

Coping with Interdisciplinarity: Postgraduate Student Writing in Business Studies.

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education, University of
Technology, Sydney in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy.**

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

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The original idea of venturing into a research of this nature came to my mind while I was engaged in research for my Master's degree on the dramatic significance of non-verbal aspects of communication in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama at the University of New South Wales. My research was truly interdisciplinary, yoking the resources of English literature with those of linguistics and communication studies. Peripheral to these, of course, were interdisciplines such as women's studies, cultural studies, and critical theory. I first realized the huge potential of interdisciplinary studies while pursuing my studies in TESOL at the University of Technology, Sydney.

It is also significant to note here that I have been a working student, employed at the Sydney International Campus, Central Queensland University, in the capacity of a lecturer/tutor, Faculty of Informatics and Communication. Obviously there were immense advantages in associating myself with the academic community as well as the student population, especially my students, while being steeped in this research. For example, I was able to witness a significant number of difficulties encountered by students while coping with interdisciplinary knowledges in their diverse writing tasks.

I am grateful to the University of Technology, Sydney, for having granted me a five-year faculty scholarship for full-time doctoral research.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis critically investigates how student writers cope with interdisciplinarity in business studies at postgraduate level. The corpus of knowledge student writers have to grapple with today seems to distance itself from the traditional mono-disciplinary contexts. Texts as well as the students who construct them are being continuously informed and conditioned by new values and imperatives of relatively new discursive practices. Hence, student academic writing (henceforward ‘student writing’) especially at postgraduate level can be regarded as a complex academic endeavour where students have to take up multiple writing positions. Analyzing student texts against the backdrop of the enormous intertextual and interdiscursive resources pertaining to interdisciplinarity is a major component of this thesis.

Electivization of the curricula, on the other hand, while providing student writers with a wide range of choices, has created yawning gaps between what is commonly known as prior knowledge and what is yet to be learnt in the form of new knowledges. These epistemological considerations, i.e., how disciplinary knowledge is acquired, evaluated, contested, and strategically used also constitute an integral part of this research.

Also of importance in the above contexts are the often lengthy and generically diverse assessment tasks students are required to accomplish within specific deadlines. The nature and structure of assignment topics and assessment tasks have in the past two decades or so undergone tremendous changes owing in large measure to disciplinary as well as socio-economic imperatives. Student writing has several dimensions in terms of the mode of assessment, egg. examination-based, presentation-based, research-based, observation-based. This thesis, however, will focus on research-based writing tasks.

Based on the findings of this thesis, a paradigm called critical interdisciplinarity has been proposed in the concluding chapter of this thesis. Pedagogical and curricular considerations play a vital role in critical interdisciplinarity.

By virtue of their encyclopaedic dimensions, knowledge domains relating to academic interdisciplinarity in student writing lend themselves to a wide range of future research

projects. An attempt has been made here to critically explore only a tiny proportion of this inexhaustible repertoire of knowledge.

(Key words: *archival property, authorial interdiscursivity, coded reality, dependent interdiscipline, disciplinarity, discursive objective, discursive reality, discursive textuality, extra- disciplinarity, facilitative interdisciplinarity, independent interdisciplinarity, interdiscursivity, interdiscursive relational shift, interdiscursive semantic shift, intertextuality, microdisciplinary analysis, multiple-embedded interdisciplinarity, referential interdisciplinarity, soft technoculture, transgressive intertextuality*)

Note: The key words are explained in the glossary.

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INTRODUCTION

STUDENT WRITING IN THE ACADEMY: THE COMPLEXITY OF COMPLEXITIES

‘There are no *facts*, everything is *in flux, incomprehensible, elusive*; what is relatively most enduring is – our *opinion*.’

(Nietzsche, 1967: 327, italics and emphasis added).

This extract from Nietzsche’s *Will to Power* would, I believe, serve as a fitting overture to this thesis in which a variety of discourses surrounding knowledges, mostly dynamic, and at times nebulous and incomprehensible, are investigated. This research, as the title itself suggests, will investigate the impact of academic interdisciplinarity on a wide range of student writings belonging to fourteen postgraduate students of business studies at two Sydney universities. Hence, the projected thesis is that academic interdisciplinarity does exercise considerable influence on the discursive construction of student texts and that students experience difficulties in producing texts within interdisciplinary settings. It should be noted that interdisciplinarity in academic writing does by no means indicate an isolated knowledge domain; it always mediates and is mediated by disciplinarity and extra-disciplinarity. Extra-disciplinarity refers to the manifestation in disciplinary texts of texts, other than disciplinary and interdisciplinary ones, eg. media texts (popular newspapers, television etc.), paramedia texts (magazines etc. produced by special interest groups such as refugees, environmentalists), hereditary texts (proverbs, fables etc), anecdotal texts (anecdotes, narratives from memory), and also texts used in non-academic practices (eg. Form-filling by an inventory clerk). Extra-disciplinarity is an essential dimension to student writing although its epistemological significance and potential are not adequately explored by critical scrutiny. Issues relating to how disciplinary knowledge is produced, modified, expanded, disseminated, and consumed within our contemporary contexts seem to have whetted the appetite of some theorists and researchers. Much of the academic work that has engaged with the discursive and literacy practices of disciplinary knowledge in student writing (eg. Bergandal, 1983; Halliday, M & R. Hasan. 1985; Bazerman, C.

1988; 1994a; 1994b; Bernstein, 1990; Bhatia. V. 1993; Baynham, M., D. Beck., K. Gordon., 1994; Craswell, 1994; Freedman, A. & P. Medway. 1994; Gilstraw, J & M. Valiquette, 1994; Baynham, 1995a; Berkenkotter, C. & T. Huckin. 1995; Dobrin, 1997; Paltridge, B. 1997; Prior, 1998) bears ample testimony to this predilection.

In the context of this investigation, a disciplinary text is a text (written, oral, visual, interactive) that is firmly anchored in a particular disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge domain. It should have explicit knowledge capital representative of a particular discipline, and also it should contain evidence of the linguistification of that disciplinary knowledge. In other words knowledge capital needs to be projected in appropriate linguistic resources. For instance, *Strategic Management: Competitiveness and Globalization* (Hitt et al. 2001) is a disciplinary text since it contains knowledge capital that is deemed to be part of business studies; it is also couched in appropriate linguistic resources befitting the discourse of business studies; it is also couched in appropriate linguistic resources befitting the discourse of business studies: eg. brand competition, impulse purchasers, promotional variables.

An interdisciplinary text on the other hand may contain explicit knowledge content belonging to two or more disciplines with their corresponding linguistic markers. *Internet Commerce: Digital Models for Business* (Lawrence et al. 2000) is an interdisciplinary text since it contains at least two explicit knowledge domains: information technology and business studies, fortified with the terminologies akin to these two knowledge domains: eg. electronic invoices, e-commerce trading system, customized technological platform.

Extra-disciplinary texts inherit and disseminate popular discourses. They distinguish themselves from disciplinary and interdisciplinary ones by virtue of this popular appeal. More importantly, they are also distinguished and marginalized by the dominant culture of academic writing (see the textual analysis in Chapter 8 & 9). They are nonetheless instrumental in discursive construction of texts in the academy. Extra-disciplinary texts include all media texts, paramedia texts, hereditary texts, anecdotal texts, and texts related to non-academic practices (see Chapter 5). Knowledges thus foregrounded through extra-disciplinary texts are complex in many ways. For example, they can be tantamount to disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge; they can also be useful source documents for disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge producers. It is evident that the

hegemonically constructed institutional legitimacy is a factor that deemphasizes or even delegitimizes extra-disciplinary texts in the culture of academic writing . It seems to me that extra-disciplinary texts have strong appeal to disciplinary/interdisciplinary texts, and that they play an epistemologically significant role in student writing.

Student writing occurs within a normative, if not prescriptive, framework of power and knowledge. If one attempts to define student writing, then these institutional power structures and institutionally sanctioned knowledge domains may invariably surface. For the purpose of this study, student writing may be defined as any rhetorically organized text embedded in appropriate knowledge (disciplinary/interdisciplinary/extra-disciplinary) and its interpretive potential (discourses) within ‘politico-institutional’ power structures (Derrida, 1992a: 23) with a view to meeting the assessment criteria of a particular course of study leading to a graduate or postgraduate qualification at a university. By ‘rhetorically organized’, I refer to the manipulation of the written word (or at times the spoken word) to demonstrate, amongst other things, analytical skills, in-depth investigation, critical detachment, clarity of expression, and acquaintance with appropriate institutionalized conventions at an acceptable level. In other words, it is the strategic appropriation of linguistic resources to manipulate appropriate knowledge structures in a given academic culture. A student text, according to this definition, is also couched in appropriate discourses in the sense that it is discursively constructed using intertextual/interdiscursive resources of various discourses (disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and extra-disciplinary), which project themselves as texts. The term ‘rhetorical’ as I have used here also signifies the persuasiveness of student texts, a salient feature of the discourse of student writing. Henceforward, I use the phrase ‘discursive textuality’ to refer to this discursive construction of texts.

The main purpose of this thesis is to find out how student writers cope with academic interdisciplinarity in their postgraduate studies. Hence the thesis explores several aspects of student writing: disciplinary knowledge, interdisciplinary knowledge, intertextuality, interdiscursivity, extra-disciplinarity, diverse assessment tasks, assessors’ perceptions of interdisciplinarity, and the need of a sustainable pedagogy to cope with interdisciplinarity. Following these dimensions, the thesis attempts to answer seven research questions relating to student writing:

- What are the characteristics of academic disciplinary and interdisciplinarity?
- Why is it necessary to focus on intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and extra-disciplinarity in the context of student writing?
- How does interdisciplinarity manifest itself in the academy?
- What are the textual dynamics of assessment tasks associated with interdisciplinarity?
- How do students cope with academic interdisciplinarity in their writings at postgraduate level?
- What do assessors' (academics) think of interdisciplinary writing tasks and interdisciplinarity?
- What are the implications of critical interdisciplinarity for writing pedagogy?

The first six chapters focus on the first three questions whereas chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10 cover the last four questions.

The thesis is primarily based on research-oriented student writings belonging to 15 MBA graduands. Such writings are supplemented with their respective assessors' remarks, interviews with students and lecturers/assessors, course profiles, assessment tasks, students' prior knowledge and practices. The selected students represent identities of a broad spectrum of student population in the academy: non-English speaking, English-speaking, mature age, diverse cultural, and academic backgrounds.

As evidenced by Chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10 there are three major research strengths in this thesis: investigation of the culture of assessing students, analysis of student texts, and introduction of critical interdisciplinarity respectively. These research-oriented chapters are preceded by six chapters and an introduction which provide background information relating to the thesis topic. While being heavily based on research, they also form a strong infrastructural support for the thesis as a whole. For the sake of brevity, I will outline the thematic structure of this thesis in the ensuing paragraphs.

In Chapter 1, some influential theoretical and pedagogical perspectives on student writing are examined under four categories: skill-based, text-based, discourse-based, and epistemology-based. Although there are significant overlapping between them, one could still observe an element of uniqueness in each category.

Anchored primarily in a set of competencies and skills, the conventional ideal of student writing seems to prescribe that a student writer's success or failure depends on the extent to which he or she can adhere to grammar, syntax, and generic integrity within institutional conventions or cultures.¹ In other words, the major focus of such approaches has been on the rhetorical and structural dimensions of texts which promote student writing as a 'persuasive discourse' (Campbell, 1972: 2). Text-based approaches focus on generic structures pertaining to various text types. They also reinforce the significance of various cultures within which texts are produced. Discourse-based approaches place much emphasis on the discorsal identity of students. One of the major considerations here is that students are conditioned by a variety of discourses around them. Another salient aspect of this approach is that to be successful writers, students should be members of a discourse community (Swales 1990; Cumming 1998; Ivanic 1998).

Epistemology-based approaches place much emphasis on the impact of the epistemologies of disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and extra-disciplinarity on student writing: eg. how students understand and use diverse knowledges in their writings. Such approaches demonstrate the fact that while being engaged in their assignment tasks, students have to bear the brunt of the curricular changes introduced to most disciplines in the academy. In these environments, it is mandatory for students to take up multiple writing positions.

Chapter 2 is characterized by an investigation of some prominent theoretical perspectives on disciplinary knowledge. Claims by social constructivists that disciplinary knowledge is socially constructed (eg. McCarthy, 1996: 13-22) need further elaboration. This thesis argues that disciplinary knowledge is always discursively constructed and discursively consumed, too. Since our thoughts, aspirations, values, beliefs, assumptions, attitudes and experiences are shaped by innumerable discourses surrounding us, it is hard even to think that knowledge is not discursively constructed.

Discourses do not deal with contexts; they create contexts, indeed.² While providing some empirical evidence, I have explicated how disciplinary knowledge is discursively constructed.

Critical analysis of various dimensions of interdisciplinary knowledge is the core of the second part of Chapter 2. Several changes have been made to the curricula of most disciplines in order to ensure that students achieve what Hartwell et al calls 'expanded competencies' (2000: 11). While tracing some significant historical developments, contemporary interdisciplinary knowledge and the related literature are examined in order to establish the complexity inherent in the affective dimensions of interdisciplinarity

Much of the literature on interdisciplinarity is premised on ontological considerations, too; that is to explore interdisciplinarity as an existing phenomenon merely on a conceptual level or what Derrida calls 'constative utterances' (Derrida, 1992a: 30). More to the point, its relational dimensions (eg. how it affects related discursive practices) have rarely attracted scholarly attention. These dimensions are pivotal to this research in several ways: they shed light on how novel interdisciplinarity is or could be in relation to student writing; they uncover pedagogical interest, skepticism, and at times frustration; they also reveal various impediments that stymie student performance within interdisciplinary contexts, most of which are connected to intertextual and interdiscursive resources. These relational dimensions also kindle scholarly interest through intellectual debates in exploring the difficulties encountered in the disciplinary integrative process. I have explored some of these issues in Chapter 3. First I open up my discussion by proposing a typology of interdisciplinarity with a review of disciplinary texts on interdisciplinarity. This is followed by an investigation of what I might call the 'applied/critical/critical applied revolution' in the academy. Here I also examine the relationship between interdisciplinarity and soft technoculture. Soft technoculture refers to a globally visible culture characterized by the integrative behaviour of three identifiable phenomena: sophisticated software texts, predominantly electronic-based technology, and new socio-cultural identities ushered in by such technology. Without taking cognizance of these dimensions, it is hard even to be acquainted with the infrastructural aspects of interdisciplinary programs, and student writing.

I investigate the curricular issues and how they pose a challenge to novice student writers in Chapter 4. Whatever the knowledge domain may be, student writers as well as student writing are disciplined, as they ought to be, by institutionally legitimized boundaries. If such boundaries do not exist, we might notice in student texts at least some evidence of antidiscursive textuality: that is the opposite of discursive textuality. It is worth examining what these institutionally legitimized boundaries are, and how they shape curricular changes. Hence the nexus between interdisciplinarity and discourses is also explored in this chapter. The chapter also briefly investigates the constructs of multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and antidisciplinarity.

Chapter 5 is devoted to analyzing the role of intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and extra-disciplinarity in student writing. Here I explore the nexus between the textual dynamics of intertextuality/interdiscursivity and student writing from an epistemology-based perspective. Intertextual and interdiscursive resources invariably embody vast knowledge domains; hence any serious inquiry into student writing should focus on issues relating to the acquisition and consumption of knowledges that are disseminated through intertextual/interdiscursive resources in a given context. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity are pivotal for discursive construction of texts within interdisciplinary contexts. These epistemological issues are central to student writing; however, much of the writing pedagogy and theory has been preoccupied with peripheral, yet significant, issues such as academic conventions, grammar-based writing strategies, generically defined textual construction, and syntax and structures. Exploration of intertextual/interdiscursive relations in order to unravel epistemological constraints is vital for any research into student writing (Fairclough, 1992).

I also explore in Chapter 5 the ways in which discourses are disseminated through extra-disciplinary texts. Extra-disciplinarity here is considered to be an essential part of interdisciplinarity since student texts are often conditioned by extra-disciplinary texts. Extra-disciplinary texts include all texts other than disciplinary and interdisciplinary texts which mediate student writing process (eg. hereditary texts, media texts, paramedia texts). Hereditary texts are texts that are cherished as traditional wisdom (eg. adages, fables, parables, proverbs). Social actors inherit such texts through an untutored process as part of their cultural capital. Media texts include newspapers, magazines,

television, and the Internet. Paramedia texts (eg. Pamphlets, brochures) are produced by special interest groups (eg. refugees, human rights activists, environmentalists).

In Chapter 6, I investigate some contemporary disciplinary/interdisciplinary dynamics of business studies. Several useful interdisciplinary knowledge domains within business studies are critically examined providing an analysis of the disciplinary evolution of each domain relating to postgraduate programs in business studies. I have investigated the significance of disciplines/interdisciplines such as cultural studies, law, psychology, information technology and communication. This chapter acts as a foil to the analysis of student texts in Chapter 8 and 9.

Chapter 7 provides the theoretical basis, eg. analytical paradigm, and the culture of assessing students. While explicating the research scope, the Chapter basically outlines the infrastructure of this thesis. The analytical paradigm I employ is called microdisciplinary analysis. It closely examines how student texts are mediated by other texts that come under the rubric of disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and extra-disciplinarity through intertextual and interdiscursive links. In this chapter, the profiles of my research participants are illustrated in order to provide a clear view of their background. The chapter also includes the explication of the methodology, the respondents, the type of data collected, and the method of data collection.

