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ABSTRACT

A discussion of innovation in college and university intensive English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs uses a systems approach to analyze program elements (constituencies, decision-makers, purpose, performance measures, environments, resources, subsystems, and boundaries) and describes new program initiatives at the University of Pennsylvania. Based on a survey of teachers' opinions and student characteristics, the program was restructured to provide greater flexibility and adaptability, greater agreement between the aims of students and of the curriculum, and greater agreement between student characteristics and specific course offerings. The program uses a T-model curriculum, which provides a graded syllabus at six lower and intermediate levels leading to a broader curriculum of electives at the highest level. Of three implementation strategies considered, only one, the normative-evaluative, which assumes that change involves alteration in attitudes, values and skills, and significant relationships, is seen as suitable for a university-based intensive ESL program. The curriculum will take considerably longer to implement than was originally estimated. Program planning data, course descriptions, and a sample objectives-based curriculum for a course in research report writing are appended. (MSE)

# A Systems Approach to Curriculum Innovation in Intensive English Programs

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Paper presented at the Colloquium on Curriculum Renewal in Intensive English Programs held at the 24th Annual TESOL Convention, San Francisco, March 6-10, 1990.

## INTRODUCTION

Recent discussions of curriculum innovation in English as a second language, in particular Ron White's book *The ELT Curriculum*, (White, 1988) have stressed the advantages of a systems approach to the management of English as a second language programs and in particular to innovations in curriculum design. Conceiving an English as a second language program as a system involves viewing it in Miles' definition as "a bounded collection of interdependent parts, devoted to the accomplishment of some goal or goals with the parts maintained in a steady state in relation to each other and the environment" (Miles, *Innovation in Education*, 1964). This presentation will apply one particular systems model--that of the "Human Activity System" proposed by Peter Checkland at the University of Lancaster and published in two articles in the *Journal of Applied Systems Analysis* (Checkland, 1979a,b)--to describe the English as second language program located at the University of Pennsylvania and will show how successful curriculum innovation involves management of complex interactions among the component parts of the system.

Checkland argues that systems analysis and, in particular, the systems diagrams that we are familiar with as flow charts which show the steps in the operation of computer programs or the organization charts which show functional relations in a bureaucracy are particularly good at showing the connections between components of human activity systems. Human activity systems, says Checkland, are wholes characterized by the connections between their component parts. These multiple connections and relationships are more easily shown in diagrams than described in prose, for a reader of a prose description has to process information serially and this places a much greater burden on memory when the description is concerned with relationships between components of a system. Systems diagrams, on the other hand, show complex relationships among components simultaneously, making the task of understanding the system considerably easier.

Checkland also distinguishes between, on the one hand, the "hard" systems which are most often the concern of professional systems analysts and which attempt to solve well-defined problems and, on the other hand, "soft" systems which are applied to the ill-structured problems which characterize situations perceived as problematic in the social world. One such "soft" systems problem is that of the design and implementation of instructional curricula and one specific application of Checkland's ideas in this area has been the program designed by Candlin (1984) for reform of the English as a foreign language curriculum in the public instructional systems in certain states (Länder) in West Germany.

For the purposes of this presentation, I would like to borrow Checkland's generalized model of a "Human Activity System" and apply it to the task of curriculum innovation in a university intensive English program. The model attempts to describe in a generalized way how taking purposeful action in pursuit of a goal must take into account the system's purpose or mission, its environment, the nature of the decision-making available, and the kind of monitor and control action which is possible given the system's resources and subsystems. It should be noted that the model is a first approximation to one abstract

representation of the problem. That is to say, it is one person's interpretation of a situation with which most teachers and ESL program directors are familiar. Because the model makes explicit my own interpretation of the problem, it may also serve as a basis for debate and discussion of differing interpretations of the same problem.

## COMPONENTS OF AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM

In Figure 1 each of the round boxes encloses a noun referring to a component of the system and the lines drawn between the boxes show the relationship among these nouns by means of transitive verbs, prepositions, and subordinate clauses. In this way, each pathway through the system diagram is a sentence or phrase describing the system.

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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If we replace the general nouns in this model with the particular nouns which refer to the problem of curriculum design for intensive English programs, we will have a working model of the problem at hand. The problem itself is defined explicitly in a root definition, which may be formulated as follows:

> An University ESL Program (S) is a professionally-manned system concerned with the overall management of teaching English as a second language so that by this management the system may make the best possible contribution to learning on the part of students attending the program.

Checkland's model identifies nine interdependent parts of a "Human Activity System," (S) which are identified in terms of a university English language program (ELP) as follows.

The *wider systems of S* are the stake-holders or constituencies both on-campus and off who make known their demands on the ELP and their view of its proper role. These include the university administration, the city or community of which the university is part, funding agencies, and students. In Checkland's model the wider systems of S are a given over which the system has no control.

The wider systems of S make known their demands on S and their view of its role to the *decision-takers* of S. These actors are the individuals who articulate the mission of the ELP and who take responsibility for its success or failure in carrying out that mission. Depending on the management style of the ELP director, the group of decision-takers may be limited to a few administrators or may include teachers, support staff and students as well. I will argue that successful curriculum innovation in a University ESL program involves expanding this group of decision-takers to include all parties affected by the innovation.

