1.
jpg](http://media.photobucket.com/image/The%20great%20white%20shark/thacien/great-white-shark-1.jpg)

Habitat:

The white shark is found in temperate, subtropical and tropical waters worldwide. This coastal shark inhabits continental and insular shelves. It has been found off oceanic islands and it also occurs close inshore. It penetrates shallow bays in coastal waters and may even venture into the surf. The shark is frequently found in the vicinity of pinniped colonies. It can swim to a depth of 1280 m [4,199 ft].

Biology:

This Ovoviviparous species is able to maintain a body temperature as much as 8°C [14.4°F] above the ambient water temperature. By keeping the temperature of muscles and internal organs higher than the surrounding water, the white shark's muscular strength and energy level is greater than that of a cold-bodied shark.

Behaviour:

The white shark swims stiffly and is capable of great speed. The shark sometimes raises its head above the water ("spy hops"), a behaviour frequently observed in the vicinity of seal colonies and in baited situations. The white shark is a predator. In general, juveniles feed on fish, while adult sharks feed primarily on marine mammals.

Danger to humans:

Sightings of a white shark do not mean that an attack is inevitable; the shark is often indifferent to divers. However, this species has been implicated in numerous unprovoked attacks on swimmers, surfers and divers. Most bites by white sharks are not fatal, but incidents in which a white shark partially consumed a human have occurred. In baited situations divers are advised to remain inside a shark cage.

Note: This species is protected in the territorial waters of several countries including Australia.

http://www.tntdownunder.com/images/photos/small/chapter_2456696036.jpg



Adapted from <http://www.shark.org.au/species.html>
29/5/09

Appendix 2

Should we cull white sharks to save human life?

The ocean is a vast wilderness to thousands of unique and amazing creatures including the great white shark. Often referred to as the living fossil, it has graced our oceans for some 400 million years. The great white shark, named not only for its appearance but for its awesome power, is a natural predator. Unfortunately, on rare occasions humans have met their fate in the jaws of a great white pointer. This has resulted in an emotional response to cull these magnificent creatures in an attempt to keep our beaches safe. If these people, mainly zealous surfers, considered the wider implications of this issue, they would undoubtedly think differently. The wild oceans and shores are after all, the natural habitat of the white shark and humans are not part of a shark's natural diet. The odds that a human will actually become shark food are extremely low and certainly don't stack up against the benefits of the sharks to the Australian Tourism Industry.

A compelling reason for not culling sharks to protect humans from attacks is that humans are not particularly appetising to sharks. Quite frankly people are too bony. John West, manager of the Australian Shark Attack Files informs us that seals and dolphins have more flesh than humans which are not the ideal food. Unfortunately if sharks choose to test something to see if it is edible, they have to use their teeth. In the case of great whites, this can be fatal for humans. However, these tragic but rare occurrences do not warrant the culling of the great white sharks, as they do not intentionally prey on humans for food.

Furthermore, thousands of Australians die each year due to misadventure or accident, motor vehicle accident being the most common cause. In fact in 2003, a person had a 1 in 84 chance of dying in a car accident compared to a 1 in 3,748,067 chance of being killed by a shark. Perhaps it should be cars (or bad drivers) that are culled! See figure 1 for comparisons of the frequency of accidental deaths world wide in 2003⁵.

5. Sources: All accidental death information from National Safety Council. Disease death information from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Shark fatality data provided by the International Shark Attack File.

Cause of death	Annual Death 2003	Death risk during one's lifetime
Car accidents	44,757	1 in 84
Accidental poisoning	19,456	1 in 193
Drowning	3,306	1 in 1,134
Excessive cold	620	1 in 6,045
Sun/heat exposure	273	1 in 13,729
Lightning	47	1 in 79,746
Fireworks	11	1 in 340,733
Shark attack	1	1 in 3,748,067

The lifetime risk is calculated by dividing the 2003 population (290,850,005) by the number of deaths, divided by 77.6 – the life expectancy of a person born in 2003. It is clear that shark attacks are a minimal threat to human life and culling sharks will not solve any problems.

While in some circumstances great whites are a danger to humans, humans are apt, as they are with most things, to exploit the great white shark for profit. This occurs very successfully in the Australian Tourist Industry. A very popular attraction off the coast of Port Lincoln in South Australia is cage diving with great white sharks. So popular is this, that QANTAS airways are considering direct flights from the busy city of Melbourne to the remote tip of the Ayre Peninsula to service the hundreds of international tourists who frequent this attraction each year. Culling great whites would pose a serious threat to this thriving industry – indeed more of a threat to human livelihood than the shark itself.

There is no doubt that a shark attack can not only be fatal for the victim, but also extremely traumatic for witnesses and family members. Culling sharks will not ease the pain for these people nor prevent further attacks. Prevention requires respecting the habitat of sharks and understanding that each time we enter the ocean, we are invading the home of this powerful predator. Although we are not the natural prey of sharks and they do not intentionally pursue humans, people must be cautious to avoid the 1 in almost 4,000,000 chance of being attacked. If sharks are culled, the impact on the tourist industry could result in many humans losing their livelihood.

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