The second part of Chapter 7 contains adequate research to problematize the relations between student writing and assessment tasks. It is certainly a fruitless effort to discuss student writing divorced from assessment tasks. Student writing is instantiated within institutionally defined and designed networks of many and varied assessment tasks with their corresponding guidelines in the academy. A review of the nexus between student writing and these intertextually linked networks that are characterized by relatively uniform assessment genres is crucial for our grasp of the ramifications of disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, intertextuality, and interdiscursivity, and above all institutionalized power (Foucault, 1995: 130). Also of importance is the fact that assessment tasks essentially persuade student writers to surf designated and ‘disciplined’ contours of knowledges, while at the same time providing them with opportunities for creativeness. Within these institutionalized settings it is hard for them to be creative without being normative. In other words, students are invariably disciplined by the knowledges they

work with and by the institutionalized conventions and practices they have to comply with.

Student writing has several dimensions in terms of assessment modes. For example, writing tasks in formal examination-based mode may differ significantly from those in research-based mode. The former is a more regulated activity in the sense that students perform within a restricted environment both in terms of time and space. Moreover, distance learners may encounter writing tasks to be executed mostly through electronic means, adding more complexity to student writing as well as assessment. Exploring theoretical aspects of the construction of assessment tasks, I have classified them into five modes: closed, hypothetical, extended, technocentric, and integrated (see Chapter 7 for a comprehensive discussion).

Selected student writings are subject to critical scrutiny in Chapter 8 and 9, which occupy an integral part of my research. The two chapters are designed to explore two areas of interdisciplinarity in business studies: the technocentric and the theoretical. Technocentric assessments have a strong orientation in the use of technology and the related literature when completing assignments whereas the theoretical ones deal with disciplines/interdisciplines such as law, cultural studies, communication, and psychology. Such analyses are supplemented with interviews I had with my respondents and assessors, course profiles, textbooks, and students' prior knowledge and practices.

Issues such as plagiarism, the use of secondary sources, transgressive intertextuality, the discursive construction of texts, understanding assessment topics/tasks, interdiscursivity, and extra-disciplinarity - all related to the epistemology of interdisciplinarity - are problematized in these chapters. Although not a rare occurrence, ventures into creativeness that defy adherence to prescriptive guidelines often result in transgressive discourses or discourses that are deemed to be perfunctorily constructed. In their attempts at coping with assessment tasks, student writers have to work with both knowledge and linguistic resources simultaneously, and these disciplinary and codified entities, which lend themselves to several dimensions, are inextricably intermingled with each other. It is also important to bear in mind that students discriminately select repertoires of knowledges prior to their writing or

material production of knowledges in the form of discourses within institutional settings really begins. And this enforced desire for discriminate treatment invariably leads them to hierarchize knowledges. In these exclusively conscious academic enterprises students, more often than not, take up multiple writing positions within multiple disciplinary contexts enveloping diverse knowledge fields. Hence, student writing is a synergised activity ('synergy is a medical term meaning the cooperative working together of different body organs to perform complex movements' (Altschull 1995:383). Student writers are no longer engaged in academic discourses that are anchored in a specific or monolithic individual discipline; instead they cope with integrative processes often involving two or more disciplinary domains introduced and sanctioned by the academy.

In the concluding chapter (Chapter 10), while discussing the implications of the findings of this research for writing pedagogy in particular and for the construct of disciplinary knowledge in general, I have attempted to advance a theory of critical interdisciplinarity. This chapter, as it ought to be, is based on the findings of my research.

The chapter starts with the prevailing status quo of interdisciplinarity in the academy: that is the one-directional approach based on course restructuring. The practical application of interdisciplinary knowledge in student writing is an overlooked area. For example students, as revealed by this research, often find it difficult to approximate the incomprehensible interdisciplinary knowledge, and to utilize them in diverse writing tasks. Course restructuring alone is not a remedial measure for such difficulties.

The assessment of students is also problematized here in interdisciplinary writing contexts. It is reiterated that student achievability should always precede measurability. There are certain echoes in this chapter of the potentiality for critical interdisciplinarity to be an interdiscipline by itself under the rubric of education. Another issue I have raised here is the need for KSP (Knowledge for Specific Purposes) programs to facilitate writing at postgraduate level.

The preceding issues have opened up new vistas for researchers, practitioners, and theorists alike for comprehending the complexities surrounding student writing and

interdisciplinarity. It is worth, I believe, rounding off this introduction with a note on some specific terminology used in this thesis. Breaking fresh grounds through conceptualization in any landscape of knowledge often entails the appropriation of new terminologies since they are the tools with which writers forge their texts. In the context of this study, I have coined some terms and phrases which merit definition and elaboration in order to avoid any semantic ramifications or confusion associated with them. Difficulties invariably arise in any academic inquiry when certain terms and phrases are used interchangeably or synonymously or even ambiguously in situations where precise or near precise meaning is required. This inadequacy could also be overcome to a great extent by introducing new lexical items to replace ambiguous or vague terms and phrases. Hence, a glossary of terms and phrases, which I believe would facilitate the reader, is provided in the concluding part of this thesis. It is through the appropriation of new terminologies that scholars in any field of inquiry express themselves not only to elucidate new concepts but also to contest the prevailing ones. A cursory glance at the theoretical/pedagogical landscape of student writing itself bears ample testimony to this discursive behaviour of theorists as well as practitioners. Hence, in the ensuing chapter I examine some salient features of the literature on student writing.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL/PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES TO STUDENT WRITING: A CRITICAL EVALUATION

In recent years, there has been an increasing awareness of student academic writing among theorists and practitioners as evidenced by the proliferation of published work in the field. Perhaps, one of the major reasons for this trend is the influx into tertiary studies of a relatively non-traditional student population, often with inadequate writing skills in English. These students include mature age and working students, migrants from a non-English speaking background, international students, and those on distance learning programs. In fact, the most prominent feature in our contemporary academic context is the student mobility from one country to another in search of knowledge, and at times of greener pastures. The demographics and the mobility of these international students have been well documented in the literature (eg. Gopinathan, 1994: 22-226; Ahmed & Basu, 1994: 82-86; Sadlak, 1998: 104; Lillis, 2001). Consequently, most tertiary institutions, especially universities, have introduced on-campus remedial measures in the form of learning support programs to facilitate, inter alia, these students' writing competencies. Student writing takes precedence over the other macro skills as it is the most important instrument in exposing one's competencies in a course of study.

As Baynham puts it, 'Research on writing tends to take different emphases, depending on the theoretical perspective or the academic discipline in which it is located - linguistics for writing as text, psycholinguistics or psychology for writing as process, critical theory to understand the subjectivity of the writer and his or her implication in social practices' (1995: 208). In order to accommodate some influential theoretical perspectives, pedagogical research, and professional books based on empirical evidence, and also for the convenience of this study, theoretical perspectives on student writing will be explored under four broad categories: skill-based, text-based, discourse-based, and epistemology-based.³ There could still be significant overlapping within this classification. One might, for example, notice that in some investigations, both skill-based and text-based approaches are indiscriminately intermingled.

1.1 Skill-based

Skill-based writing pedagogy is largely dominated by the role of cognitive faculties in the learning process, influenced by theorists such as Piaget (1950), Skinner (1957), Spence & Spence (1968).⁴ This approach employs methods, very often in formulaic, prescriptive, and sequenced forms, to develop a series of skills or strategies, heavily focused on rhetorical structures, traditional grammar, reading comprehension, conventions, and minor communicative activities (eg. Gregg & Steinberg, 1980). Moreover, 'vocabulary selection' (Halliday et. al. 1964: 191) is also an integral part of this approach. Another dimension to the skill-based approach is found in the structuralist model which seems to recognize language learning as 'building up habits' (Roger, 1981: 96), providing iterative tasks such as pattern practice, substitution tables, drilling and space – filling. These activities often demand rote-learning. Skill-based approaches are often conscious attempts at teach writing in isolation from the context of a particular discipline. Hence, there is often a motivation on the part of the writer towards acquisition of a set of skills, with occasional piecemeal applications. Consequently, in the writing process, students are often encouraged to learn about the language, irrespective of its contextual complexities.

Some skill-based approaches have a heavy focus on communicative and semantic aspects of academic writing (eg.. Amaudet and Barrett, 1984). They provide some practical approaches such as interactive activities in reading and writing with a view to facilitating the student writer. It contains carefully sequenced materials to enable the writer to be 'successful in other coursework or in professional activities' (ibid: vii). This is in fact a key element in academic writing for students whose first language is not English. For example, EAP or English for Academic Purposes are programs widely used in ESL teaching as a preparatory course for aspiring university students. In these programs major emphasis is now placed on skill - based writing strategies. However, as Leki (1998) points out such programs often try out the processes of information gathering and organizing such information prior to starting writing tasks.

A typical example of a skill-based model is *Writing Academic English* (Oshima & Hogue 1983) meant for international students. Promoting pattern practice and space

filling activities, the authors introduce traditional grammar-oriented tasks, which ultimately result in the provision of more information about the language. There is sufficient empirical evidence (Elley et al cited in Krashen 1984 : 12) to reveal the limitations of grammar-oriented approach to teaching writing. Barber's investigation into 'the growth of vocabulary' and 'changes in meaning' (1964: 77-127) vividly demonstrates rhetorical structures as well as vocabulary selection, and is a typical example of approaches that promote rote-learning. Some skill-based approaches have been centred on what I might call the infrastructural aspects of student writing. Epistemological and intertextual dimensions are not the major focus of such approaches. *Study Skills for Academic Writing* (Trzeciak & S. Mackay, 1999) and *Assignment and Thesis Writing* (Anderson & Poole, 2001) are representative of such approaches. For them, the pivotal aspects of student writing are planning, general format, quotations, footnotes, tables and figures, referencing (ibid: 1-163). I am not relegating these skill-based orientations to mere work of peripheral significance for student writing; a productive pedagogy, however, needs to be more balanced and multifocal.

English for specific purposes (ESP) offers another dimension to skill-based approaches. ESP programs seem to have a heavy bias towards terminology-related language skills in a particular discipline. Hence they provide students with linguistic competencies to cope with a particular disciplinary context: eg. accounting, nursing, finance etc. Although anchored in monolithic disciplinary contexts, such approaches facilitate the learner's grasp of linguistic resources of a particular knowledge domain.

As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) observe ESP programs in the 1970s were largely confined to English for science and technology. (see Swales, J. (ed) 1985 *Episodes in ESP*). What we can see in most ESP programs, or ESP 'pedagogic materials' (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) is the segregated treatment of a variety of disciplinary domains to facilitate reading and understanding. This compartmentalization of disciplinary domains in ESP programs certainly assists the learner to comprehend knowledge capital of a particular discipline. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) also identify a series of classifications that can be grouped into ESP programs: eg. English for Medical Studies, English for Economics, English for Technicians, English for Psychology etc. As they demonstrate, such classifications are based on the 'general nature of the learner's specialism' (ibid: 16).

ESP pedagogic strategies had in the late 1980s embraced the values of discourse communities, and there has been a noticeable shift in recent years towards 'situated learning' (Lave & Wenger (1991). Swales (1990) focuses on specific contexts where language choices also become specific. One could also notice a trend towards yoking ESP and genre analysis together. Dudley-Evans (1994) takes up this issue in a comprehensive way.

For ESP programs to be more productive in interdisciplinary contexts, first, the contemporary dynamics of interdisciplinarity needs to be recognized and then only the monolithic treatment of disciplines can be problematized. Current tertiary students of accounting for example do not study accounting *per se*, but rather several other disciplines integrated into accounting: eg. computing, communication, law. This complex disciplinary phenomenon can make ESP approaches to student writing even more complex. The reason for this is that it is not just a mere focus on several disciplines in isolation that makes ESP programs successful; it is the capturing of the integrative behaviour of such disciplines that becomes crucial.

In contrast to the approaches discussed above, recent literature on student writing has also focused on some isolated yet useful skills involving a wide spectrum of academic literacies. Exploring productive strategies for developing student writing, Ballard (1984: 52), for example, proposes an integrated approach involving 'reading, note-taking, planning and writing'. She also provides instances where non-English speaking background student writers at postgraduate level responded to assignments with a bias towards their cultural perceptions, and suggests establishing language skills support programs to assist graduates as well as postgraduates in their acculturation process and liaison with academic staff.

A variety of studies (Hobsbaum, 1984 : 73; Couture et al, 1985 : 393-407; Wilkinson, 1990; Currie, 1994 : 75-76; Pantelides, 1999 : 72) have also revealed the positive effects of skills development through liaison between the writing teacher and the content expert. As evidenced by research, another strategy, the use of 'metadiscourse' (Cheng & Steffensen, 1996 : 149-180) has proved to be successful in improving student writing.

The other useful strategies for student writers proposed by recent research include writing conferences (Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997), 'persuasive writing' (Ferris, 1994), analytical skills as a crucial aspect of student writing (Rosenwasser & Stephen, 2003), teaching writing on interactive television (Neff, 1998), 'syntactic maturity and writing effectiveness' (Faigley, 1979), 'syntactic maturity from high school to university' (Stewart, 1978), syntactic complexity in student writing (Marzano, 1978), 'syntactic density' (Belanger, 1978), 'writing quality and syntax' (Gebhard, 1978), and 'measuring syntactic growth' (Maimon & Nodine, 1978). Although the list is by no means exhaustive, it is quite evident that in the late 1970s, more scholars and practitioners attached much importance to the exploration of syntactical dimensions in student writing. It should however be noted that these syntactical preferences were even visible in the 1990s. Connor, for example, taking a distinct international focus uses the data of the International Association for the Evaluation of Education research, and concludes that 'syntax, coherence, and persuasion' are useful for the teaching of 'argumentative/persuasive writing' (1990: 84-85).

1.2 Text-based

Over the past two decades, exploration of sociolinguistic and cultural premises in the writing pedagogy as well as theory has indicated a noticeable shift from skill-based approaches to text-based paradigms, such as the genre approach, that have exercised enormous influence on student writing at varying degrees.

Some limitations of skill-based approach towards a productive writing pedagogy seem to have contributed to the development of text-based approaches. The popular text-based pedagogy with its major emphasis on textual modeling, and how texts are produced within a predetermined set of genres, encourages student writers to view texts as what might be called templates. Swales defines genre as a 'class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purpose' (1990: 58, also cf. Bazerman, 1988; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Bhatia, 1993; Gilstraw & Valiquette, 1994; Paltridge, 1997).

One advantage of this approach over the skills-based one is that student writers can be shown how to identify generic features in their writings and produce texts in a relatively

homogenous discipline. A major contribution in this area comes from Halliday and the proponents of systemic functional linguistics theory. According to systemic theory, a text could be defined as 'language that is functional' (Halliday & Hasan 1985: 10) and we can make sense of a text in relation to its cultural context by identifying a 'social activity type' (Eggins 1994: 35). It is within this cultural context and the accompanying three register variables, field, tenor, and mode, that genre types (eg. essays, reports, theses) with their diverse schematic structures are introduced into student writing. At the semantic level, field, tenor, and mode are realized in experiential, interpersonal, and textual meanings respectively. Textual analysis based on generic use of language and disciplinary-specific contexts are salient features of genre-approach to teaching writing, and student writers are encouraged to conform to generic features and linguistic resources, often following authentic models, that characterize each genre type.

Derewianka (1994) provides text types highlighting their schematic features and analytical potential in a convincing way. But these text models, however authentic they may be, raise some fundamental issues. In fact, a comprehensive research into the efficacy of text models involving ninety-five undergraduates has revealed that models do not have a direct bearing on successful student writing (Stotsky, 1995). However, genre approach enables the student writer to channel his/her intellectual energies into a predetermined set of templates, perhaps with the resultant reduction in communicative strategies, and viewed in this perspective, genres certainly facilitate writing in relatively homogeneous contexts. But to what extent the student writer can perform within the boundaries of genres, and what other factors that hamper his/her intimacy with the genres in a particular discipline remain highly controversial. As Bazerman (1988: 7) observes, '...attempts to understand genre by the text themselves are bound to fail, for they treat socially constructed categories as stable natural facts' (cf. Ivanic 1998: 46). Depending on the circumstances in a writing position, even traditionally established genres (Green & Lee 1994 : 207-221) can disintegrate or deviate from the norms. In such situations, the question of 'power and status of one written genre ... over another' (Baynham 1995 : 208) may also emerge. In the same breath one might argue that the taxonomic and structural ingenuity with which the systemic functional paradigm operates seems to obscure its pedagogical deficiencies.

Some scholars (eg. Nicholas & Nicholl, 2000) believe that the main limitation of the genre approach stems from its often acclaimed strength: that is the introduction of various text types to students. In this approach textual dynamics within disciplines are often not the focus. Although this is a limitation, genres can help students to organize a generically acceptable assignment. As a result of the structurally identifiable textual features of a text, most EAP programs today combine text-based approaches with skill-based ones in writing pedagogy.

New dimensions to traditional view of genres have been explored to demonstrate the limitations of traditional academic genres in tertiary writing since most genres presuppose a writer's knowledge of 'social motive in responding to a recurrent social situation of a certain type' (Freedman & Medway 1994:3). As Gilstrow and Valiquette (1994 : 48) observe, 'when a teacher writes in an academic genre herself, or when she monitors ... students' performances in a genre, she executes practical consciousness. But... when she explains her evaluation of students' attempts in the genre, she executes discursive consciousness. And discursive consciousness can suppress or even distort elements of practical consciousness.' In their research into two student writers in psychology and criminology, they demonstrate the conflicting attitudes of two teaching assistants; one concentrating on discourse features in the writings and the other on the students' compliance or non-compliance with the discursive principles. They further observe that '...users of a genre share not only knowledge of the genre but also a particular configuration of knowledge-of-the world, this common ground forming a community of interest' (1994 :48-50). Thus, in student writing, the prescriptive generic features and the established knowledge of a particular discipline clash with the new knowledge pertaining to that discipline. This is a veritable challenge to the novice student writer.

Bazerman's seminal works (1988 & 1989) are a landmark in persuading students to be familiar not only with the disciplinary contents and social contexts but also with the myriad of genres within which such knowledge contents can find their expression. Many scholars (Bhatia, 1993; Bazerman, 1994; Freedman & Medway, 1994; Berkenkotter & Hucken, 1995; Lea & Street, 1999) have also pointed out the limitations of recognizing genres as exhibiting simple contexts and identities in academic writing. For example, there is empirical evidence to suggest that despite students' familiarity

with generically integral text types, they often perform well below the expectations of lecturers/tutors in executing their assignments in courses where several disciplines are integrated (Lea & Street, 1999).