*The purpose or mission of S* is a statement of why the ELP exists and what it hopes to achieve. Ideally, the mission of the ELP should parallel the mission of the university of which it is a part. If the mission of the ELP and the university are at odds then conflicts are likely to arise.

The decision-takers of S are also aware of the effectiveness of the system in achieving the goals stated in the mission statement through *measures of performance of S*. In practice, this measurement is often carried out by evaluation of the program by students, through faculty meetings and surveys, as well as by means of external reviews.

In Checkland's model the *environments of S* are those external factors which the decision-takers monitor and attempt to influence. In the case of a university ESL program, such circumstances include the knowledge base of second language acquisition theory and classroom teaching practice, the market forces which determine demand for the ELP's services, and the administrative climate of the university. I will argue below that it is changes in the ELP's environment which most often lead to curriculum innovation.

While the right-hand side of the diagram represents the monitor and control subsystem, the lower central part of the diagram represents the operational subsystem--how, that is, resources are allocated among the different components of S and how these components are designed and interconnected. The *resources of S* are human (teaching faculty, administrative staff), financial (revenue and expenditures), and physical (buildings, classrooms, offices, and equipment).

The *subsystems of S* are the different kinds of program offered by the ELP. These may be limited to an intensive English program for non-matriculated students or may be more extensive such as an intensive English program, community outreach programs, university service programs, and programs sponsored by external funding agencies. Clearly, the subsystems of S do not exist in isolation from one another but show *connectivity* or a network of resources shared among the different subsystems of S. In the case of an ELP this includes instructional materials and tests which are used on different programs, the individuals who teach on and manage several different programs, and the physical and financial resources for which the different programs compete and to which they contribute. Such resources may be allocated and reallocated in new ways in a process of curriculum innovation.

Finally, the *boundary of the system* is defined by the area of authority of the system's decision-takers, which may be defined in turn by the demands placed upon them by the wider systems. Indeed, the boundary of the system may change as a result of the success (or lack of success) that participants in the wider systems perceive the program as having in the achievement of its goals. The area of authority of the ELP may for example expand when the ELP takes on a greater role in determining language policy on campus, or alternatively it may diminish if one area of program activity is cut.

In summary, the systems diagram we have been using can also be seen to comprise three essential subsystems. First, the model contains a *monitor and control subsystem*,

represented by the right-hand side of the diagram. As we saw, this subsystem monitors the effectiveness of the system in achieving its goals and the goals themselves are reexamined in the light of changes in the knowledge environment. Second, in the *operational subsystem*, represented in the lower central part of the diagram, the system's decision-takers receive the information produced by the monitor and control subsystem and allocate resources in order to achieve the best possible contribution to learning on the part of students attending the program. The operations of this subsystem include establishment of different kinds of program, allocation of resources among them and definition of connections among the different programs. Finally, what Checkland calls an *"Awareness" subsystem* must exist in order for the decision-takers to be cognizant of the relevant information inputs into the system. The "Awareness" subsystem ensures that the decision-takers are aware of relevant information regarding the views and demands of the university administration, the city or community of which the university is part, funding agencies, and students. These decision-takers must also be aware of the knowledge environment, that is, both the informat concerning the evaluation of their own program and also the theory and practice of similar programs at other institutions. Finally, the decision-takers must also be aware of the boundary of their system as defined by their own area of authority.

The model presented here is a first approximation to the view of a university ELP as a bounded collection of interdependent parts, devoted to the accomplishment of a stated goal, in which the parts have fixed relations with each other and with the environment. We may find such a model useful as an overview of a complex system, of which until now we have only perceived parts and have been only dimly aware of the relations among them. The second part of this paper will describe how an understanding of this interconnectivity was the basis for a curriculum innovation at the University of Pennsylvania's English Language Programs.

## CURRICULUM INNOVATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

### New Programming Initiatives

Since 1986 the curriculum of Penn's English Language Programs has been undergoing extensive renewal. The motivation for this renewal came from several changes in the environment of the system, in the knowledge base, in market conditions, and in the administrative climate. Prior to 1986 the structure of Penn's ELP was that of a pre-academic intensive English program for non-matriculated students. In addition to the intensive English program, there were a few additional programs such as a training program for international teaching assistants and a summer abroad program for undergraduates at a Japanese University.

One particular change in the environment was the significant drop in student numbers during the period 1981-86, when our program realized--like many others--that enrollments

were highly sensitive to the value of the dollar on international currency markets and to other vagaries of global politics such as the Iranian Revolution and the drop in the price of crude oil over which we appeared to have no control. An awareness that an almost perfect inverse relationship existed between the value of the dollar and our enrollments, as shown in Figure 2, and a change in the administrative climate at Penn that stressed the need for responsibility-centered budgeting combined to impel us to seek alternative sources of revenue which would offset the drop in revenue in the intensive program. This was the motivation behind the drive to diversify our program offerings into other areas such as community outreach, sponsored programs, and university service work. Our belief was that by spreading the risk over a number of different areas of programming we could better withstand a hostile market environment than we did in the early eighties when we had essentially only one operational component--the intensive program.