Research (Bhatia 1993; Currie 1994) has also revealed that experiential knowledge can enhance students' success in handling the narrative genre as opposed to the argumentative essay, which requires 'heavy cognitive load.' This is another indication of the role played by the practical consciousness or the shared knowledge in facilitating student writing.

Also of importance are the assignment tasks, especially at graduate or postgraduate level. They often entail diverse academic discourses in which genres are indiscriminately intermingled and blurred (Bhatia 2004). At a very simple level, a single paragraph in a critique essay for example may contain a confluence of several genre types: explanation, argumentative, descriptive, or even narrative. Some genre-conscious student writers may be inclined to view that in a critique essay only arguments can reign. It is hard not to believe that these essentialist frameworks of textualization (Caputo, 1997: 117) create problems for creative student writers.

Activity theory is another aspect related to genres and ESP. The nexus between writing and human activity was prominent in the work of Vygotsky (1978) and Leont'ev (1978). Since then significant contribution in this area of inquiry has been made by a bevy of scholars: Bazerman, (1988); Russell & Bazerman, (1997); Smart, (1993); Prior, (1998). The main argument behind activity theory is that writing is mediated by activity. Activity theory can also be related to interdisciplinary investigations since human activities are diverse and heterogeneous in nature. Activity theory is not confined to human activity alone; it is also closely linked with the products that generate human activity. For example computers and other new technologies of communication have introduced new practices that mediate the writing process.

Prior has made a significant contribution towards literate activity in the academy. His major work (1998) based on three disciplinary areas: geography, sociology, and American Studies (seminars and writings) suggests the need for student writers to be immersed in diverse lived experiences and knowledge domains in the process of

learning how to write. As he puts it, 'if disciplinary enculturation typically refers to the transmission of specialized knowledge and discourse to novices..., then it should be a continuous, heterogeneous process of becoming the historical co-genesis of persons, artifacts, practices, institutions, and communities through everyday mediation of activity and agency' (1998: 244).

Intertextuality is another issue that has attracted the attention of text-based theorists. This typifies a predilection among scholars for exploring the territories of critical theory to expand linguistic and social domains of academic literacy. Viewed from Kristeva's concept of Intertextuality or 'transposition' with its 'enunciative and denotative positionality' (1989: 417-418), academic texts lend themselves to an infinite variety of interpretations, but their validity in academic settings depends on discursual variations produced by intertextual relationships (cf. Barthes, 1977; Foucault, 1981; Bakhtin, 1981; Kristeva, 1984; Bourdieu, 1993; Eco, 1995; Bazerman, C. 2003). Fairclough (1995: 101-136) provides us with an interesting analysis of intertextuality in its dual form: 'manifest intertextuality' and 'constitutive intertextuality' within interdisciplinarity contexts (cf. Baynham et al, 1994: 164-165). Manifest intertextuality similar to Ivanic's use of 'actual intertextuality' (1998: 48) typifies features in a text that are easily discernible as borrowed from other sources or texts whereas constitutive intertextuality (interdiscursivity) refers to a texture of a text emanating from 'a combination of elements of orders of discourse' (Fairclough 1995: 117-118). His observation that 'intertextuality entails an emphasis upon the heterogeneity of texts, and a mode of analysis which highlights the diverse and often contradictory elements and threads which go to make up a text' (1995: 104) relates to the production as well as analysis of texts within interdisciplinary contexts.

Some practitioners and theorists have also yoked skill-based and text-based approaches together. For example, Hogue (1996) provides a series of skills and text models whereas Silyn-Roberts (2000) introduces infrastructural information about generic features of thesis structures with text models. White emphasizes the need for a comprehensive writing program with a focus not only on students but also on teachers (1989: 42-55) while Swales and Feak (1994: 10-20; see also Wilkinson, 1990) elaborate on the value of pattern practice and text models in writing programs. Thurstun and

Candlin (1997) focus on the differences in language use in academic and extra-disciplinary discourses.

Text-based approaches are popular among students as well as practitioners since they offer convenient strategies for training student writers. Whether text-based approaches alone can address the writing problems is highly controversial, since writing is always informed by a variety of knowledge domains (Bazerman, C. 1989). On the other hand students have to look for resources required for writing tasks, which should also merit our attention. Being exposed to a myriad of discourses, both academic and non-academic, student writers need to be selective and meticulous in their information gathering.

1.3 Discourse-based

Recent literature on student writing is also characterized by what I might call 'discourse-based' perspectives. The advocates of these approaches place much emphasis on the importance of student writers' intimacy with discourse communities as part of enculturation process (Swales 1990; Swales & Feak 1994). These are also premises where students' identities are problematized and defined through conflictual encounters that often lead to transgression and contestation. Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (1978) has in many ways generated interest in the community-based learning strategies that promote induction processes. Some are inclined to explore how 'writing and the writer are implicated in discourses, ideologies and institutional practices' (Baynham, 1995: 208).

As Baynham observes, in modern contexts 'a basic assumption is that in order to understand the problematic of the novice writer, we need to understand the disciplinary contexts within which they are required to write or more specifically the disciplines they are writing themselves into' (2000:17). Baynham's use of 'intrinsic' and 'embodied' readings of student texts is also useful for our understanding of new disciplinary dynamics in academic writing. By 'intrinsic', he refers to the reading texts in terms of 'skills or technologies' whereas by 'embodied' he means the reading of texts as an 'embodiment of the processes of subject production at work as learner writers engage with the writing demands of the discipline' (ibid: 31). Baynham illustrates these two

concepts referring to students' conflicting encounters between practices and disciplines in academic writing contexts (in this case nursing).

In his seminal work *Genre Analysis : English in academic and research settings*, which provides both theoretical and practical applications to academic writing as well as research, Swales (1990) defines genre as 'a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes.' Swales' new genre theory (Cf. Freedman 1992) seems to open new vistas to tertiary writing in that it explores students' induction process to a 'discourse community' (Swales 1990: 24-95) prior to their exposure to genres and language learning tasks. As he observes, 'The body of discourses has a set of more or less well-related concepts. The community has an inheritance of books, articles, and research reports, and a system for communication among the membership...The community of persons in a discipline, then, tends to be self-conscious of its 'brotherhood'. The members have a commitment to each other and to the guiding premises and lines of inquiry...' (ibid: 68-69). Swales' major contribution, however, has been to extend the parameters of textual analysis to accommodate the three-staged 'experimental design' : discourse communities, genres, and the language learning tasks in a broader social context (1990: 1-95). Some of these notions of the writing pedagogy are also exemplified in *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* (Swales & Feak, 1994).

According to some scholars (Bazerman, 1994a; Belcher, 1994 & Bhatia, 1999) a corpus of disciplines in a course of study generate intricate relationships while interacting with each other, and at the same time retain characteristics unique to each discipline. This is in fact a very significant observation since it sheds light on the need for what I might call 'interdisciplinary discourse communities' (see Chapter 10).

Harvey's notion of students' 'presence' (1994: 642-654) in writing tasks acknowledges students' personal experiences as more crucial than the established text types, methodologies, and analytical tools for understanding and analysis of texts. For example, working class students can relate their own personal experiences to contexts in a particular text in the process of analyzing it (1994: 647). By 'presence', Harvey refers to the presence of students in a text through their experiences, not through their personal information. In writing activities, this provides more avenues for creativity as well as

proximity towards texts, untrammelled by institutionally sanctioned and deterministically imposed criteria. I might further add that, 'students' presence' also gravitates almost unwittingly towards a range of interdisciplinary domains. For example, a student engaged in activities related to sports, or hospitality trade may invariably conflate such knowledge within a writing task anchored in a different disciplinary domain. This is certainly an innovative approach, an approach that 'may reduce students' intimidation in the face of texts' (*ibid.* 645), and it deserves, I believe, a better term than 'presence' as it presents itself.

There has been much debate in the literature on how students' multiple identities contribute to the ways in which individuals are able to engage with academic discourse communities in diverse academic communities (e.g. Angélil-Carter, 1997, 2000; Canagarajah, 1997; Clark and Ivanic, 1997; Thesen, 1997; Fairclough, 1992; Nelson, 1990). Canagarajah (1997) provides evidence of how ethnically and racially marginalized students develop their resistance to new academic conventions they are being acculturated into (*ibid.* pp. 186-187), and suggests that a sustainable methodology (*ibid.* pp. 193-195) within similar contexts should be an integral part of the writing pedagogy (for an opposite view, see Welsh, 2001: pp. 553-573).

Welsh's observation that students learn through developing resistance, and that their 'legitimate opposition to subordination' (2001: 554) should form an essential part of the process in absorbing new cultural capital. Welsh critiques the resistance theory and suggests that students learn through contradictions and that such interruptions are a site for absorbing new cultural values (2001: 553-573). Welsh's thesis is that 'emancipatory critical pedagogy' (*ibid.* 554) should consider students' resentments, frustrations, and challenges as an integral part of the learning process.⁵ Resistance, I believe, be it in student writing or otherwise, has often been identified as a mode of externalizing existing inadequacies or frustrations.

Several studies (Ivanic 1998 : 89-106., and Park & Maguire 1999 : 145- 163) have also demonstrated the textual dichotomies that tend to conceal the complexities within 'disciplinary and institution specific' (1999: 163) values. Ivanic's influential study (Ivanic 1998:) explores student writings in relation to the writer's literacy and 'discoursal identities' corresponding to a particular disciplinary community with the

consequent interaction of ideologies, institutional practices and discourse conventions. The heterogeneous nature of the academic discourse community finds its expression in Ivanic's case studies (1998: 109-253) involving eight mature students (by 'mature', she means 'mature-age' students) whose discursal identities have been copiously illustrated. Perhaps, Ivanic's (1998: 32 - 215) major contribution to discourse-based approach emanates from her analysis of the interplay between 'discourse identity', marked by its heterogeneity , and 'literacy identity', characterized by its social context, with the student writer striving to establish his/her own identity by complying with or questioning the institutional 'practices and discourses, and the values, beliefs and intents which they embody' (1998: 32. Also see Hyland's notion of the persona of the writer, 1999).

Some theorists have demonstrated how students with experiential knowledge and social practices struggle in their induction processes into new discourse communities within interdisciplinary contexts Berkenkotter et al. (1991: 191-212). Ballard (1994: 16-25) and Craswell (1994: 41-55) have also highlighted the significance of the study advisor in promoting graduate students' 'discourse skills' (Craswell, 1994: 41).

Since ideology or ideologies are forged largely by being exposed to a myriad of discourses around us, Althusser's analysis of the 'interpellation of individuals as subjects' (1977: 163) is also useful for our understanding of the discursal self of student writers. The inference here is that ideology 'hails' (ibid: 162) individuals, and that it makes individuals persist in what they have been indoctrinated.

Discourse-based approaches are also popular among learning skills units or study skills centres in most universities. There are often subject specialists to help students familiarize themselves with a particular discipline.

1.4 Epistemology-based

In spite of its being predominantly text-based, recent literature on student writing indicates the influence of epistemology-based paradigms, too. Perhaps one of the reasons for this new direction is that some disciplines have acquired, and will acquire,

sophistication by encroaching on other disciplines, particularly in relation to technology, and this condition, which Bernstein (1990: 156) calls 'regions', is a challenge to the student writer who has to contend with the 'recontextualized' contents of a discipline with its accompanying complexities in other 'intellectual fields of disciplines and in the field of practice' (ibid: 156).

Some researchers have begun to realize the urgency to provide student writers with 'means to understand the forms of life embodied in current symbolic practice, to evaluate the consequences of the received rhetoric, and to transform our rhetorical world when such transformation appears advisable' (Bazerman, 1988: 320). What Bazerman implies, in rather metaphysical terms, is that written genres should not be static and that they are susceptible to undergo metamorphosis in tune with the cultural or social practices. To successfully contend with these epistemology-based issues, writing pedagogy should extend its frontiers beyond the text-based approach. Relatively little research has been conducted to explore these new territories of knowledge pertaining to academic literacies. Perhaps one of the reasons as to why epistemology issues have not been subject to adequate critical scrutiny in the writing pedagogy seems to be the dominant ideology surrounding skill-based and text-based approaches themselves. This dominance, I might add, is also institutionally manifest in more tangible form. For example, the emergence of 'study skills centres', 'learning skills units', and 'language support units' as transdisciplinary institutions peripheral to the academy amply demonstrate these preferential treatment of skills in the writing pedagogy.

Epistemological investigations shed light on how student writers grapple with the intricacies of disciplinary/interdisciplinary/extra-disciplinary knowledge when executing their writing tasks. Exploring disciplinary/interdisciplinary/extra-disciplinary contexts and discursive practices in writing, epistemology-based approaches reiterate the significance of both integrating text and practice into student writing in particular reference to relatively new disciplines where practice-based professionalized elements are prominent. Epistemology-based researchers argue that context specific focus alone is not adequate; rather any writing pedagogy must take into consideration the interdisciplinary and discursive practices pertaining to a discipline (Ballard, 1984, 1994; Dobrin, 1997; Chandrasoma et al, 2004). The reason for this is very clear; before

student writers work with knowledge, they should acquire such knowledge. While the acquisition of knowledge itself is a challenge within interdisciplinary contexts, the appropriation of such knowledge in student writing could even be more challenging.

In some disciplines, as Klein (1996: 189-202) observes, the overlapping of the boundaries dividing disciplines is so invasive that the host discipline seems to have lost its characteristics (cf. Barnett, 1994: 126-139). She believes that the process of communication within an interdisciplinary framework itself constitutes a body of knowledge. For example, accounting as a discipline has embraced the realms of other disciplines such as, information technology, commercial/company law, communication studies, and statistics. The constant interplay between these disciplinary elements with their accompanying subtleties and nuances, for example, the implications and applications in a piece of writing, can easily baffle the novice student writer. The other issues that affect writing are the prejudices often based on practice and social hierarchy. For example, a student trained and employed in a vocational environment may bring with him/her the values, beliefs, experiences and perceptions pertaining to his training and his status which can often be in conflict with the professionalized course content at a university.

In his research involving forty graduate students, Ackerman explores this issue of prior disciplinary knowledge. 'Prior knowledge of a discipline', he concludes, helps students 'throughout comprehension and composing,' thus enriching student writing in disciplinary specific contexts (1991: 139). Ackerman like many other scholars (eg. Newmann et al. 2002) focuses on disciplinary specificity.

Whatever approach one opts to hinge on in conceptualizing diverse aspects of student writing, it is mandatory to recognize the pivotal role of disciplinary/interdisciplinary/extra-disciplinary knowledge student writers have to grapple with while executing their writing tasks in a given context. It is quite evident that interdisciplinary texts are essentially intertextual and interdiscursive (Chandrasoma et al 2004).

There is a noticeable dearth of research into epistemology-based aspects of student writing; it is unfortunate that issues relating to the nexus between student writing and interdisciplinarity still remain a serious omission from the current literature.

However, skill-based, text-based, discourse-based, and epistemology-based approaches to student writing have enriched our awareness of writing as a significant macro skill in tertiary studies. Each approach has in its unique way contributed towards improving this skill. However, much needs to be explored in the area where student writers cope with interdisciplinary knowledge.

Before we examine the nexus between the corpus of such knowledge and student writing (discursive textualization), it is perhaps worth exploring some influential theoretical perspectives on disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge itself. This might shed some light on the extent to which changing attitudes to disciplinary knowledge have exercised influence on interdisciplinarity.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTOURS OF KNOWLEDGES: DISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE

2.1. Disciplinary Knowledge

Disciplinary knowledge has always been a site of contestation. A relativist would argue that disciplinary knowledge and disciplinarity are misnomers since each discipline intrinsically contains several strands of knowledges belonging to several other disciplines. This is voiced by Balibar and Macherey when they contend that, 'Literature and history are not each set up externally to each other (not even as the history of literature, social and political history), but are in an intricate and connected relationship...' (1978: 6). Similarly even in the context of research, one might argue that today's scientists deal not with a discipline *per se*, but with a plethora of problems, and these problems embody a wide spectrum of disciplines (Lenoir, 1993: 77-81; Gibbons et al. 1994: 30). Disciplinary frontiers are not like the former Berlin wall; in fact, almost every discipline has some area of proximity to one or more disciplines. Economics, for example, as a discipline has close affinities with mathematics, political science, history, and sociology. Therefore, 'the nature of the divisions between disciplines...varies with the nature of the disciplines concerned' (Becher, 1989: 37). While this is true, we need to remind ourselves that any investigations into the discursive practices of the academy need to be anchored in the institutional frameworks of power. In other words, disciplines in the academy are institutionalized, and legitimized entities of knowledges, as evidenced by the physical presence of several phenomena: the departments, the faculties, the centers, the programs of study, the literature (eg. textbooks, course profiles), and the designations (eg. deans, professors, lecturers) named after disciplines.

It is difficult to define disciplinary knowledge since its canvas can extend itself to encyclopaedic dimensions. Hence, most theorists and interested scholars often resort to geopolitical metaphors in view of these huge dimensions attached to disciplinary knowledge: eg. '*sphere, world, map, field, province, kingdom*' (King and Brownell, 1966: 74. original italics). In fact some extending their rational boundaries have even

suggested different metaphors (Lyon, 1992).⁶ These attempts are all indicative of the huge canvas of disciplinary knowledge.

So, what counts as disciplinary knowledge? What are its constituents? King and Brownell identify ten characteristics of disciplinary knowledge: ‘a community of persons, an expression of human imagination, a domain, a tradition, a syntactical structure, a conceptual structure, a specialized language, a heritage of literature and artifacts and a network of communications, a valuative and affective stance, and an instructive community’ (1966: 68-95). While one might notice considerable overlapping in their classification of knowledge (eg. tradition, and heritage of literature), it is pertinent to note here that they have incorporated the necessary elements to advance a curriculum theory that is closely aligned with humanist and modernist paradigms. A careful examination of their work would reveal the preoccupations that have galvanized them to define disciplinary knowledge in this light. For them disciplinary knowledge should have a distinct intellectual heritage and a humanist and rational purpose.