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Insert Figure 2 about here

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The result was a considerable expansion of our sub-systems and a diversion of resources away from the intensive program into new programming initiatives. The program's offerings now include community outreach programs for international students, scholars, and professionals in the Philadelphia area; extensive service EAP work on campus in new areas such as English for dental education, for energy professionals from developing countries, and for students of architecture and city and regional planning; and large number of programs for teachers, business people and professionals sponsored by funding agencies such as USIA, CIEE, and The Soros Foundation. These new programming initiatives now account for 30% of the Program's revenue.

**Curriculum Innovation in the Intensive English Program**

Meanwhile the intensive program continued with a curriculum which had been developed between 1979 and 1982 and was characterized by:

- A focus on English for academic purposes.

- A synthetic syllabus (Wilkins, 1976) in which language items were taught as discrete units, language skills were separated, and classes were graded according to a scale of assumed linguistic difficulty.

- A focus on written work rather than oral fluency which was determined by the classroom interactional styles of the predominantly Hispanic and Arabic students of the time.

- Very little possibility of individualization according to different students' needs.

- A curriculum closely linked to the teaching materials available at the time that it was developed.

The environmental changes which led to the present process of curriculum innovation occurred both in the knowledge environment and in the market environment. First, much recent scholarship in second language pedagogy and innovative work in syllabus design has challenged the idea of a discrete-point synthetic syllabus in which learners learn individual items and skills in isolation from each other (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Candlin & Murphy, 1987; Wilkins, 1976; Prabhu 1987). This work had suggested that there are other and better ways to learn a second language than by the gradual accretion of separate parts of it. In addition, the increasing focus among teachers and researchers on individual differences among language learners and the design of innovative ways of individualizing language instruction (Dickinson, 1978; Geddes & Sturtridge, 1982) was a further change in the knowledge environment which affected our view of the curriculum.

Market forces were the other environmental factor which changed for our program as they did in so many other university ESL programs in the United States. From a predominantly pre-academic population of students from the Middle East and Latin America, our students now hail mostly from East Asia (notably Japan) and are less concerned with admission to a degree program at a university in the U.S. than they are with a direct experience of the language and culture of the United States and then returning to continue their studies or careers in their own countries.

The process of renewal was initiated by a small group of teachers led by Kristine Billmyer (the curriculum committee) but from the very beginning the strategy for change involved including as many people as possible as decision-takers in the system (Billmyer, Adams, Petty, & Tanner, 1988). A questionnaire was completed by 210 students enrolled in the intensive program. The survey gathered information about student characteristics (age, gender, native language, country of origin, length of time in the English program, profession or academic discipline), their purpose for studying in the English program and their perceived language and cultural training needs. In addition a survey of teachers' perceptions of the present program model and the written curricula for various levels of the intensive program was conducted.

On the basis of the survey of teachers' opinions and student characteristics, as well as the changes in the environmental factors, the curriculum committee recommended a revision of the intensive program curriculum which would achieve three broad goals (Billmyer et al., 1988):

*Greater Flexibility and Adaptability.* It was felt that the curriculum was not capable of adapting either to a change in student needs and characteristics, nor was it able to accommodate changes in ESL pedagogy and incorporate new texts and materials with ease.

The new curriculum, it was felt, should provide both the structure needed to maintain a high quality of instruction but also the flexibility to adapt to change in the future.

*Greater Agreement Between the Aims of Students and the Aims of the Curriculum.* The student profile in 1988 revealed that the student population fell into two major categories: pre-academic and general. The curriculum appeared to meet the needs only of the former group, whereas the general students, who did not, for example, need to learn to listen to lectures or write research papers were nonetheless being drilled extensively in those skills. It was felt that the new curriculum should be flexible enough to accommodate both pre-academic and general-purpose students.

*Greater Agreement Between Student Characteristics and Specific Course Offerings.* The original curriculum was conceived at a time when many students entered at the absolute beginner level and stayed with the program until they reached a level of proficiency high enough for them to be admitted to university. However, the current profile of students revealed that the majority of students enrolled at the intermediate levels. The new curriculum, therefore, should offer more course options at the high intermediate to advanced levels so that students may recycle at these levels without having to repeat the same courses. In addition the greater number of East Asian students in the program today compared with the predominantly Hispanic and Arab population of 10 years ago suggested that the old curriculum's emphasis on the development of written skills should be replaced with a greater availability of instruction aimed at developing spoken fluency.

## The New Curriculum

The curriculum model which was adopted to replace the old curriculum was one put forward by my colleague, Tom Adams, and became known as the T-model curriculum. It comprised two separate organizing principles in one which could be visualized as the vertical and horizontal strokes of a capital letter "T". At the lower and intermediate levels of proficiency, a graded syllabus was proposed which takes the model of communicative competence proposed by Canale & Swain (1980) as its organizing principle. In this syllabus, instructional objectives in grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence will be specified at each of six levels. Achievement of specified combinations of those objectives will allow students to pass from one level to the next higher level. This part of the new curriculum is still in the early stages of development and there is still some debate among the designers and the rest of our teaching staff as to whether the syllabus should be organized in the way of a traditional synthetic syllabus in which elements of the Canale & Swain communicative competence model are taught independently, or whether to go the direction of an analytic, task-based syllabus suggested by Candlin (1987) and Prabhu (1987).