Several useful insights into the nature of disciplinary knowledge in our current social contexts are found in the work of Foucault: ‘a discipline is defined by a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments...’ (1981: 59). Again in his *The Archaeology of knowledge*, Foucault observes: ‘Knowledge is that which one can speak in a discursive practice, and which is specified by that fact: the domain constituted by the different objects that will or will not acquire scientific status...knowledge is defined by the possibilities of use and appropriation offered by discourse’ (1972:182-183). Here Foucault theorizes knowledge (savoir) in general with a marked emphasis on discursive practices since he believes that discursive practices are always activities defining either potential disciplines or established disciplines. Hence it seems to me to be logical to conclude that his definition is equally applicable to disciplinary knowledge (connaissance) as well.

Foucault quite explicitly reiterates the inadequacies of analyzing or viewing knowledge as an uninterrupted genealogical process. This I believe is the overarching theme of his influential work: *The Archaeology of knowledge* (1972 : 3-211; also cf. Foucault, 1995: 16 & 160). It should however be noted that he does not completely reject the historical

development of disciplinary knowledge; in fact his frequent references to the Classical period and also to the various discursive variations that occurred especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries may be viewed as an acknowledgement of the significance of genealogy-based investigations (1972: 52-89). (I cannot see any specific methodology used by Foucault in his *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) nor in *Discipline and Punish* (1995); this in itself marks the strength of his work, for methodologies often generate boundary consciousness in some form or another). What Foucault quite convincingly demonstrates is that discontinuities and interruptions must be essential episodes in any archaeological survey of systems of knowledge.

In a Foucauldian sense, the role of discursive practices is central to any formation of disciplinary knowledge (1972: 179). Psychiatry as a discipline for example had had all its ingredients in the form of discursive practices long before its enunciation as a full-fledged discipline in the academy (Foucault: 1972). A more recent example of an institutionalized interdiscipline is terrorism studies as evidenced by the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies established in 1997 at George Washington University (www.gwu.edu/~terror/intunctr.html).

The existence and maintenance of institutions such as universities and schools hinge inter alia on the structured knowledges. Following the huge corpus of research contained in Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), disciplinary knowledge may then be defined as institutionalized discursive practices. In other words it is the repertoire of knowledge by which a particular discipline is characterized and represented. This relatively homogeneous condition of disciplinary formation is known as disciplinarity. Here the implication is that disciplinarity is contingent on differentiation, which results in boundary maintenance.

Derrida's theorization of the 'structure' and 'center' is equally applicable to the notions surrounding disciplinarity, too. He refers to the 'fixed' meaning or meanings in a given structure as 'center'. It is significant to note that this 'center' is confined to the rigid boundaries of the structure, and is subject to the interplay of its elements only within the structure. As Derrida succinctly puts it, 'As center, it is the point at which the *substitution of contents, elements, or terms is no longer possible*. At the center, the *permutation or the transformation of elements...is forbidden*... The concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a play...constituted on the basis of a fundamental

immobility and a reassuring certitude...' (1978: 278-279, italics added). It is the non-transformation of the core of disciplines that ensures their immobility. This is in fact associated with the structure as well as the methodology of most disciplines. One might even extend this argument to discourses as well.

Quite reminiscent of Bourdieu's (1991) notion of disciplines as political structures, Lenoir defines disciplines as '...dynamic structures for assembling, channelling, and replicating the social and technical practices essential to the functioning of the political economy and the system of power relations that actualize it' (1993: 72). Lenoir's main argument is that disciplines should not be regarded as monolithic entities, but rather as 'heterogeneous families of social, organizational, and scientific-technical practices...' (ibid: 85).

Disciplinary knowledge is not only constituted by systematized and compartmentalized knowledge with relatively impermeable boundaries; it is also disciplined by a set of values. The term 'compartmentalized' has distinct connotations of borders or of frontiers, and these frontiers and borders are determined not so much by an individual discipline as by other disciplines. Each discipline, for instance, has got its own field specific lexis or discourse markers, its own informational content, and its institutional and institutionalized stature, and when taken as a whole, these phenomena contribute to boundary maintenance. Disciplinary knowledge, preserved in the academy mostly in the form of textbooks, magazines and journals both in conventional, and electronic form, is modified and expanded through discursive practices associated with scholarship as revealed in research and epistemological stances, but a large part of its intrinsic characteristics remains more or less intact. The term 'intrinsic' literally seems to invoke meanings contingent on temporal transcendence. Hence following Foucault's notion of the archive ('the system that governs the appearance of statement as unique events' (1972: 129). I shall refer to this basic characteristic of disciplinary knowledge as 'archival property', the property that characterizes a particular corpus of knowledge. It endows a discipline with defensible as well as defensive identity. Archival property of all disciplines consists of the historical development of their own discursive practices, for example economic history in economics, and business history in business studies. Thus, archival property can embrace traditionally accumulated theoretical and practical knowledge capital of a discipline.

Davidson's Principles and Practice of Medicine (Edwards et al, 1995), first published in 1952, and has been used in the academy throughout the world as a standard textbook for medicine, was in its nineteenth edition in 2003. Since its first publication, each successive edition has introduced slight modifications, either in the form of new statistics, or new techniques, but most of the fundamentals of medicine (or archival property) as listed, explained and illustrated in the book have remained almost unchanged for decades. Psychology is another disciplinary domain that merits our attention; psychology today has been reduced to a mere generic term, and it still carries with it a strong archival property (as a result of academic interdisciplinarity one might notice under psychology at least seven sub-disciplines; child, social, cognitive, physiological. clinical, educational, industrial). This list is by no means exhaustive. It should, however, be noted that 'archival property' does not portray disciplines as hermetically sealed entities bereft of any change or expansion.

2.2 Disciplinarization of knowledge

I have so far discussed some notions relating to disciplinary knowledge. Still one crucial question remains unanswered: How could one disciplinarize knowledges? As I have mentioned elsewhere, disciplinary knowledge is discursively constructed through diverse modes of interactions between social actors and discourses. The implication here is that disciplinary knowledge is not essentially a product of a particular culture, although it can be firmly anchored in the social canvas to which it relates. Anglo-American and European traditions of knowledge production have close affinities with each other, and they have exercised, and still do, enormous influence on the so-called marginalized traditions of Asia and Africa. Also of importance are the demographic and psychographic factors involved in the discursive construction of knowledge. These two aspects are basically related to the consumers of such knowledge. The former refers to audience types such as students, academics, farmers, etc. whereas the latter signifies the psychological dimensions of a particular audience type: values, beliefs, attitudes, needs, aspirations, and many more besides.

Disciplinarization of elements of knowledge certainly stems from diverse epistemologization processes. For the convenience of this study, I am proposing six identifiable dimensions that characterize this diversity: *disciplinary agents of power*,

target knowledge field, discursive sites, discursive strategies, discursive construction of knowledge, and ratification of discursively constructed knowledge.

By disciplinary agents of power (cf. Foucault's use of the phrase 'the regime of disciplinary power' 1995: 182, also cf. Lyotard, 1984: 46), I refer to the legitimate producers of disciplinary knowledge. Themselves being hegemonically and hierarchically defined, most agents of power are academics and researchers, in most instances representing tertiary, and research institutes. I need to emphasize here that hegemonic relations are always intertextually constructed, contested, rejected, modified, and maintained in a given academic culture.

There is always a target knowledge field that constitutes the nucleus of knowledge production. The target knowledge field of this thesis, for example, is interdisciplinarity. While locating a target knowledge field, one has to do a significant amount of research. This in itself is part of the discursive strategies of knowledge production.

Disciplinary knowledge production occurs in a particular discursive site. A laboratory, for example, is a discursive site for a scientist to produce knowledge. Similarly, an ethnically defined geographical area could be a discursive site for a linguist or a sociologist to embark on knowledge production. Discursive sites can envelop local, regional, and global dimensions depending on the cultural milieu that characterizes them. It is by no means suggested here that disciplinary knowledge production is solely anchored in a particular discursive site; in fact, there could be several discursive sites within a knowledge production project, and some can even assume interdisciplinary proportions. In the context of soft technoculture, discursive sites could well be virtual ones, too. Researchers are now able to exploit the enormous potential of online resources to supplement their discursive construction of texts.

Discursive strategies are the ways (eg. research methodologies) in which a variety of resources (eg. newspaper reports, televisual images, data obtained from research), are appropriated in quest of a would-be disciplinary knowledge. A newspaper report on a particular target knowledge field may be of immense value for a disciplinary agent of power engaged in knowledge production. This is an area where student writing is implicated through interdiscursivity. For instance students have access through a myriad of extra-disciplinary texts (eg. print texts, broadcast texts, televisual texts and radio

texts, cyber texts (internet, intranet, and extranet), anecdotal texts, shadow texts,) to a particular disciplinary knowledge domain without necessarily referring to disciplinary texts relating to that domain. And very often the primary sources of a knowledge domain for the producer of a extra-disciplinary text and for the disciplinary agent of power could be the same.

Discursive practices are central to discursive construction of knowledge. These include collection and analysis of data, publication of research, organization of conferences and seminars, delivery of lectures and talks. This is where the resources of disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and extra-disciplinarity could be utilized in complex ways. Thus, disciplinary knowledge is always discursively constructed; it is the selective combination of a wide spectrum of discourses.

The would-be disciplinary knowledge is always subject to a ratification process during which it is contested, trialed, and finally legitimized. Such ratification processes often involve publications in refereed journals or in the form of disciplinary texts. It is by no means implied here that once disciplinary knowledge is legitimized, it remains immune to contestation. In fact knowledge is a site of contestation, and is subject to intellectual debates at a given period of time. My argument here is that disciplinary knowledge is always discursively constructed.

Consider, for instance, the Bantus in the Kalahari who have acquired a wealth of knowledge from times immemorial. This is the knowledge that has helped them survive for centuries in one of the most inhospitable terrains of the world. This is the knowledge acquired on the basis of trial and error, and has passed down from one generation to another. A social anthropologist might embark on a research into such heuristically tested knowledge (target knowledge field) in the Kalahari, which is the discursive site, and in the process of such investigations, he might epistemologize this 'local' knowledge.

The epistemologization of local knowledge may entail discursive strategies such as formulation of field-specific lexis, comparative theorization, and systematization of knowledge in terms of hierarchal values or scales, thus leading to a disciplinarization process. Any epistemologisation process generates what I might call an intellectual intensity, which adds an intellectual texture to a particular disciplinary domain.

Discursive construction of knowledge involves among other things the review of literature already built up surrounding the domain and the exploration of interdisciplinary domains such as applied linguistics. The former would include newspaper genres such as feature articles or televisual genres like documentaries on the Kalahari desert. As I mentioned before, student writers are often implicated in this stage of discursive construction of knowledge. Such developed and sophisticated knowledge may then be subject to dialectical evaluations and contestations by disciplinary communities through discursive practices such as seminar presentations, blind reviewing, and publications in scholarly journals. Often punctuated by iterative citations in publications, these contestations and consensual voices may further discipline and develop such knowledge towards a 'research consensus' (Said 1991:176). Such knowledge will eventually be part of social anthropology. This is by no means to suggest that this knowledge is immune to contestation; This is only a 'simplistic' way of depicting how knowledge is discursively constructed. If one examines the contents of Silberbauer's work (1981) on the central Kalahari desert, then it will elucidate the disciplinarization process I propose here.

Indisputably, even today the institutional supremacy in disciplinary knowledge production is still with the tertiary educational institutions. This is evidenced by the phenomenal growth in the production of disciplinary knowledge in the academy through journals and books available both in hard and soft copy form, enveloping every discipline. However, the importance of the emergence of various other sites of knowledge production since the 1970s cannot be underestimated. Among them, government departments, independent research institutions, workplaces of large corporations, international agencies, and above all the media institutions contribute substantially towards disciplinary knowledge production. In fact, the academy utilizes such knowledge owing to its easy accessibility through the new technologies of communication. It is this accessibility factor rather than cooperation among various institutions that facilitates disciplinary knowledge production, the academy being unarguably the pivotal institution.

The nexus between universities and non-academic organizations (eg. large corporations) in terms of knowledge production is a relatively new phenomenon. Sponsored professorships and chairs by leading organizations signify among other things this non-

traditional confluence. This has two explicit implications: first, non-academic communities recognize the importance of the academy as a site of knowledge production, not merely as a knowledge disseminator. This liaison can immensely benefit the sponsors in terms of human resource development, the know-how for research logistics, transfer of experts and know-how, in-service training opportunities, to name a few. Second, it highlights the promotional aspects emanating from these alignments. It is for example a prestige for a company to sponsor a distinguished professorship in an equally distinguished university. Such advertising texts, as marketing strategies, often promote these vested interests of corporations.

Recent research has also highlighted the close liaison between universities and the media (Cunnigham et al, 1997)⁷. The establishment of virtual universities demonstrates the new trends in borderless education (Cunnigham et al, 2000: 45-52. So how could the university be advantaged by these close affinities? In recent years, there has been a substantial corpus of research on workplace practices undertaken by universities worldwide. The research areas differ from linguistics to sociology, from environmental studies to feminist studies, from health and recreation to occupational health and safety and so on.

The emergence of professional knowledge organizations marked another significant aspect relating to knowledge production in the context of globalization. In a sense, these knowledge-intensive ⁷ organizations are the opposite of 'labour-intensive' ones (Alvesson, 1995: 6). Their main function is to provide professional business services by marketing their various knowledge-based products. As Tordoir points out, they are 'at the crossroads of three major developments [:] the increasing role of scientific and professional knowledge in business, the rise of a service economy, and changes in the organization of professional work in industrial companies and in the economy at large, leading towards complex network structures' (1995: 1). The cumulative effect of these new ventures is the growth of knowledge-based consultancy services (ibid: 111-201) on a global scale (also cf. Dawson, 2000). Since 'knowledge workers are understood to be highly qualified individuals' (Alvesson, 1995: 7), graduate programs, especially at postgraduate level now offer new courses to meet the industry demands. So, in the context of globalization, industry demands have introduced new dimensions to

disciplinary knowledge. What exactly are these industry demands, and how are they met?

Today, employers recruit graduates on the basis of several criteria: 'their knowledge, intellectual ability, ability to work in a modern organization, inter-personal skills and communication' (Harvey, 1994, as cited in Ralph, 2002: 161). The third criterion deserves elaboration, for it is the macro context within which employees have to be engaged in various discursive practices. First to be noticed is the technological environment which demands not only superior skills in using new technologies of communication but also the ability to keep pace with the new developments in such technologies; second, the cultural diversity that shapes attitudes to work and workers in a modern organization; third, the knowledge of global business operations, and fourth, legal and ethical issues in such practices.

The cumulative effect of all these forces, some tangible and some intangible, is the emergence of a performatively motivated ideology among social actors that seeks to privilege these new values and new identities. In other words social actors align themselves with the socio-economic, political and educational power structures of the new millennium. Prior to the acquisition of any disciplinary knowledge, most social actors envisage how this would-be knowledge could be potentially viable in the socio-economic structures (in terms of discursive objectives) that often dictate terms to them. Interdisciplinary knowledge is closely linked to these new socio-economic imperatives.

2.3 Interdisciplinary Knowledge

Over the past two decades or so, interdisciplinarity has invaded virtually all disciplinary domains of the academy as well as non-academic fields such as government departments, research institutes, and hospitals (Klein, 1996:13; Bazerman, 1995:387). Taking a historical perspective, Klein traces the evolution of the terms 'disciplinarity' and 'interdisciplinarity' and concludes that the former focuses on the specialization of a discipline whereas the latter on transcending the traditional boundaries of knowledge pertaining to a discipline (1996: 1-15, also cf. Epton et al, 1983: 3-37). These definitions, although they signify some crucial aspects of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity, do not seem to capture the complexity surrounding these two terms as they are used in this academic investigation. Within academic disciplinarity, the

propensity of disciplines to veer away from their established boundaries in order to inhabit the territories of other disciplines is not uncommon. Academic interdisciplinarity may then be defined as the selective integration of element from established disciplines (eg. economics, history), dependent interdisciplines (eg. industrial psychology), independent interdisciplines (eg. cultural studies, women's studies), critical/applied interdisciplines (eg. critical management studies) and sometimes practices (eg. occupational health and safety) into a particular discipline as a means of professionalisation, sophistication, or expansion. Hence, academic interdisciplinarity typifies the manifestation of integrative behaviour, not necessarily reciprocally amenable, between established disciplines, dependent interdisciplines, independent interdisciplines, critical/applied interdisciplines, and practices. For example, it is quite evident that modern archaeology has benefited from the discursive practices such as radio carbon dating, micro chemical analysis, from disciplines such as economics, linguistics, and ecology (Grant, 1990: 174), and from interdisciplines such as cultural studies and environmental science.

As Lyon (1992: 681) observes, 'It is becoming obvious that the nineteenth century divisions of the university are no longer an adequate grid for intellectual activity, and in response, many disciplines appear more open to external discourses.' A contemporary journal devoted to interdisciplinary studies, while advising its contributors to submit manuscripts which 'deliberately cross disciplinary boundaries', summarizes its editorial policy as follows: '...social scientists should work towards integrating their disciplines in the attempt to understand the complexities of human problem... both researchers and practitioners should translate understanding into action by making links between theory and practice' (Loveridge, 1999: ii). It seems to me that academic interdisciplinarity is eventuated by two major forces: *socioeconomic imperatives* and *desire for differentiation promoted by the persuasive works of theorists and researchers* most of whom are academics.