The horizontal stroke of the "T" was intended for students who had achieved high intermediate or advanced proficiency, either by means of progress through the vertical stroke of the "T" or by initial placement at this level. At this level students are free to choose courses which suited their individual needs from three main areas: an area of academic skills

intended to prepare those students who wish to matriculate in an American University, including such courses as *Library Research Skills*, *Writing the Research Paper*, and *Listening to Lectures and Note-taking*; an area of general language skills focusing on such topics as *Vocabulary Development*, *Advanced Grammar*, and *Conversational Strategies*; and finally an area of content-based instruction in which topics of interest are taught through the medium of English but in which the focus of instruction is knowledge or development of skills in the content area rather than knowledge of English (cf. Mohan, 1986; Crandall & Tucker, 1989; Willetts, 1986) including such topics as *English Through Computers*, *Contemporary American Literature*, and *The News in English*. See Appendix A for a full description of these and other courses.

All courses at this level are electives, and a full-time course of study consists of four courses. In specifying the content of the new courses, the designers placed an emphasis on course objectives rather than on course materials: that is to say the objectives of a course were developed first and then either new materials were written to fit the objectives or suggestions were made for adapting existing materials (cf. Stevick, 1971; Madsen & Bowen, 1978). An example of this objectives-based approach to curriculum design is the curriculum produced by my colleague Debbie Busch for a course entitled *Writing the Research Paper* included as Appendix B.

The electives level of the curriculum is now fully implemented and is proving very popular among students. The advantages of the new electives over the old lock-step curriculum is eloquently expressed in the following opinion of a former student who returned to the program to write a paper on curriculum design:

> In summer 1988, I was a student of ELP in an advanced writing and reading class. The teacher used *A Perfect Day for Bananafish* by Salinger as a textbook. We were supposed to read a new short article every week and write several papers on these articles. In the class of 20, 11 students were MBA or Master of Law candidates, 6 were university students in their own country, 2 were a sabbatical teacher, and 1 was a Master of Education candidate. First of all, the textbook which the teacher chose did not suit to MBA or Master of Law candidates. Most of them complained that they were not interested in Salinger. Second, the needs of students were very different. There were EAP and general English needs. Third, the students' proficiency varied. Some of the students started ELP several sessions ago in the level of 400 or above and they seemed to have moved to a upper class automatically. The students who were placed in the class from the session were better in English than those who had been studying.
>
> As T-model provides the students more opportunities of the class, it will not happen that the same students in my class were placed into the same class from now. T-model will help to eliminate or decrease the frustration of both teachers and instructors [sic], because students can choose a writing class

> which meets their demands. Since I was very discouraged at the ELP's class which did not teach me what I really wanted to study, I am glad to hear the new invention, T-model (Nakanishi. 1989, p. 4)

**Strategies for Implementation of the New Curriculum**

No matter how well designed a new curriculum may be, there are numerous reports in the literature of failure to implement new curricula (e.g., Mountford, 1981; Etherton, 1979). Many of these failures have demonstrated the importance of good organizational management in successful innovation. Indeed, according to White, "it is effective management that provides the circumstances whereby innovation will arise, be taken up and successfully installed" (1988:141). White identifies three strategies of innovation in educational systems: a power-coercive strategy, an empirical-rational strategy, and a normative-reeducative strategy. In a power-coercive strategy for innovation, decision-takers of the system propose and support the innovation and it is up to those who are affected by the innovation to accept or reject it. In an empirical-rational strategy, the innovation is proposed by decision-takers who know that the innovation is desirable, effective, and in line with the self-interest of those who will be affected by it.

It is clear that both the power-coercive and empirical-rational strategies cast the actual teachers and other staff who will be affected by the innovation in the role of passive participants. In the case of a of a new curriculum, the design and implementation would be decided by a limited number of decision-takers and communicated to the teachers, most of whom would not be involved in design decisions. In the case of the power-coercive strategy, the decision-takers may be viewed as despots and in the case of the empirical-rational strategy they may be viewed as benevolent despots.

It will be clear to anyone who has worked in ESL programs in this country that such strategies for implementation of curriculum reform are unlikely to succeed. In our educational culture, and especially in higher education the teaching faculty is accustomed to having a considerable voice in what they teach and how they teach it and is unlikely to accept innovations in which they have not participated.

The third strategy for innovation, mentioned by White is the normative-reeducative model. This model assumes that change will involve "alteration in attitudes, values, skills and significant relationships" (White 1988:129) and, as has been demonstrated by Young and Lee (1985), without such alteration in attitudes curriculum innovations are unlikely to succeed. The normative-reeducative model involves a blurring of the distinction between change agents and those affected by the change: to recast this in terms of Checkland's model it involves increasing participation by all parties whom the change will affect in the circle of the decision-takers of the system. In our own experience at Penn, the process of curriculum innovation has been a success to the extent that we have involved all interested parties; the cases where there has been resistance to change have been those where the teachers have not been significantly involved in the process.

A total of 16 elective courses were developed by 10 teachers and administrators. A model syllabus for the new courses was first developed by the members of the curriculum committee and guidelines for development of new courses were developed. Teachers were given release time from teaching to design the syllabus for one new course, which was then piloted by the same teacher and revised if necessary. The course was then taught a second time by another teacher not involved in the development, and, again, revisions were made if necessary. After a second round of revisions, the syllabus was essentially complete and the new course was offered again as necessary.

## CONCLUSIONS

The designers of the new intensive program curriculum envisioned that "full implementation of the T-model curriculum will take place ... over a period of approximately two years" (Billmyer et al., 1988:18). The reality has been that after two years of very hard work only the electives level has been fully implemented and work is only just now beginning on the proficiency-based courses in the vertical stroke of the "T". The expansion of programming in other areas apart from the intensive program has meant that resources have been diverted from the curriculum development effort, and other projects have also taken up much time. The full implementation of the whole T-model curriculum (including a redesign of the testing and placement procedures) will probably take another two to three years, making four to five years' duration for the project as a whole.

This is a considerable investment of time and resources for any ELP to bear, but in the long run it is probably worth it. The involvement of most members of the teaching faculty and the administrative staff in the curriculum project gives these individuals the opportunities for personal and professional development which will benefit not only themselves but also the students who are ultimately the clients of this innovation. It is true, however, that these same individuals complain of a heavy work load and many of us look forward to a day when all these changes will be over and teaching at the ELP will just be another nine-to-five job. Not for us the Trotskyite concept of permanent revolution.

In this paper I have argued for the value of a systems-analytic framework for viewing curriculum innovation in intensive English language programs on the grounds that such a framework makes clear the interconnections between components of a system which managers of innovation must carefully consider. In describing the renewal of the curriculum at the University of Pennsylvania's English Language Programs, I have shown that both environmental factors such as a changing knowledge base, market conditions, and administrative climate and measures of performance of the system such as questionnaires to students and surveys of the faculty caused the system's decision-takers to initiate the process of curriculum innovation. Finally, three strategies for implementation of the curriculum innovation were discussed and it was argued that only one--the normative-evaluative strategy--is suitable for a university-based intensive English program. This paper is a report of work in progress and there is much that still needs to be done in our own

curriculum innovation at Penn as well as in the more theoretical areas of curriculum and innovation studies.

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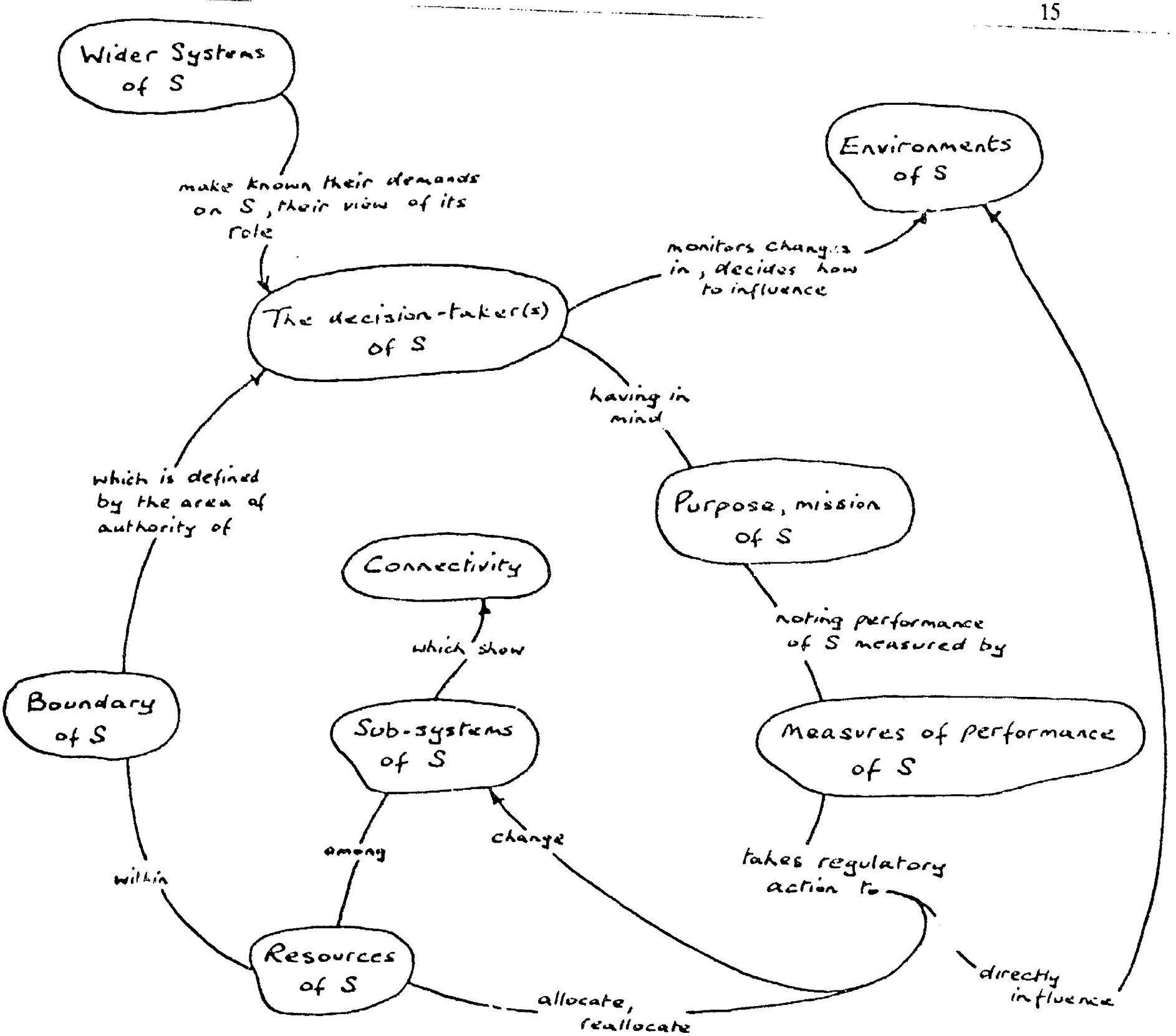