Socioeconomic imperatives provide the impetus in two identifiable ways: first they provide the necessary opportunities for new knowledges to be harnessed in effective ways especially in workplace contexts through discursive transfer of knowledges. Second, they present themselves as the raw materials for theorists and researchers to work on. What we witness here is the enactment of the discursive construction of knowledges.

Organizing social institutions to meet the needs that stem from socially generated demands is not a relatively new phenomenon. During the Renaissance, for example, rhetoric as a discipline in the school curricula not only produced potential actors who could recite set pieces in drama, but also catered to a large number of theatre-goers in understanding and appreciating the rhetoric of the performing artistes. Max Weber points out that the Confucian system attempted to train ‘for practical usefulness... in the organizations of public authorities, business offices, workshops scientific or industrial laboratories [and] disciplined armies’ (as cited in Gerth & Mills, 1995:426). (Also for a discussion of the influence of Confucianism on the Chinese education system, see Chan, 1999:16-27). According to Pan et al (2002: 5), the situation in China has not changed much; referring to the interdisciplinarity in higher education, they identify ‘interdisciplinary branches resulting from the combination of higher education and other disciplines, eg. economics of higher education, higher education management ... and the engineering of higher education.’

In Australia the traditionally established discipline of education, eg. ‘the history and philosophy of education, and educational sociology and psychology’ ...has changed markedly over the past decade largely because of the new demands placed by employers and practitioners on teacher preparation, but also at another level in response to the expansion and reorientation of university systems’ (Holbrook & Findlay, 2002: 106).

What is new today in social institutions is their wide global/local dimension, and sophisticated ways of producing, consuming, and understanding knowledge, especially in areas such as education, technology, industry and workplace. Social realities have multiplied and so has the social consciousness. The last two decades, for example, have seen the phenomenal growth in industrial production and consumption coupled with the great strides made in the fields of media and information technology. Parallel to these forces is the globalization of business as well as education (these two areas of discursive practices are now blurred). And these multifaceted dynamics have resulted in the introduction of radical changes to disciplinary knowledge at an unprecedented level. Disciplinary knowledge is no longer conditioned in terms of unified and easily discernible institutional entities; instead it is being forged and deployed in keeping pace with the globally as well as locally constructed realities, representing competition, contestation, boundary crossings and at times consensus. As Gibbons points out, ‘The dynamics of the global economy and the global competition are dissolving boundaries

between nations, institutions and disciplines, and giving rise to a distributed knowledge production' (Gibbons, 1988: 82).

As a result of these global and local repercussions, there is often cooperation between universities and other institutions, both government and non-government, to introduce and expand interdisciplinary knowledge that is required for keeping pace with new developments (Whitley, 1984: 20; Lenoir, 1997). These ventures are evident especially in disciplines such as science, engineering, education, and business studies. It would, however be a fallacy to deduce from these observations that knowledge production is more or less centralized or homogeneous. The collaborative efforts of knowledge producing institutions, especially in the workplace related ones, themselves are interdisciplinary by virtue of their diverse representational identities (Shinn, 1999). As Garrick and Rhodes succinctly put it, 'In our post-industrial work environments, workers are expected to develop pertinent and complex knowledge... the use of electronic data base, the internet and other industrial communication and negotiation processes...[and] the capacity to engage in higher-order thinking skills related to problem solving, critical thinking and research (up skilling)' (2000: 5-6). These socio-economic imperatives have introduced enormous changes to the university curricula. For example, referring to the component of 'Organizational Learning and Change' (MBA-B069), a Faculty of Business Handbook justifies its validity in local and global contexts in explicit terms: 'The course has a client-focused approach in which subjects reflect major technological, economic and social changes occurring in Australian and international workplace today' (UTS 1999: 87). Expansion of undergraduate programs to accommodate interdisciplinary studies, which was once the privilege of elite universities became noticeable in state universities in the USA (Newell, 1986: vi). Consider, for instance, the recent bias towards the provision of client-focused courses of study, especially in business studies. From 1980 onwards, the popularity of professionally demanding disciplines such as business studies, engineering and computer science has gained momentum. These changes are also characterized by what Lyotard calls 'performativity criterion' (1984: 46). Hence, 'The desired goal becomes the optimal contribution of higher education to the best performativity of the social system. Accordingly, it will have to create the skills that are indispensable to that system' (Lyotard, 1984:48 ; also cf. Misko, 2002).

It is also evident that these contemporary demands are realized through contemporary interdisciplinary texts. There are of course numerous interdisciplinary texts that promote interdisciplinary knowledge in consonant with the contemporary socio-economic imperatives. Hodgetts and Luthans, for example, in their *International Management: Culture, Strategy and Behavior* (2000) provide disciplinary knowledge that meets most of the employability criteria referred to earlier: ‘political, legal, and technological environment’ (*ibid*: 30-48), ‘ethics and social responsibility’ (*ibid*: 72-92), ‘meanings and dimensions of culture’ (*ibid*: 106-137), ‘managing cross cultures’ (*ibid*: 138-165), ‘organizational cultures and diversity’ (*ibid*: 166-193), ‘intercultural communication’ (*ibid*: 194-220), ‘organizing international operations’ (*ibid*: 298-327), ‘motivation across cultures’ (*ibid*: 370-397), ‘leadership across cultures’ (*ibid*: 398-425), ‘human resource development across cultures’ (*ibid*: 460-489). One might notice that this knowledge capital is also interdisciplinary in nature. Without adequate exposure to these vital elements of knowledges, prospective graduate employees will find it extremely difficult to be employable. As Lyotard (1984: 49) points out, students in the arts and the human sciences are disadvantaged in securing gainful employment within these challenging work practices (see my analysis of the MBA curriculum in Chapter 6, for further information about these professional imperatives). It is also worth noticing that the majority of the disciplinary texts on these relatively new discursive practices, as has always been the case, are products of the west.

My second point in this discussion is differentiation. Barthes refers to the ‘jolts of fashion- in the interest of a new object and a new language...(1977: 155) as one of the contributory factors for interdisciplinarity. This could certainly apply to dependent interdisciplines. It seems to me that differentiation is one of the crucial factors for the formation of independent interdisciplines, too. According to Klein, the emergence of interdisciplines such as urban studies, environmental studies, women’s studies, and cultural studies (For me, these are independent interdisciplines) was largely due to the inadequacies of established disciplines to explore such non-traditional domains (1996: 88-132). This inadequacy theory, as it becomes evident in my analysis below, could be applied to applied/critical/critical applied interdisciplines (eg. applied linguistics), but not to independent interdisciplines like women’s studies and cultural studies. Disciplines such as sociology and anthropology had investigated issues of cultural significance long before cultural studies came into being as an interdiscipline in the

early 1970s. However, cultural studies competed for a separate space outside the domains of these disciplines. It competed through the discursive practices of theorists and scholars interested in the field.

I am inclined to relate this desire for differentiation to the poststructuralist paradigm. It was the poststructuralists who within a conceptual framework first built up the infrastructure for interdisciplinary inquiry. This school of thought is mainly anchored in the works of avant garde theorists such as Derrida (1978; 1992a; 1992b), Bakhtin (1981; 1984; 1986), Foucault (1972; 1981; 1995), Kristeva (1980; 1984; 1989), and Greenblatt (1980; 1989). There are, however, a great number of other theorists, too numerous to mention here, whose works foreshadow in a variety of different ways poststructuralist orientations. Hence my endeavour is not to analyze the theoretical output of this movement as a whole, (which will assume encyclopaedic proportions, indeed,) but to selectively identify some influential conceptualizations of interdisciplinarity as manifest in some seminal works that characterize poststructuralist thought.

In general, poststructuralism stresses the indeterminacy and instability of signifiers and signifieds in contrast to the determinacy and stability accorded to meaning by most structuralist paradigms. It is these uncertainties (Lemert, 1997) that make even conceptualization of poststructuralist paradigms more nebulous. Another significant tenet of poststructuralism is the centrifugality of identities associated with both texts and authorship. It is mainly through this decentredness that poststructuralist paradigms appear to align themselves with interdisciplinarity.

New Historicism seems to have been influenced by the Foucauldian notions of discourse and power (Lentricchia, 1989: 234-241). The essentially Foucauldian concept that the modalities of discourses can hardly be explained in terms of continuous and unruptured progressive events is in fact one of the fundamental tenets of new historicism which distinguishes itself from old historicists who preferred to view such discourses as unified and uninterrupted processes. This intellectual tradition is significant for interdisciplinary research since it investigates interdisciplinary texts through radical interpretation of cultural, political, and social domains. Greenblatt, for example, relates how Marlowe transgressed the very genres within which he wrote/produced plays: 'Marlowe seems to be battering against the boundaries of his own medium: at one moment, the stage represents a vast space, then suddenly contracts

to a bed, then turns in quick succession into an imperial camp, a burning town...(1980: 195). Also of importance is the fact that new historicists use a variety of texts of other disciplines while investigating the political power structures depicted in literary texts (cf. Dollimore, 1989; Sinfield, 1997). Hence, the overarching ideology of new historicism is based on interdisciplinary reading of texts.

As Barthes points out, ‘...*interdisciplinarity*... cannot be accomplished by the simple confrontation of specialist branches of knowledge. Interdisciplinarity is not the calm of an easy security; it begins *effectively*... when the solidarity of the old disciplines breaks down- perhaps even violently, via the jolts of fashion- in the interest of a new object and a new language...(1977: 155 original italics). Barthes does not elaborate on these comments since his enterprise was to confront the notion of text. However, these comments reveal vital clues to our understanding of some misunderstandings surrounding the concept of interdisciplinarity. Barthes’ reference to the ‘jolts of fashion’ in the integration process is also worth examining. This is what I might call the ‘projectile effect’; the integration of information technology bears ample testimony to these fashionable inclinations. Although it is not very clear to me what Barthes refers to as ‘new object’, it could be assumed that he means both knowledge capital and its accompanying discursive objective. The discursive objective of a specialized information technology component (eg. e-commerce), for example, would be to enable the student to utilize the new knowledge in a professional environment relating to his or her specialization. Then the linguistic resources (or the ‘new language’ Barthes refers to) that characterize the new specialist knowledge would create difficulties for student writers. For example, ‘good will’ in e-commerce and accounting means the reputation of a business entity (therefore an intangible asset).

Another unnoticed interdisciplinary phenomenon associated with the theoretical output of the poststructuralist movement is what may be called the degenerification of terminology. For example the use of hybrid phrases such as ‘cultural *capital*’, ‘*ecology* of language’, ‘*architecture* of knowledge’ suggests not only the interdisciplinarity in linguistic formation, but also the epistemological value attached to the discourses referred to by such phrases. This is in fact related to interdiscursive semantic shift. In other words, the generic identity of such terms has been modified so that they may play vicarious roles in knowledge domains.

The desire for differentiation, I might add, is characterized by two dimensions: institutional, and institutionalized. The institutional dimension refers to the more palpable and physical characteristics. The qualifier 'studies' used as part of most interdisciplines signifies this institutional dimension. So the differentiation is at once conspicuous by the presence of the term 'studies'. Another example of this institutional dimension of differentiation is the strength of an interdiscipline to be globally visible in the academy as a separate domain of knowledge. This is important since local and regional orientations of most phenomena today are superseded by global orientations. Lenoir (1993: 71), referring to the nature of disciplines, makes the following observation, which throws some light on what I have been advancing here: '...for as laboratories and sites of apprenticeship are essential for organizing and reinforcing the economies of skill necessary for conducting science locally, disciplines are the structures in which these skills are assembled, intertwined with other diverse elements, and reproduced a coherent ensemble suitable for the conduct of stable scientific practice more globally'.

Various policies and discursive practices associated with a particular interdisciplinary knowledge domain constitute the institutionalized dimension. This dimension is characterized by the programs of study and their accompanying courses that represent interdisciplines often in the form of electives. More often these courses have a close intimacy with a variety of other disciplines and interdisciplines. Who are the actors behind this differentiation? In fact, if one peruses the literature, it becomes evident that it is the theorists, scholars, and practitioners who promote the differentiation (See my analysis in Chapter 6 of the integration of cultural studies into business studies) through various discursive practices. As Hausman observes, '...interdisciplinary efforts are artificial not because of compliancy or desperation but because they are intellectually motivated attempts to be different' (1979: 4-5). To substantiate my claim for differentiation, I will examine some tangible evidence in the context of independent interdisciplines.

The independent interdiscipline of speech communication whose indebtedness to the once established discipline of rhetoric exhibits an interesting differentiating phenomenon. How does speech communication distinguish itself from rhetoric? Rhetoric was confined to the 'study of oral communication as a means of sharing information and gaining influence... (www.calpoly.edu/-spc, 2003: 1). So, it was a

discipline that facilitated communicative transactions in social life. It is reasonable to surmise that social actors whose knowledge of rhetoric was insufficient found it difficult to participate effectively in discursive practices. For example, theatre-goers with inadequate training in rhetoric may have been immensely disadvantaged in fully appreciating the plays of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Speech communication differs from rhetoric in that it ‘uses the resources of both the humanities and the social sciences in exploring how people communicate directly and indirectly through language and associated non-verbal’ transactions (*ibid*: 1). And theorists who promoted this relatively new interdisciplinary of speech communication did not want to accommodate it within the disciplinary corpus of rhetoric. This could be another ‘jolt of fashion’ (Barthes, 1977: 155). As a result of this interdisciplinary focus, most programs of speech communication contain courses that have strong affinities with disciplines/interdisciplines such as business studies (eg. business and professional speaking, organizational communication processes), medicine (eg. interpersonal issues in health communication), Linguistics (eg. language and religion), women’s studies (eg. women and language), cultural studies (eg. cultural analysis of screen media) (www.spcomm.uiuc.edu, 2003: 1), information technology (eg. technology and human communication), education (eg. classroom communication), law (eg. applied argumentation) (www.calpoly.edu. 2003:1). The growing number of courses offered under the rubric of speech communication in several universities attest to the phenomenal expansion of this knowledge domain. For example, the speech communication graduate program at the University of Illinois, Urbana contains 66 courses (www.spcomm.uiuc.edu, 2003: 1-2) whereas California Polytechnic State University has 38 different courses embracing the knowledge domains of ‘the social sciences and the humanities’ (www.calpoly.edu/-offering.htm, 2003: 1). I might stress here that this phenomenon should not be viewed merely as a case of pouring new wines into old bottles, but rather it is an instance where new wine is made available in new bottles in order to highlight the differentiation.

Disciplinarity as a phenomenon appears to have lost its pristine identity in the academy owing in large measure to curricular changes eventuated by economic imperatives. Although there are disciplines such as history, geography, philosophy, they are all dependent on other disciplines or interdisciplines, so that they can be more meaningful and resourceful. For me interdisciplinarity is merely a generic term, which requires to

be explored in a sustainable and broader conceptual framework. In the ensuing chapter, I will explore this construct from a critical perspective.

CHAPTER THREE

DIVERSE MANIFESTATIONS OF INTERDISCIPLINARITY

3.1 A Typology of Interdisciplinary Knowledge

The construct of interdisciplinarity is a complex one. Its complexity arises mainly from the unrestricted ways in which the term is used. In order to avoid confusion, we need to conceptualize interdisciplinarity from a broader perspective, and such conceptualizations should essentially focus on some tangible aspects of interdisciplinarity. In other words they should be based on the sheer manifestations of interdisciplines in the academy. Interdisciplines manifest themselves in various forms and it is not easy to define them. In the context of this inquiry, I have identified five types of interdisciplines: independent, dependent, multiple-embedded, applied/critical/critical applied, and referential. Most interdisciplines are discursive practices of a would-be discipline. For example, cultural studies, women's studies, terrorism studies are all interdisciplines (although some may still prefer to call them disciplines). In this investigation, such interdisciplines are called 'independent interdisciplines'. They are independent by not being overtly dependent on other disciplines or interdisciplines.

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When a particular discipline encroaches on the disciplinary territory belonging to another, that is the absorption of discursive practices alien to it, it then also becomes an interdiscipline. For example, socio-linguistics, and educational psychology are interdisciplines that depict the integration of sociology and linguistics, and education and psychology respectively. I refer to such interdisciplines as 'dependent interdisciplines'. What we witness here is a mutual constitution of elements belonging to two or more disciplines. However, the host discipline is always punctuated by the

adjectivization (eg. in the case of educational psychology, the host discipline is education).

When three or more interdisciplines are conflated in a single course of study, they result in multiple-embedded interdisciplinarity. This is very common in postgraduate programs where a significant number of electives are available for students to choose from. 'Informatics, culture, and communication', for example, is a multiple-embedded interdiscipline being offered to MBA students as an elective. Multiple-embedded interdisciplines are formally institutionalized and legitimized as evident from a given course profile of a program of study.

Some interdisciplines can also be recognizable outside the parameters of the aforementioned institutionalized frameworks. For example, a newly discovered and introduced (usually following the poststructuralist paradigm) critical dimension of a discipline or an interdiscipline that expands its own domain while enriching the domains of other disciplines or interdisciplines (eg. critical management studies, critical applied linguistics). Such disciplines/interdisciplines usually utilize the resources from a variety of conceptualizations and discursive practices belonging to various paradigms. In this investigation, they are referred to as critical/applied critical interdisciplines.

Interdisciplinarity can be manifest through an assessment task (without any institutionalized manifestation, eg. reference in a course profile to an interdiscipline) that necessitates the appropriation of elements from interdisciplinary domains. This phenomenon may be referred to as 'referential interdisciplinarity.' Sometimes the disciplinary gulf as evidenced by assessment tasks in a single course is daunting: for example, LAWS11045 Law and Welfare of Society (2003), contains two assignments that display this unbridgeable gap between knowledge domains. Question one refers to the amendments to the Commonwealth Constitution. Students are asked to 'outline the provisions for this in the Constitution and give examples of successful and unsuccessful amendments of the Constitution over the years. Also cover the recent republican debate in Australia' (ibid: 21). Question 2 in contrast focuses on gender issues: 'Describe the rise of women's rights movements and the emancipation of women. Also discuss whether women now have equal legal rights as men' (ibid: 21).