**Figure 1. A Model of the 'Human Activity System' (from Checkland, 1979a)**

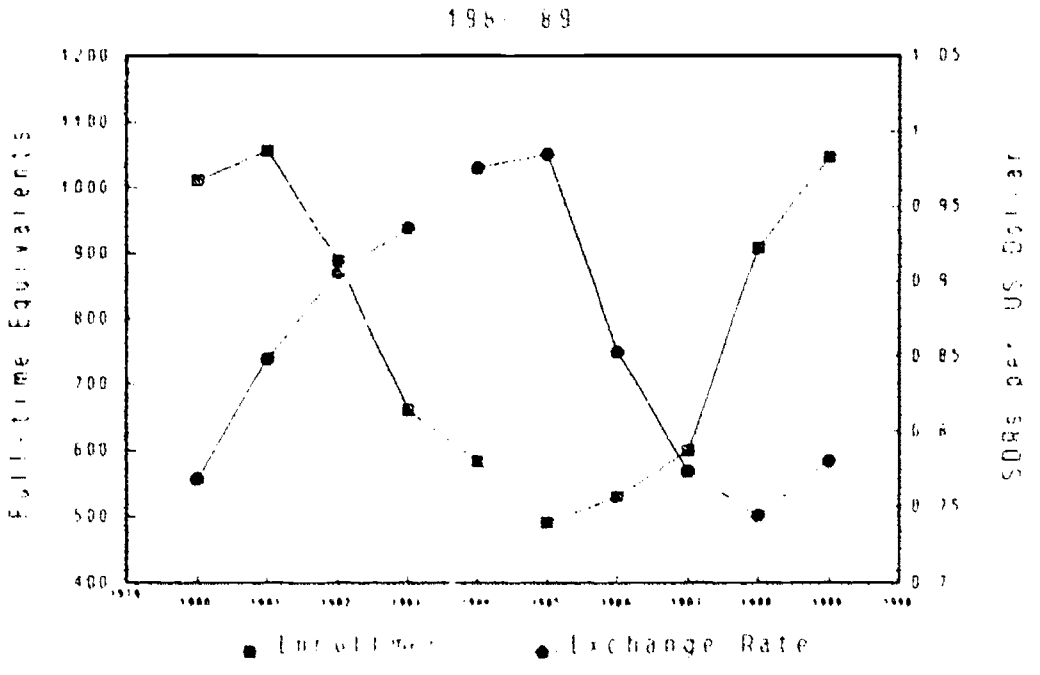


**Figure 2. The foreign exchange market as an environmental constraint on an ELP**

## APPENDIX A: ELECTIVE COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### Academic Skills Courses

***Academic Writing.*** At the university level, students are frequently asked to demonstrate knowledge through writing. This knowledge usually is based upon reading, understanding, and integrating text from a variety of sources, and then selecting, and shaping the necessary information into a clearly written and well organized paper. This course provides practice in developing these strategies. Together as a class, students will study topics from various fields of study. The title of the book used in this course is *Strictly Academic*. Students are required to take this course before taking *Writing the Research Paper.*

***Writing the Research Paper.*** The aim of this course is to teach college-bound students the step-by-step process of writing a research paper. Students will learn to choose and narrow a topic, select relevant articles from periodical indexes, take notes, paraphrase, and synthesize information from many sources into a coherent, well-organized research paper with proper references and citations. They will also become familiar with the standardized formats for writing papers in different academic areas and demonstrate mastery of the conventions of one particular format in their final papers. Students must take *Academic Writing* before they can enroll in this course. They must also take *Library Research Skills* before or concurrent to taking *Writing the Research Paper.*

***Library Research Skills.*** The aims of this course are to develop students' library research skills and to instruct them in computer word processing skills. Students will learn to use the reference section of the library, they will locate books and periodicals using the PennLIN computer search facility, and they will learn to evaluate the usefulness and appropriateness of various books and periodicals for their own research projects. Students will practice using computers for word processing. Classes will often be held in Van Pelt Library and in one of the Computer Labs so that students get hands-on experience using both facilities. This course meets twice a week.

***Academic Speaking.*** The aim of this course is to develop and improve the students' ability to effectively communicate orally in the following academic settings: a) the class discussion group, b) the large and small lecture class, c) oral presentations involving overhead transparencies, d) appointments with the professor, and e) the university department office. Students and teachers will identify several strategies for common situations in each setting and teachers will assist the students with linguistically and socially appropriate language for these strategies.

***Listening to Lectures and Note-taking.*** The goal of this course is to develop the listening comprehension skills students need in order to understand academic lectures and the writing skills they need to take effective notes while listening to a lecture. Students will listen to lectures on topics of general interest, cross-cultural communication and language learning issues, and on subjects related to specific academic disciplines. This course is recommended for individuals planning to attend American university courses or for individuals who want to increase their comprehension of long, connected passages of spoken English presented in typical lecture style.

***Reading Academic Texts.*** Professors and students both agree that the ability to read is the most important skill for students at American universities. This course will help students improve their reading comprehension and study skills and introduce students to the organization of textbooks as well as the style of writing that is characteristic of them. Students will read selections from textbooks in many academic disciplines and discuss them.

***The American University.*** This course will focus on understanding and working within the culture of the American university. The course is divided into several segments: understanding the various phases of applying to a university and the different types of schools available to students; orientation to methods of instruction and examination at the university; educational attitudes and ethics in the university setting, and ways of improving study skills. The course includes mini-lectures (taped and live) by university lecturers, observation of university classes, discussions (e.g., grading, plagiarism, university structure, admissions, teacher/student relations) and involvement in a group research project. A further goal of the course is to aid students in formulating a personal statement that can be used in college applications. The class will integrate the use of all four skill areas--listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

**General Skills Courses**

***Essay Writing.*** The aim of this course is to enable students to produce essays of various types. The course will cover basic principles of essay writing as well as prominent types of essay development, including exemplification, definition, cause/effect, comparison, classification, description, narration, and argumentation/-persuasion. Within each writing task, students will learn to use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The textbook is *College Writing Skills* by Langan.

***Vocabulary Development.*** This course will increase students' knowledge of English words and idioms. Vocabulary will be classified and learned according to notions, topics, function, and use. Students will have opportunities to practice new vocabulary in ways that require them to speak, read, and write. In addition this course helps students improve upon their dictionary skills.

***Advanced Grammar.*** This course aims to reduce grammatical mistakes often made by students at the advanced levels, and to help students learn to use grammatical structures they avoid or do not completely understand. By learning to use these structures correctly students will add variety and accuracy to their speaking and writing. Included in the content will be articles, modals, correct use of tenses, prepositions, and complex structures. A test given at the beginning of the course will determine other structures which students find difficult. Instruction will focus on students' individual grammar problems as well as grammar problems common to the whole class in both spoken and written English.

***Conversational Strategies.*** This course aims to encourage a more spontaneous use of English in social and community settings by providing students with opportunities to interact in simulated and real conversational situations. Students will develop conversational skills and improve interactive listening through work in the following areas: conversational interaction (starting a conversation, making small talk, continuing a conversation, and closing a conversation); interactive listening (clarifying or checking understanding, giving signals of attention or misunderstanding); relevant functional language (making invitations, complimenting, apologizing, agreeing and disagreeing); and telephone conversations.

***Speaking Accurately and Clearly.*** This course will help students improve their pronunciation and help them speak accurately and persuasively. Instruction emphasizes grammatical accuracy and precise use of vocabulary in narrating, describing, explaining, stating and supporting an opinion, hypothesizing, and expressing needs, hopes, and wishes. An important component of the course will be pronunciation and intelligibility. Students will practice the American English sound system, stress, rhythm, and intonation, and they will develop their skills in speaking clearly and expressively in dramatic monologues, plays, and poetry.

**Special Subject or Content Courses**

***English Through Computers.*** This is a practical course introducing students to a number of different computer programs. Students will be given the opportunity to use IBM PCs daily to practice English language skills by completing tasks such as: playing word games and making their own games as well; practicing reading comprehension; and playing adventure games. They will also learn to create a database and use it to search for information and learn to use different software packages such as: Lotus 123 spreadsheet to balance their monthly finances; and the desk-top publishing facilities of WordPerfect 5.0 in order to produce a student newsletter.

***Contemporary American Literature.*** The aim of this course is to help students acquire a deeper understanding of American beliefs and values through reading and discussing literature. Students in this course will read a variety of short pieces of contemporary American literature, including short stories, poetry, and plays. These readings will provide the basis for stimulating class discussions about the authors and their writings and a common ground for cross-cultural comparisons.

***The News in English.*** The aim of this course is to increase the ability of students to comprehend and evaluate the news in American English. Students are exposed to all forms of the media through which the news is reported, including: television, radio, newspapers, and news-related periodicals. They will increase their vocabulary and improve their reading and listening comprehension skills in general, and more specifically, in relation to current events. Furthermore, students will become familiar with the role of the news media in American society. The course requires extensive reading, as well as viewing television news and documentaries, and listening to news broadcasts.

***Listening and Speaking in Business.*** The purpose of this course is to increase the speaking and listening skills of business students and professionals. Students will improve their ability to use spoken English fluently, accurately, and persuasively in a number of business situations, including: business case analyses, problem-solving discussions, business meetings, and different types of public speaking. Students will increase their listening comprehension and develop business vocabularies through listening to business news broadcasts and viewing televised case studies of American corporations. From time to time articles from *The Wall Street Journal* will be read and discussed.