It is, however, interesting to notice how the interdisciplinary integration is achieved in spite of this hiatus. For example, attempts are made here to integrate women's studies into legal studies through an explicit reference in Question 2 where the two domains are amalgamated: women and their legal rights. This is a striking example of referential interdisciplinarity. Each assignment should be done in approximately 2000 words.

I still need to elaborate on independent interdisciplines. What exactly are the determining criteria of being an independent interdiscipline? Are they all destined to be independent interdisciplines forever? In other words, do they have any prospects of being disciplined to be disciplines? I propose three factors that characterize independent interdisciplines. First, they do not claim to have a strong *appeal* to our contemporary knowledge economy; second, they are not as *pervasive* as other disciplines; and third, they are not being vigorously *promoted* through institutionalized means (eg, as core subjects in a course of study) as worthy of being disciplines. For example, cultural studies, and information technology emerged as interdisciplines in the early 1970s. Today, there are faculties in most universities named after information technology. Hence, information technology is considered to be a full-fledged facultized discipline; cultural studies is yet to gain such recognition. Information technology related subjects have also gained 'core subject' status in most disciplines; cultural studies is, however, largely represented in courses as an elective, or even as a referential entity in assessment tasks. Information technology does satisfy all the three criteria I proposed: strong appeal to the knowledge economy, pervasiveness, and vigorous promotion, whereas cultural studies does not.

The above categorizations are by no means based on conclusive theorizing; changes in socio-economic structures may add further dimensions to interdisciplinarity. However, within the confinements of this provisionality, I have gleaned some valid and productive aspects of interdisciplinarity for scholars to work on.

Often characterized by their heterogeneity, the elements belonging to these categories remain either indiscriminately intertwined with or relatively isolated from the host discipline. These new elements and their social and cognitive output, however heterogeneous they may be, coalesce into a discipline for a variety of epistemological as well as pragmatic reasons (Becher, 1994: 55-70). For example they may contribute to broaden one's intellectual horizons and provide opportunities for applying this

knowledge (Geertz, 1993: 19-35) or ‘ecology of literacy’ (Ivanic 1998: 62) in diverse fields in society.

Since interdisciplinarity necessarily entails a disciplinary integration process, it is also worth examining how students’ prior knowledge influences their appropriation of interdisciplinary knowledge in textual construction. I have noticed two categories of interdisciplinarity in particular reference to prior knowledge: tacit interdisciplinarity, and facilitative interdisciplinarity. Tacit interdisciplinarity occurs when students attempt to utilize their prior disciplinary knowledge corresponding to a seemingly identical knowledge domain in a different local condition (eg. using inadvertently the knowledge of Chinese business law in a context where Australian business law is the theme). I might add that tacit interdisciplinarity could manifest itself in a more vestigial and residual form in student writing. Facilitative interdisciplinarity is related to students’ prior knowledge of interdisciplines that have a direct bearing on a particular course of study. Appropriate prior knowledge usually facilitates students in many ways to cope with a course of study.

3.2 Applied/Critical/Critical Applied Revolution

The reinforcement of disciplines with ‘applied’, ‘critical’ and ‘critical applied’ paradigms has ushered in a revolution in the field of interdisciplinary studies. And this interdisciplinary phenomenon still remains unexplored by the critical scrutiny, at least at the time of writing this thesis. If we examine the evolution of disciplinary knowledge, we may notice two ‘applied’ revolutions. The first occurred in the late 19th century when applied disciplines were introduced to the university curriculum in the USA. They included, ‘medicine, law, theology, engineering, agriculture, education, business management, public administration, and journalism’ (King and Brownell, 1966: 57). They were aptly called applied disciplines by virtue of their mandatory applicability in a broader context of society. The careers of medical officers and solicitors for example presuppose the comprehensive study of the practical aspects of medicine and law (eg. through internships) respectively. Much has been written about these disciplines by theorists and scholars, including Kant (1979) who perhaps for the first time explored in detail the utilitarian value of such disciplines. Second, the adjectival use of ‘applied’ before certain disciplines paved the way for interdisciplinarity. My concern here is with the latter. I use the phrase ‘applied revolution’ in a specific context with a view to

unraveling its inherent interdisciplinary connotations, and of course, orientations and applications. In other words, the adjectivized ‘applied’, ‘critical’, and ‘critical applied’ before a particular discipline, I believe, has generated interdisciplinary trends. It should be noted that the distinction between applied and non-applied, between critical and non-critical is largely contingent on the applicability factor outside the archival habitat or traditional boundary of a particular discipline. They also signify ventures into specialization especially in practice-oriented contexts by negotiating uncharted territories of knowledges. I use the term ‘venture’ here deliberately since at least some of these adjectivizations are used on an experimental basis. The phrase ‘applied revolution’, as I have used it here then invokes explicit attempts at expanding the stretchable boundaries of disciplines, thus exploring realizable value potential or assets of disciplines in relation to others. The construct of applicability or practicability associated with the applied revolution, I believe, does not undermine the intellectual intensity of a discipline; it would rather enhance its intellectual appeal.

The importance of the practical application of knowledge is not a new concept. This could well be traced back to Confucian paradigms of teaching and learning (Mote, 1971: 36). Through its inclinations towards expansion on the strength of applicability in non-traditional contexts, a particular discipline may encroach on other disciplines, (or other disciplines may use the methodologies belonging to another discipline), and this might lead to interdisciplinarity. The advent of applied psychology in the early 1900s marked an important milestone in the discipline of psychology. Its first application was in the selection of employees for new industries; hence a new interdiscipline called industrial or occupational psychology came into being (Muchinsky, 1990).

Interdisciplinarity in the discipline of linguistics is another striking example. In the mid 1960s Chomsky (1968) attempted to broaden the horizon of linguistics by linking it with cognitive or psychological realms of knowledges. Chomsky’s analysis of linguistic behaviour in terms of the methodology of psychology enriched the field of linguistics. Today, linguistics is perhaps one of the disciplines where what I might call the ‘applied revolution’ manifests itself in a more tangible way. Applied linguistics is a growing repertoire of knowledge where centrifugal forces are yet to embrace new territories of other disciplines: communication, information technology, political science, medicine, business studies, law etc. Hence, its breaking away from mainstream linguistics is characterized by heteroglossaic (Bakhtin, 1981; Pennycook, 2001) approaches premised

mostly in historical, cultural, and political knowledge domains. Applied linguistics is applicable in almost every discipline; consider, for example, the impact of discourse analysis now in vogue in most academic disciplines.

In fact, applied/critical disciplines appear to be more vibrant than non- applied /non-critical disciplines. In what follows, I will briefly investigate interdisciplinary developments of two disciplines: linguistics and management studies in particular references to some influential texts.

Linguistics as a discipline is mostly confined to its theoretical elaboration. In the early 1960s, some theorists and practitioners questioned the traditional grammar-oriented approach, and discussed the importance of ‘subject matter’ (eg. Roberts, 1960: 9). This led to some conscious attempts at exploring its application potential in language teaching (eg. Wilkins, 1972; Falk, 1973; Mundell, 1978). Thus, applied linguistics was born of mainstream linguistics (generative or descriptive linguistics), and had had its first application in education, especially in second language teaching and learning. In fact one might trace this applied dimension back to the Second World War period when linguists were interested in teaching the English language, and also learning other languages in enemy territories (Jamieson, 1980: 12). I found Firth’s *Papers in Linguistics* (1957) useful for understanding the applied dimension of linguistics from a historical perspective. Although a significant part of his work is devoted to descriptive linguistics, his comments on the social role of linguistics, and of linguists certainly merit scholarly attention: ‘The multiplicity of social roles we have to play as members of a race, nation, class, family, school, club...involves a certain degree of linguistic specialization... For the adequate description and classification of contexts of situation, we need to widen our linguistic outlook’ (1957: 29-30). His references to ‘contexts of situations’ and ‘linguistic outlook’ (yet to be widened) signify the applied dimensions of linguistics. Not only did he identify the social role of linguistics, he also elaborated on the contexts in which such linguistic applications could be situated.

Theoretical and applied aspects of linguistics have in recent years been subject to critical investigations. Corder, for example, documents this division in unequivocal terms: ‘...the relevance of theoretical linguistics to perhaps teaching is *indirect* and it is not the task of the theoretical linguist to say what relevance it may have. This is the field of applied linguistics’ (1973, italics original). Corder focuses on areas such as the

development of phonological syllabus, teaching grammar models, and evaluation strategies, all concerned with language teaching (*ibid*: 323-374; also cf. Lehmann, 1976: 293-300; Carter: 1998).

The applicability of applied linguistics in our contemporary disciplinary contexts has been questioned by several theorists (Smith, 1981; Pennycook, 2001). Smith, for example, commenting on the application of contrastive linguistics, again in the context of language teaching, makes a significant observation on the possibility of transcending the boundaries of linguistics: ‘...application of linguistics will be of two basic types: first-order applications which follow directly from linguistic theory and second-order applications which involve considerations external to linguistics proper. Second-order applications help to constitute a number of interdisciplines’ such as psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics (1981: 15). Smith’s observations although developed at conceptual level are significant since he perceives the valuable contribution applied linguists can make towards enhancing the stature of other disciplines (*ibid*: 15).

It is in these contexts that critical applied linguistics emerged as a revolt against the narrow application of applied linguistics, which was situated in the same *cul de sac* where linguistics once was. Pennycook (2001) develops a conceptual framework for critical applied linguistics that transcends its conventional applications. As he demonstrates, ‘...studies of how people learn a second language have been constricted by the narrow purview of mainstream second language acquisition (SLA) work. The issues of language learning have been cast as questions to do with the acquisition of morphemes, syntax, and lexis..., and the learner has been cast in a one-dimensional acquisition device’ (*ibid*: 143). Critical applied linguists by contrast can problematize the classroom as a site where socio-politically and culturally defined attitudes, values, beliefs, assumptions, and experiences of students as well as teachers interact and clash in their attempts at consuming and constructing texts that are themselves vehicles of transmitting the ideologies of socio-political power structures at a given time (*ibid*: 114-130). As Pennycook (2001) observes, critical applied linguistics can draw heavily on the theoretical capital of the poststructuralist paradigm, taking it as not mere theories per se, but as a pool of resources or assets in expanding the boundaries of applied linguistics.

Viewed from these perspectives, the interdisciplinary dimensions of critical applied linguistics is vast. It can inhabit the domains of almost every discipline ranging from

aviation and law to medicine and zoology. It is interesting to note that, in doing so, critical applied linguistics does in fact critique its own ancestors.

Critical applied linguistics is an exclusively, if not uniquely, versatile discipline; it could be applied to discursive practices of any conceivable discipline in order to facilitate their smooth functioning in a given context. And its importance is strongly felt in disciplines such as law and psychology where strategic manipulation of linguistic resources are instrumental in the appropriation of discursive practices in social contexts. A cross-examination of a witness in a court hearing for example is more of a linguistic exercise than of factual deliberation where hegemonic relations and economic imperatives dictate terms. Again, in an interdiscipline like feminist studies, critical applied linguistics could explicate the role of language in defining gender relations (Farganis, 1994: 113-114). This is an area, I believe, where critical applied linguists, not the feminists, nor the historians, could contribute immensely by exploring the nexus between linguistic dimensions and the ideologies of socio-political power structures associated with popular feminist/anti-feminist discourses.

In the context of business studies, Clegg observes the significance of linguistics in determining power relations in organizations (1989: 151). Similar instances where the sharing of resources developed by various other disciplines makes a host discipline truly interdisciplinary have significant implications for the writing pedagogy in general and student writing in particular. Student writers in such contexts have to grapple with various concepts through new terminologies belonging to a number of disciplines and interdisciplines.

My preceding observations may also highlight an important epistemological dimension to student writing within interdisciplinary contexts. When critical applied linguistics, itself an interdiscipline, succumbs, for example, to the invigorating influence of the poststructuralist paradigm, then it embraces another strand of interdisciplinary knowledge: postmodern critical theory. This is further extended to absorb yet another interdisciplinary dimension, when the methodology of critical applied linguistics is used, for example, in feminist or cultural studies. So the interdisciplinarity of critical applied linguistics as well as feminist or cultural studies invariably becomes multiple-embedded, containing at least three interdisciplines in each interdiscipline. Let me examine another example. When feminist theory (women's studies) is informed by

applied linguistics, one might notice the integration of two different knowledge domains. If feminist theory thus refurbished is integrated into another knowledge domain, for example, organizational behaviour, then one might witness the juxtaposition of three different knowledge domains. In fact, the importance of feminist theory in organizational behaviour has been well documented (eg, Calas & Smircich, 1992: 227-253).

This phenomenon may aptly be termed multiple embedded interdisciplinarity. The fusion of disciplinary/interdisciplinary elements here operates at two basic levels: conceptual and linguistic. As far as the second example is considered, the conceptual strengths derive at least from four disciplines/interdisciplines: women's studies, critical applied linguistics, organizational behaviour, and critical theory. These are then subject to the influence of extra-disciplinarity. So the linguistic resources associated with them naturally assume diverse proportions. In fact student writers have to cope with these two dimensions of interdisciplinarity (conceptual/linguistic) simultaneously in their attempts at constructing student texts. I am by no means developing a teleological proposition here; as evidenced by my analyses of student writings, multiple-embedded interdisciplinarity is certainly a force to be reckoned with as far as student writing is concerned.

Critical management studies provides us with another example of interdisciplinarity eventuated by the critical/applied revolution. It would also be productive to investigate at the same time the role of applied linguistics within management studies, too.

The interdiscipline of critical management studies emerged as a reaction to the orthodox mainstream management programs. How could, one might ask, critical management studies be called interdisciplinary? Is being critical tantamount to interdisciplinarity? It is evident that, like critical applied linguistics, critical management studies is premised on the theoretical landscape of the poststructuralist movement. It is an interdiscipline within the orthodox management studies, and its interdisciplinary nature is nurtured by its own transgressive developments while being nestled in a safe haven: the orthodox management studies. I might stress here that without safe havens, there is no applied/critical revolution.

Critical management studies (CMS) can be applied in contexts other than it has traditionally been used. Its applicability, for example, in information technology or even in sports, denotes its potentiality to be a vibrant interdisciplinary. 'As the presumed center of an increasingly large number of distinct activities and processes', Alvesson and Willmott observe, 'management expands and its claims are correspondingly magnified. As this occurs, it becomes increasingly vital to subject it to critical examination' (1992:3). So what are the means of subjecting management studies to critical scrutiny?

According to Deertz, the asymmetrical power relations based on gender distinctions in modern organizations are an important aspect of critical management studies; hence it is largely indebted to the critical theory (1992: 30-31). Deertz further makes some important comments that merit quoting at length: 'As a system, language holds forth the historically developed dimensions of interest...Thus when we consider language from a political point of view within organizations, the interest is not primarily in how different groups use language to accomplish goals, the rationality in language use, nor how the profit motive influences language use. The concern is with the dimensions utilized to produce classifications and thus produce groups and their relations' (1992: 28-29). Although there is no explicit reference to applied linguistics, what Deertz suggests here is that in line with the tenets of critical applied linguistics, language use should not be considered on the merit of its representational value alone, but rather on the strength of its relational value realized through various stratifications, eg. hegemonic power relations, cultural practices, within organizations.

CMS has also brought about radical conceptualizations of organizational behaviour. Drawing heavily on Foucault, Marcuse, and Barthes, Burrell demonstrates the tension between 'de-erotization' and 're-erotization' of the workplace, and points to the emergence of an anti-organization (1992: 66-87). By 're-erotization', Burrell refers to 'a more joyous, playful attitude to life and to fellow humans where sexuality and feelings are enhanced' (ibid: 78). Here Burrell's analysis of the role of pleasure in business organizations is significant for us to fathom how critical theory (especially feminism) is implicated in complex ways. In fact Burrell refers to the collision between feminist ideology and the erotization of commodities in popular advertisements (ibid: 73).

Other investigations of critical perspectives in business studies include ‘Critical Theory and Accounting’ (Power & Laughlin, 1992: 113-133) where the possibility of enriching accounting practices with the theoretical application of the work of Habermas is explored, ‘Marketing Discourse and Practice: Towards a Critical Analysis’ which questions the ‘...highly positivistic and normative approach to knowledge’ ((Morgan, 1992: 154) in the marketing discourse, ‘Personnel/Organizational Psychology: A Critique of the Discipline’ which attempts to ‘...subsume two fields of study: human resource management and organizational psychology’ with greater possibility of its being enriched by critical theory (Steffy & Grimes, 1992: 181), and ‘Critical Social Science for Managers? Promising and Perverse Possibilities’ which discusses CSC as ‘...an intellectual framework for resisting domination by traditional science and technology, institutionally distorted communication, owners of capital, and patriarchal forces’ (Nord & Jermier, 1992: 203).

My discussion so far on applied/critical/critical applied interdisciplines has focused on the pivotal role played by poststructuralist paradigms in enriching knowledge domains. It should however be noted here that such interdisciplines can also emerge outside the precinct of this intellectual tradition. Consider, for instance, the application of applied ethics in management studies (eg. Palmer, 1999). Such moves are occasioned by the pervasive influence of communication new technologies on management studies: ‘The computer industry has unquestionably one of the worst ethical problems in the world... What a challenge, therefore, to both the administrators and educators in the field of IS [Information Systems] in business!’ (*ibid*: 107). I might add that soft technoculture has unleashed serious ethical implications not only for business studies but also for the new technologies of communication themselves. In what follows I will examine interdisciplinarity in particular reference to its current pedagogical situatedness.

3.4 Interdisciplinarity and Soft technoculture

The impact of soft technoculture on interdisciplinarity is another dimension that remains unexplored in the current literature. In surveying the literature, it becomes abundantly clear that although there are a few books on interdisciplinarity, there is still a noticeable

deficiency of works devoted to exploring some crucial aspects of interdisciplinarity from epistemological perspectives.