## APPENDIX B: A SAMPLE OBJECTIVES-BASED CURRICULUM

### Writing the Research Paper[1]

#### Aim

The aim of this course is to teach college-bound students the step-by-step process of writing a research paper. Students will learn to choose and narrow a topic, select relevant articles from periodical indexes, take notes, paraphrase, and synthesize information from many sources into a coherent, well-organized research paper with proper reference citations. They will also become familiar with the standardized formats for writing papers in different academic areas and demonstrate mastery of the conventions of one particular format in their final papers. Course prerequisites: Academic Reading and Writing or its equivalent and Introduction to Library Research (may be taken concurrently) or its equivalent.

#### Rationale

Research paper writing is basic to teaching and learning in American universities. In order to be successful, international students must learn how to write papers which meet the expectations of university professors (Hamp-Lyons & Courter, 1984, p. xii). However, many foreign students are not required to write research papers in their home countries, and if they are required, the format and conventions of research paper writing may be quite different. Writing a research paper requires certain skills and "tricks of the trade," which students need to learn in order to produce a paper efficiently and effectively. This course is designed to guide students through the research paper writing process so that they will have those skills when they begin studies at an American university.

#### Objectives and Performance Criteria

##### Main Goal

Students will write a five-page research paper during the course. The following objectives are suggested to help students achieve that goal. To receive credit for the course, students must demonstrate their understanding of the following objectives in the final paper. These objectives should be presented sequentially.

**Objective 1.** Students will choose and narrow a topic for the final research paper. *Performance criteria:* (1) Students will be able to judge whether various topics are too broad to be handled in a 5-page research paper. (2) Students will be able to give several suggestions for narrowing a topic. (3) Students will choose a topic for their own research papers. They will be able to determine the feasibility of a particular topic in terms of availability of materials in the library, level of English ability required to understand the readings on the topic, and their own level of interest. They will also give consideration to the appropriateness of the topic for a research paper at the college level.

**Objective 2.** Students will use periodical indexes to find articles on a specific topic and predict the contents of articles from the titles and other information in the periodical entries. *Performance criteria:* Students will submit a list of at least ten entries from a periodical index along with a list of their predictions about the contents of each article and a judgment as to whether the article will probably contain information relevant to their research papers.

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[1]Syllabus aims and objectives by Debbie Busch.

**Objective 3.** Students will reassess their topics and write thesis statements and titles for research papers. *Performance criterion.* Students will write an acceptable one-sentence preliminary thesis statement that accurately describes the topic, and a title for their research papers.

**Objective 4.** Students will learn to document their bibliographies on index cards. *Performance criterion:* Students will document source information on cards using APA or MLA style--one card for each source--and hand in at least 10 properly formatted cards to the teacher.

**Objective 5.** Students will preview and scan sources for information relevant to their research paper. They will take notes on cards and paraphrase information while they are taking notes. *Performance criterion:* Students will submit 5 paraphrased blocks of information that will be used in their research paper.

**Objective 6.** Students will learn to use quotations properly. *Performance criteria:* Students will correctly punctuate and format quotations, and identify errors. They will also know the criteria that should be used for selection of quotations and how to introduce and incorporate them in the text.

**Objective 7.** Students will synthesize information from several sources, properly citing references in-text in order to avoid plagiarism. *Performance criteria:* Students will successfully complete an in-class exercise on the importance of research paper writing using information from three sources. (This ties in with objective 10.) They will also properly cite references in the final research paper.

**Objective 8.** Students will write introductions to research papers. *Performance criterion:* Students will write acceptable introductions that include sufficient background information, the thesis statement and a statement of purpose.

**Objective 9.** Students will write the preliminary and final drafts of their research papers. *Performance criteria:* The final research paper should reflect changes suggested by the teacher. It should include a title page, an outline or abstract page, the body of the paper and a reference page. It should be at least five pages long double-spaced. The student will be evaluated on a 100-point scale (100 points = near native proficiency). The student should achieve at least 80 points to satisfactorily complete the course and to be considered ready to pursue academic work in introductory, undergraduate courses in an American university.

### Knowledge

In addition to understanding the steps involved in research paper writing, students also need to be given the information, presented as objectives, below.

**Objective 10.** Students will be given an overview of research paper writing in American universities. Topics to be covered include types of papers required in undergraduate and graduate courses, the role and purpose of research paper writing in American higher education, the format of research papers in different fields and the terminology specific to research paper writing. *Performance criteria:* Students will demonstrate their understanding of readings on the above topics by contributing to class discussions, and by doing the writing assignment outlined under objective 7.

**Objective 11.** Students will use sophisticated sentence structure and demonstrate the proper use of punctuation. *Performance criterion:* Students will correct and revise sentences from their own writing to create sophisticated, varied sentence structure.

**Objective 12.** Students will understand the concept of plagiarism. *Performance criteria:* Students will demonstrate understanding by properly documenting sources in the final paper. Optional: They may also demonstrate their understanding by completing a series of exercises on the topic.

**Objective 13.** Students will learn to use the proper register (formal) in research paper writing. Students will recognize and correct informal language, vague words and other stylistic errors. *Performance criterion:* Students will use appropriate register in the final research paper.