The term soft technoculture attempts to accommodate the integrative behaviour of three identifiable phenomena: sophisticated software texts, predominantly electronic based machinery, equipment, and devices, and the new cultural identities ushered in by them.

Soft technoculture also promotes the construction, consumption and dissemination of interdisciplinary discourses. Hypertext for example is a *micro* knowledge site that paves the way for a myriad of intertextually intertwined *macro* knowledge domains. It is a graphic illustration not only of how texts are interrelated but also of how texts could be selectively consumed; hence the emphasis is on optionality. Hypertexts often lead to hypertext links or hyperlinks that act as channels of expanding a particular knowledge domain through a series of intertextual chains. Hence hypertexts are a breeding ground for intertextuality and interdiscursivity. Hypertextual representation of knowledges emerged with the advent of the internet and what is striking from the point of view of textual consumption of hypertexts are the disciplinary eventualities that may even baffle the consumer (reader). Disruptive as they may be, these eventualities have the potential to be amazingly resourceful for the learner. This in itself I believe is a new mode of consumption occasioned by the illusive networks of hypertexts. My argument here is that almost unwittingly readers of hypertexts may end up with accessing quite unforeseen terrains of knowledges within a particular knowledge domain. As Delany & Landow (1991) observes hypertexts exercise enormous influence on literary studies.

What then are the implications of hypertexts for our understanding of the new vistas of disciplinary knowledge? Perhaps the most prominent factor is what may aptly be called the pre-programmed/non-programmed viewer/reader sensibility. Consumers of disciplinary knowledge today are often inundated with resources that represent disciplinary knowledge through hyperlinks. And such opportunities may well be pre-programmed or non-programmed. This ubiquity of knowledge capital is a new phenomenon that emerged with the introduction of the Internet.

The major characteristics are that knowledge can be disseminated *simultaneously* to massive audiences throughout the world, that such knowledge is *readily available* (just a mouse click away), and that knowledge can be used and *reused* in a variety of flexible

ways. Disciplinary knowledge in particular has been subject to intellectual scrutiny as has never been before as a result of this extraordinary accessibility factor.

Also of importance are the contemporary dynamics of academic interdisciplinarity eventuated by the readily available and accessible sources of disciplinary knowledge through various channels of electronic communication. It is worth examining the importance of information technology peripheral to its traditional role in soft technoculture. What is striking about information technology as a discipline is that it enriches the canvass of most other disciplines and makes expand their horizons. Business studies in particular has immensely benefited from the recent technological innovations based on networks. E-commerce is a good example of how disciplines can enlarge their frontiers while utilizing the resources belonging to another discipline. Medicine, for example, has enriched itself with contours of new knowledges, using the resources of new technologies of communication. Macleod (1996) elaborates on the multidisciplinary dimensions of medicine and examines the role of disciplinary communities to absorb these changes. Nano technology, a recently introduced interdiscipline, deals with molecular manufacturing, and it attempts to combine traditional chemistry with biology. The ability of this interdiscipline to manipulate micro-molecular structures, especially eliminating diseases is brought about by the new communication technologies. In line with this interdiscipline, one may view a disease as a mere disactive molecule, a revolutionary concept brought about by electronic manipulation of biological phenomena. Thus not only does technology facilitate to locate precise nano structures pertaining to a particular disease, but also it yokes several disciplinary domains together to create new disciplinary knowledge. More recent developments in embryonic stem-cell research, despite its ethical considerations, has given impetus towards creating new interdisciplinary domains.⁸

The discursive practices within soft technoculture have been instrumental in introducing new dependent and independent interdisciplines, too. E-commerce, for example is a dependent interdiscipline that occupies a key position in any business studies curricula today. And m-commerce, another dependent interdiscipline is perhaps the latest addition to business curricula (see Chapter 6, for more information). Web designing, on the other hand, is an independent interdiscipline that could be part of a communication studies program.

Since technocentricity or technological determinism has always been the driving gear of the corporate culture, recent emergence of interdisciplines such as cultural studies and environmental studies have added new dimensions to organizational behaviour in both global and local contexts. My point here is that the very identity of these interdisciplines have undergone significant changes. Up until the early 1970s, most disciplinary texts on organizational behaviour (eg. Luthans, 1973) lacked in components dealing with cultural dimensions. However this trend underwent changes with the introduction of technocentric workplace environments (eg. Hunt, 1992; Johns, 1996). The pervasive influence of globally recognizable soft technoculture has lent itself to the production of influential works centred on the role of cultural values within the ecology of technocentricity. Hofstede (1997) in his analysis of cultural differences in organizational behaviour identifies five useful dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, and long-term orientation (see also Chapter 6). Sophisticated software texts (programs) play a dual role in interdisciplinary knowledge production: they are texts by themselves; and they are also texts that help produce other texts. Thus a particular software package can have immense potential for constructing myriads of other texts (visual graphics for example) depending on the user's ability and requirements.

With the advent of the new technologies of communication, textual consumption of social groups at community level has also undergone tremendous changes. Access to and affordability of technology for communication in social settings have improved as has never been before. The dissemination of new discourses of human rights, war crimes, ultra-militant trade unionism, child abuse, homosexual rights, and above all the 'legitimacy' of pro-western political thought speaks eloquently of the enormous impact of NTC. Most televisual images highlight discursive practices relating to interdisciplines such as cultural studies, environmental studies and many more besides. The role of the Internet as a globally available virtual knowledge site is also worth examining. It is a global knowledge site operated via global computer networks. Its main purpose is to communicate a wide range of discourses, knowledges, and information in words, sounds, and images and it is perhaps the most widely used vehicle of communication within soft technoculture. One might also notice some mandatory discursive practices (eg. the use of e-mail) drawn from the soft technoculture as part of a

course. For example, the course profile of Information Systems Management: Integrating E-commerce admonishes: 'E-mail will be used as an important means of communication throughout the term...Not subscribing to a course e-mail list immediately could result in your losing marks' (ECOM 20001, 2003: 3). The discursive objectives of this course are well explained in the course profile: 'introduce the framework and explain how business professionals can analyze systems for themselves; discuss the elements of a work system; discuss the types of information systems; provide an understanding of topics related to building and maintaining information systems' (*ibid*: 6). This clearly demonstrates how the Internet-based knowledges have become an integral part of the new interdisciplines and also of the new discursive practices within professional settings in the academy today. In the next section, I examine very briefly some salient characteristics of disciplinary texts on interdisciplinarity.

3.4 Disciplinary Texts on Interdisciplinarity

There are few texts available in English devoted to examining interdisciplinary dimensions of knowledge. Most of these texts, as the following brief review would reveal, are premised in course restructuring of academic programs. Perhaps one of the reasons for this paucity of texts is that interdisciplinarity is relatively a new area of knowledge production and consumption.

It was in the mid 1970s that texts on interdisciplinarity began to emerge. Squire (1975) for example in a short report on interdisciplinarity highlights the strengths as well as weaknesses of interdisciplinary programs in British universities in the early 1970s. Here the major focus has been to demonstrate the disintegration of archival properties of disciplines such as geography and economics. The conflictual relations between these integrative ventures however have not been explored. He explores historical developments, including boundary crossings, of a selected corpus of disciplines and interdisciplines in terms of their informational content and genealogies. Its relevance to the current discourses on interdisciplinarity seems to be relatively minimal since the introduction of interdisciplinary programs was in its germinal form at the time of writing his book.

Similar attempts were made by William (1978) providing some convincing statistical information about interdisciplinary programs in several universities in particular reference to those in the USA, the UK, and Australia. Hausman (1979) and Kockelmans (1979) approaches interdisciplinarity from a broader perspective. Hausman in fact critiques the 'bureaucratic machinery' for creating what he calls 'the artificial schemes' that generate 'student credit hours in a discipline as the main basis for appropriating funds, or the adherence to reward structures that favour productivity only in narrowly specialized accomplishments' (ibid: 9). Kockelmans touches on the implications of interdisciplinarity for science in particular reference to restructuring courses.

However, in addition to the above, there are still more crucial issues associated with interdisciplinarity. Much of the recent literature available on interdisciplinarity has a tendency to project interdisciplinarity as an easily conceivable and unproblematic phenomenon. Perhaps the most influential works on disciplinary knowledge in the recent contexts are Becher's *Academic Tribes and Territories* (1989), Becher and Kogan's *Process and structure in higher education* (1992), Klein's *Crossing Boundaries* (1996).

Becher and Kogan observe that the pervasive competitiveness in the academy is not something new, but has long been there as an inherent characteristic: 'Basic units contend vigorously with their rivals in the same field, and with their neighbours in the same institution, to win greater prestige ... and earn the most resources. Institutions, in more or less subtle ways, continue to promote their own standing at the expense of others' (1992: 185). By 'basic units' they mean 'the smallest component elements which have corporate life of their own' eg. departments, schools, faculties (1992:82).

Klein's (1996) work stands out for two reasons: It attempts to survey disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity as tangible phenomena, and it is the only single work that is available on these two constructs. Her work portrays disciplinarity/interdisciplinarity in terms of institutionalized changes. Klein promotes the theory that interdisciplinarity occurs as a result of the inadequacy of the existing disciplines. Similar observations are made by Denzin, too: 'Curricular changes in the form of interdisciplines are also caused by the inadequacy of a particular discipline to meet the demands at a given time' (Denzin 1997: 258). All in all Klein's (1996) work highlights some useful areas where researchers can embark on their investigations (eg. interdisciplinary research).

Among the more recent works on interdisciplinarity Abbott's *Chaos of Disciplines* (2001) and Moran's *Interdisciplinarity* (2002) merit our attention. Abbott's major argument is what he calls the 'fractal distinction of disciplines' (2001: 10). By this phrase he means the 'dichotomies', for example, 'the constructed versus the real nature...' the situated versus the transcendent' (ibid: 10), that characterize the cultural orientation of disciplines. The difficulty with Abbott's proposition is that he situates or rather attempts to arrest complexities inherent in disciplinarity in a perceived omnipotent cultural basis. For example, he believes that the first cultural function of disciplines emerged with the 'Geertzian' notion of culture that provided 'academics with a general conception of intellectual existence' (ibid: 130), and the second 'is that of preventing knowledge from becoming too abstract or overwhelming' (ibid: 130). Perhaps a lengthy quotation might reveal some strengths as well as weaknesses of Abbott's cultural orientation in explicating disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity: 'An important property of disciplinary cultural structure is what we may call a discipline's axis of cohesion. Disciplines often possess strong cultural axes, which we consider to be their central principle' (ibid: 140). He further observes that the cultural axis of political science is 'power', of economics is 'choice, and of anthropology is 'ethnography'. Then, he attaches a 'social structure' to disciplines, eg. audiences, disciplinary community (ibid. 144). It seems to me that what Abbott means by cultural axis is identical with my reference to the 'archival property' of disciplines (Chapter 2). It all depends on how one defines the term 'culture', and in its broadest sense, that is culture as an overarching historically situated construct, Abbott's proposition seems valid. However, by endowing disciplines with discrete cultural formulae (eg 'power' for political science, 'choice' for economics), the dynamic nature of disciplines appears to have been underestimated. In fact one might argue that 'power' could also be a cultural axis of economics, or in a Foucauldian sense, for any discipline for that matter. For example as I pointed out in Chapter 3, it is hard to locate an easily discernible cultural axis in applied critical/critical applied disciplines/interdisciplines.

As Moran observes, 'The value of the term 'interdisciplinarity lies in its flexibility and indeterminacy, and ... there are potentially as many forms of interdisciplinarity as there are disciplines' (2002: 15). He traces, as Squire does, the historical developments of some disciplines (eg. English) and focuses on the restructuring of courses. He confines

interdisciplinarity to academic cultures within universities, as if interdisciplinarity is not susceptible to forces and imperatives outside the academic tribes and territories.

Perhaps, one of the major limitations of the disciplinary texts mentioned above is that they all, with the exception of Abbott's, conceptualize interdisciplinarity in terms of course restructuring; very scanty attention, if at all, is paid to the epistemology of interdisciplinarity: e.g. textual consumption and construction within interdisciplinarity (how interdisciplinary knowledge is acquired and used). Interdisciplinarity is there not for course restructuring alone; its primary purpose is realized through textual consumption and construction. Another draw back is that none of them has attempted to explore the multifarious ways in which interdisciplinarity is manifest in the academy today.

It is significant to note here that since interdisciplinarity presupposes the existence of disciplinarity, one cannot discuss the former as being divorced from the latter. This becomes more evident when analyzing the impact of what I might call the applied/critical/critical applied revolution on interdisciplinary studies.

As I have pointed out in this chapter, interdisciplinarity in the academy is a complex phenomenon. The impact of soft technoculture has added, and will add, new dimensions to almost every conventional discipline making them more complex. In order to unravel this complexity, diverse manifestations of interdisciplines in the academy needs to be conceptualized while recognizing their tangible aspects. Hence, the categories of dependent, independent, multiple-embedded, applied/critical/ critical applied, and referential are useful for our understanding of interdisciplinarity in student writing. It is also evident that disciplinary texts on interdisciplinarity have attempted to explore various aspects of interdisciplinarity in particular reference to the erosion of disciplinary boundaries. In the chapter that follows, I will examine the status quo of interdisciplinarity. This involves curricular issues, new challenges to student writers, and discourses - all associated with interdisciplinarity within contemporary academic contexts.

CHAPTER FOUR

ACADEMIC INTERDISCIPLINARITY TODAY

4.1 Curricular Issues

As mentioned before, interdisciplinarity today is a pervasive phenomenon that straddles almost every discipline. This is demonstrated not only by the proliferation of disciplinary texts but also by the discursive events such as conferences and seminars on interdisciplinarity. The interdisciplinary nature of the disciplines of literature, music, and medicine, for example, was the theme of a recent international conference titled 'No Sense of Discipline' (University of Queensland, 2001). This is encouraging as Kvale points out in his analysis of postmodernist view of psychology, '...what is needed is a transgression of disciplinary boundaries ...beyond the humanities and social sciences; there should be a venturing into the natural sciences' (1992: 79). Interdisciplinary studies relating to the natural sciences, perhaps with the exception of Lenoir's work (1993, 1997), are extremely limited. At a time when the humanities and social sciences have close affinities with the natural sciences, such research interests are of paramount significance.

Let me now examine some pedagogical as well as curricular issues emanating from the integration of elements from other disciplines or interdisciplines into a particular discipline. Relating to this interdisciplinary impasse, three key issues may be identified: selection, delivery, and assessment of an interdisciplinary product in the academy. These may be viewed as interruptions and ruptures in the genealogical process of any discipline, hence sites of contestation common to any interdisciplinary integration endeavour, either as a policy, a process, or as an outcome. In the ensuing pages, I will examine several controversial issues relating to interdisciplinary integration in our contemporary academic contexts.

In a current debate on the professionalisation of nurse education, Cash observes: 'For nursing to be a university discipline it is not necessary for nursing lecturers to be at the cutting edge of physiology but rather the cutting edge of nursing. In terms of the knowledge from other disciplines that is required we need lecturers who know that the established work is, can select the knowledge that is needed by a practitioner, and teach

it. The assessment is, therefore, directed by the nursing paradigm, not the psychologists' or sociologists' (2000: 76).

Cash's paper (ibid: 73-77) throws much light on the complexity of this issue and on the futility of establishing canonicity in terms of monodisciplinary constructs. The selection and the importation of the element belonging to other disciplines are more often than not guided by utilitarian and practical applicability of such knowledge to meet the growing demands generated by socio-economic forces. A sociology component in nurse education, for instance, would enhance the practitioner's understanding of and interest in social issues and social organizations. Moreover, it would endow him/ her with qualities required to be a better social being and an informed nurse both within and outside of her profession.

The integration of ethics, a key discipline in the 'discursive constellation' (Foucault, 1972: 67), into accounting has also brought about similar issues relating to what Cash explores. As has been revealed in a recent survey involving forty-five universities and colleges in Australia and New Zealand, the integration of ethics is in 'response to world wide trends to [in] education, ... to societal demands, [and] to fostering an understanding of expected behaviour' (Chua et al, 1994: 382). Consequently an accounting student would be exposed to ethical practices within his/her professional field in a more professional way than it would have been in the absence of an ethics component. In other words, the practitioner would develop better awareness of socially as well as professionally acceptable ethical behaviour as a result of this exclusive exposure to ethics education. As Chua et al observes, 'With the increase in business and accounting graduates, it is imperative that business/accounting educators should nurture ethical values in their students. Since there is an increased realization that appropriate ethical awareness as well as technical competence is important in a complex, pluralistic business environment, it is important that business and in particular accounting majors at least acquire some ethics competence at university' (ibid: 384). The delivery of a new product within a disciplinary context alien to it, I believe, is perhaps the most challenging interdisciplinary venture to be embarked on by a lecturer. Questions such as 'Who has got sufficient pedagogic desire to teach the ethics component?', or 'Who is adequately qualified to deliver it?', or 'To what extent can a lecturer, with all these requirements met, integrate this component through his or her teaching into Business Studies?', may invariably arise.

The survey done by Chua et al (*ibid*: 381) further reveals that , in addition to faculty members, non-faculty members such as ‘practising accountants... ethicists and philosophers, and lawyers’ were involved in teaching the interdisciplinary component of ethics. It is reasonable to assume that non-faculty members without strong background in both accounting and ethics may experience difficulties in relating ethics to accounting; on the other hand, faculty members may need a thorough knowledge of and acquaintance with ethics, and in either case, perhaps more importantly, they should be prepared to undertake interdisciplinary research pertaining to these areas of knowledge if they were to be successful and productive lecturers. Also of importance here is the pedagogic desire to be engaged in both teaching and research in an interdisciplinary environment. Some academics, according to the survey referred to earlier were of the view that ‘teaching of ethics was a highly philosophical issue beyond the capability of accounting academics’ (1994: 383. Also cf. Morris et al, 1963: 265). Closely related to the providers’ disciplinary knowledge and pedagogic desire is their ability to provide students with feedback in terms of discussions and comments relating to interdisciplinary contexts.

According to McDonald, the role of ethics in business organizations is a complex one; she identifies four aspects associated with business ethics: ‘normative/philosophical’, ‘meta-ethical/analytical’, ‘descriptive/positive’, and ‘prescriptive/hortatory’ (1998: 25). The first category considers ethics as a moral system underpinned by various schools of philosophy; the second focuses on the role of ethics in decision making; the third explores the culturally defined perceptions of individuals as well as institutions on ethical issues, and the fourth dwells on the role of media organizations in promoting ethics among business organizations (*ibid*: 25-28). The ethical values and practices pertaining to these categories are significant in the context of interdisciplinarity. It is important to note here that a business ethics component thus conceptualized not only explicates ethics in business, but also it embraces the knowledge domain of ethics in general, eg. various conceptualizations of ethics in a variety of disciplines. McDonalds proposition has strong implications for the pedagogy; the same rhetorical questions I framed in relation to the observations made by Chua et al (1994) may prove to be valid here, too.

As Gilbert observes, ‘the question of who should teach business ethics is a troublesome one. Because it includes both a body of knowledge and application of this knowledge to

business situations, a reasonably qualified teacher of this subject would need to master a certain number of philosophical writings and principles, and also familiarity business as practiced in a variety of industries. Yet there is no specific program that prepares teachers with this dual background' (1992: 7; also cf. Yavas, Dilber & Arsan, 1991: 10). So when several academics elaborate on the same pedagogic issue, then, there is a serious problem. If this is a problem for academics, then, needless to say that it is real difficulty for students, too.

These dichotomies are voiced with equal vehemence by Fleishman (1994) as well. Referring to the English, French and Humanities departments of his own university (John Hopkins University), he points out that scholars 'teach and research scientific texts, without much apparent contact with the History of Science and Philosophy specialists who offer more traditional instruction in them' (1994 : 151). He considers interdisciplinarity as an antidisciplinary movement, a juggernaut capable of crushing the structure of a traditionally established discipline. The recent interdisciplinary trends manifest in English departments in the USA, Fleishman observes, might tarnish their prestigious status as monodisciplines: 'The imperial ambitions of interdisciplinarity may well, by an ironic reversal, contribute to the further marginalization of English' (*ibid*: 151).

So far I have provided evidence of some difficulties associated with interdisciplinary ventures from a pedagogical point of view. It is also pertinent here to examine how students are implicated in these new enterprises.

4.2 Interdisciplinary Challenges to Students

Referring to an MBA (Accounting) curriculum model, Hartwell et al observes that 'In addition to completing the business core and accounting core sequences, students take several courses in a concentration...Auditing and Consulting, Taxation, and Information Systems. Objectives for the concentration component of the curriculum should be derived from objectives for the other curriculum components and should contribute to meeting the program objectives. For example, the objectives of the Auditing and Consulting component of the curriculum could include: 'Students can *design* and *write* an audit plan for a business entry's financial statements; students can *evaluate* capital project alternatives using analytical procedures and *write* recommendations that rank

alternatives and describe their relative merit' (2000: 7-8, *italics original*). The curriculum model they refer to becomes truly interdisciplinary, especially in the context of student writing since the program objectives take precedence over the ones traditionally associated with the interdisciplinary components.

Recent studies have copiously illustrated the correlation between the nature of a knowledge domain and the students' ability to approximate that knowledge (Shommer 1990 ; Hofer & Pintrich 1997 : 88-140, also see Vygotsky, 1978). When a particular knowledge domain is alien to students, they often tend to simplify it by either memorizing it or avoiding any difficulties encountered in integrating different levels of knowledges (Shommer, 1990: 498-504). These epistemological dimensions are well reflected in most student texts I have analyzed in Chapter 8 and 9.

Disciplinary integrations may also lead to difficulties at semantic levels, too. For instance, the introduction of a concept such as 'human capital' from mainstream economics into a host discipline may entail conceptual variations in its 'new analytical surrounding' (Fine, 1999:413). This phenomenon assumes greater complexity when such concepts eventually undergo changes in a colonizing discipline. In economics for example the notion of 'human capital' has been superseded by that of 'social capital', which may be defined as ' the outcomes and influences that derive from interaction between individuals, whether freely chosen or the more or less accidental consequences of aggregated behaviour ' (Fine, 1999: 413). Another twist to the semantic values of this term occurs when the World Bank gives a global thrust to the notion of social capital to accommodate 'issues such as the environment, community, gender, conflict, ethnicity, customs and culture' (Fine, 1999:417). This interdisciplinary phenomenon in textual terms provides us with three useful perspectives. First, it amply demonstrates the danger of definitional and etymological precision in determining the semantic realms of some terminology that seem to have acquired 'spatial dimensions' (Fardon, 1995: 2-8; cf. Schafer, 1998: 41-43) since the definitional instruments employed are often subject to metamorphoses in tune with global and local dynamics. For instance, the notion of social capital extends well beyond a finite and absolute interpretation, and it may successively acquire new global and social dimensions, or retain its original conceptual characteristic according to varied institutional practices in interdisciplinary domains. Second, it may be viewed as a classic instance where disciplinary knowledge is modified by the impact of globalization, inflicting more complexity on seemingly

established interdisciplinary contexts. And third, it throws useful insights into the competing and consensual characteristics of certain concepts that reside in disciplines with permeable boundaries.

Any interdisciplinary element after its being integrated into a host discipline is anchored in an alien disciplinary domain peopled by an alien student population and an alien disciplinary community, and is expected to produce alien results through techniques alien to it. I am using the term 'alien' iteratively, however awkward it may sound, to reiterate difficulties inherent in disciplinary integration. Interdisciplinary components are often expected to produce outcomes that are traditionally alien to them. Information technology, a relatively young discipline, provides its graduates with expertise which involves both practical and theoretical components in both hardware and software applications, thus paving the way for them to contemplate several career pathways: programmers, system analysts, troubleshooters, consultants, to name a few. These are the 'discursive objectives' that information technology as a discipline aspires to meet.

By 'discursive objective', I mean the expectations that a student, on completion of a course of study is very likely to utilize the disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge he or she acquired in a discursive practice corresponding to such knowledge. This should not be confused with 'course objectives', which means a student's ability to fulfill the requirements of a course through academic/professional achievement. Obviously these discursive objectives are determined by the disciplinary community through curricular variations depending on the exigencies at a given time. We may however witness a totally different discursive objective in a context where information technology is appropriated as an interdisciplinary element in a host (or recipient) discipline. Consider, for instance, an information technology component in business studies where the discursive objectives expected of the component would be to equip the business student with necessary skills that would enable him or her to prepare a balance sheet or a trial balance using the spreadsheet or a simple software package like MYOB in a professional environment. It is pertinent to note here that the discursive objectives are determined, not by the information technology component *per se*, but by the host discipline, which is business studies. This is by no means an amorphous phenomenon, but a very tangible one, indeed. My argument here is that interdisciplinary roles, once integrated, are often quite different from disciplinary ones in terms of discursive objectives and conceptual variations in content specific areas.

It is also reasonable to believe that some students may develop difficulties in absorbing the discourses of critical/applied interdisciplines. Nord and Jermier, for example, while exploring the role of critical social science in business studies, notice that the diverse backgrounds (eg 'elitist and non-elitist') where managers (working students) come from can have conflicts with the contents of the interdiscipline (1992: 209). In spite of these conflictual encounters, they highlight the successful application of CSS in business studies (ibid: 207).

It is unfortunate that the politics of interdisciplinary integration has not been adequately explored; instead, most theorists and academics, as I have mentioned earlier, have attempted to explicate interdisciplinary integration in terms of deficiencies, and inconsistencies in course restructuring.

In addition to the difficulties encountered by students, the responsibilities and commitments of the academic community have also recently attracted scholarly attention owing in large measure to what Ritzer calls the 'McDonaldization' of education (Ritzer, 1996, as cited in MacKenzie, 2002: 2; also see Green, 1997: 2). Some scholars for example have discussed the administrative and the management commitments of the present day professors (MacKenzie, 2002: 1-19) within interdisciplinary contexts. It seems to me that the ten roles of an academic referred to by MacKenzie adumbrate in a Lyotardian sense the performativity function of the contemporary higher education: 'researcher/scholar, teacher, administrator, counsellor, manager of learning, assessor, author of learning material, technologist, consultant, and entrepreneur' (Ford et al, 1996: 97, as cited in MacKenzie, 2002: 7). The role of an entrepreneur in particular denotes the commodification of educational programs and the resultant responsibilities of academics in the past two decades. As Diehr and Montanari point out, 'pressure to adopt and adapt business management practices have now emerged in the arena of higher education' (2002: 101). Given the current trends in the commodification of education, such reflections emerge with no surprise at all. It should however be noted here that one important aspect that has escaped the attention of such scholars is the interdisciplinary roles of academics. Abbott makes a tangential reference to this in a sarcastic vein: 'English professors are doing anthropology, calling it cultural studies. Economists are doing sociology calling it family economics' (2001: 121). In what follows I will attempt in brief to explore how and why academic titles in the recent past have undergone changes brought about by interdisciplinarity.

What is epitomized, among other things, in academic titles are the discursive practices corresponding to a particular knowledge domain or domains. Accordingly, they undergo significant changes in tune with the changes made to the curricula. The following analysis is based on academic titles derived from several influential disciplinary texts and advertisements in order to demonstrate their intimate relationship with the disciplinary interdisciplinary knowledge they are producing and promoting.

Prior to 1980, most academic titles relating to business studies were indicative of monodisciplinarity. A cursory glance at the geneology of some academic titles would reveal the changes in disciplinary dynamics of the academy. Alfred Chandler was Professor of Business History at the Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University. During this period (see Chapter 6) business history was considered a major component of the MBA. His influential works, *Strategy and Structure* (1962) and *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (1977) amply demonstrate the role of business history in the MBA program. Similarly, E. Wight Bakke was Professor of Management at the Labor and Management Center, Yale University until 1971. In his *Bonds of Organization* (1966), Bakke expounds a theory of cooperation and communication within organizational settings.

However, in the early 1980s, most academic titles were aligned with the then burgeoning interdisciplinary programs of study. For instance, Oliver Williamson became the Professor of Economics of Law and Organization at Yale University in 1983. In *Economic Organization*, Williamson analyzes organizations using the concept of hierarchy as the main criteria, and incorporates the implication of law for organizational behaviour. During the same period, Fred Fiedler was Professor of Psychology and Management at the University of Washington. Law and psychology were major disciplinary strands that formed an integral part of the business curricula, and these trends are well reflected in the then academic titles.

Some academic titles illustrated the integration of new technologies of communication into business studies. Herbert Simon, a Nobel prize winner for economics was awarded a Professorship in Computer Science and Psychology at Carnegie-Melon University. His research involved computer-aided decision making processes for management. This was the period when computing was introduced to most disciplines, business studies

being prominent among them. So there was a strong correlation between disciplinary dynamics and academic titles in the early 1980s, illustrating institutional manifestations of interdisciplinarity.

Among the more recent academic titles in business schools, one might witness some far-fetched disciplinary coalitions: Professor of Manufacturing Policy and Strategy, Fellow in Automotive Logistics.

4.3 Multidisciplinarity, Transdisciplinarity and Antidisciplinarity

Multidisciplinarity occurs in situations where two or more disciplines are offered concurrently in a course of study. Hence, the segregated disciplinary contents are by and large monodisciplinary. Their behaviour is relatively segregative as opposed to integrative in academic interdisciplinarity. This relatively monolithic disciplinary nature is manifest not only in disciplinary texts (eg. textbooks, professional books, study guides, lectures) but also in assessment tasks. Most graduate programs are multidisciplinary (eg. English, geography, and history). . It may be argued that there is ample opportunity for academic interdisciplinarity within multidisciplinary settings; that is when two or more separate subjects are studied concurrently. While this is true to a great extent, it is quite evident that writing in academic interdisciplinarity imposes an exclusively conscious effort on the part of the student writer to integrate disciplinary and interdisciplinary texts to produce an intertext; hence the multiplicity or proliferation of diverse texts and writing positions is inevitable. This is not so in multidisciplinary where students deal with relatively discrete and homogeneous disciplinary contexts. An in-depth analysis of this issue may invariably lead us to the question of assessment tasks, for it is the assessment tasks that reveal how and why student writers manipulate disciplinary, interdisciplinary and extra-disciplinary knowledges to meet the institutionally defined and designed requirements.

Gibbons et al define transdisciplinarity as ‘knowledge which emerges from a particular *context of application* with its own distinct theoretical structures, research methods and modes of practice but which may not be locatable on the prevailing disciplinary map’ (1994: 168, italics original). It seems their definition is geared to underpin Mode 2 knowledge production (*ibid*: 19). Transdisciplinarity may be defined as knowledge domains that cut across existing disciplines and interdisciplines and at times exist on the

periphery of them, for example, study skills centers, and language support programs. In another sense, it could be related to discursive practices that exhibit centrifugal characteristics.

Antidisciplinarity, as I understand the term, denotes a sense of no discipline, hence anarchist developments in the academy. It seems to me that the arguments put forward by Vincent (1992: 126-127) in his critique of the rejection of the nation state are equally applicable to a critique of antidisciplinary sentiments: 'Can authority be maintained', asks Vincent, 'under anarchy without a state or government?' (*ibid*: 126). Since disciplinary/interdisciplinary practices operate within regulated institutional power structures, such anarchist developments could easily be curbed. Let me examine one prominent discursive practice in the academy: the publication of research articles. It is impossible to think of any refereed journal that is prepared to accept for publication research articles where disciplinarity or interdisciplinarity is totally absent. Since all refereed journals are anchored in disciplinary/interdisciplinary domains, the contributors as well as reviewers have to conform to such regulated orientations. And it is unfortunate that most proponents of antidisciplinarity ventilate their reflections in a rhetoric that reveals intellectual intensity, not the informed opinion: 'To be antidisciplinary is to interest ourselves and actively to prefer precisely those knowledges which are under recognized or unrecognized within existing disciplinary terms. A discipline constitutes itself in and through the kinds of knowledges it seeks and endorses, and equally through those its methodologies render unpresent or invisible. As a result, the processes of disciplinary analysis are bound to leave a 'remainder', a residue of phenomena unvoiced or uncommented upon. Antidisciplinarity asserts the importance of this invisible remainder' (Strohm, 1996: 1). Strohm, however, does not provide any evidence to substantiate his claims. Antidisciplinarity is an outcome of dedifferentiation, an anarchist condition that rejects both disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. Although interdisciplinarity can dissolve the boundaries of established disciplines, it always operates, and will operate, within regulated institutional structures. Since educational institutions are 'routine mechanisms', they transmit 'accumulated information' from one generation to another (Bourdieu, 1973: 72). In other words, one might observe a sense of linearity in the disciplinary structures of the academy. This linearity in fact resists, and will resist, any antidisciplinary developments. According to Said, a discipline 'acquires authority for its traditions,

methods, and institutions, as well as general cultural legitimacy for its statements, personalities, and agencies' (1991: 156). His observations reveal two important characteristics of disciplinary knowledge: power and the desire for retaining its archival property. Unlike Said, Abbott explicates this relatively conservative nature of disciplinarity from an institutional vantage: 'The departmental structure of the American university has remained largely unchanged since its creation between 1890 and 1990' (2001: 122). However this does not mean that institutionalized identities (eg. policies, the curricula) of the academy have remained dormant; in fact they have been subject to the impact of socio-economic power structures through a variety of discourses.

4.4 Interdisciplinarity and discourses

As Foucault points out, knowledge is appropriated through channels of discursive practices (1972: 179). Discursive practices are the activities generated by a particular discourse or activities that typify a particular discourse or both. According to Foucault, they are 'a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area....(1972:117). Discursive practices are then established norms and behaviour patterns pertaining to a particular discourse or discourses, and are based on temporal conditions. For example, diagnosing a patient is a discursive practice within medical discourse, and the site of discourse is a hospital or a clinic. The existence of disciplines, according to Foucault, always presupposes the existence of discursive practices corresponding to such disciplines. In other words, there can be discursive practices without any disciplines to correlate with them. Foucault (1972) has surveyed these discursive practices so extensively that nothing as succinct as this summary can do him justice. Although the notion of discursive practices may easily be defined, the concept of discourse seems to have been overworked and rendered highly problematic in recent years (Pennycook, 1994b).

Most definitions surrounding the term 'discourse', just as much as most terminologies of the poststructuralist movement, are fraught with ambiguities. (In fact, ambiguities and uncertainties are salient characteristics of the poststructuralist thought). Foucault rejects the notion of representing discourses as mere 'groups of signs (signifying

elements referring to contents or representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (1972: 49). He identifies four groups of rules that are instrumental in discursive formation: 'objects' (necessary conditions and relationships), 'enunciative modalities' (sites of discourse), 'concepts', and 'strategies' (themes and theories) (ibid: 31-70). Another important observation is the notion of 'discursive constellation' (ibid: 67) that stabilizes the boundaries belonging to each discipline within the constellation. For example, business studies belongs to a discursive constellation of which disciplines such as accounting and economics are part. Hodge and Kress define discourse as 'the social process in which texts are embedded, while text is the concrete material object produced in discourse' (1995: p. 6). They further define discourse as 'a signified of any text...' (ibid: 264). The difficulty however with this definition is that not all texts have signifieds strong enough to form discourses surrounding them. According to Gee, Discourse means socially acceptable ways of 'using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and of acting...' (1990, p.143, for a range of other definitions of discourse, see Pennycook, 1994: 115-138; Fairclough, 1995: 5; van Dijk, 1997: 1-4; Mills, 1999: 1-7). Following Foucault's conceptualization of discourse, I am inclined to view discourses as power and knowledge that *reinforce* and *sustain* most popular narratives (Foucault, 1995).

According to Foucault discursive practices are the antecedents of disciplines. Psychiatry as an established discipline, for instance, did not appear until the early nineteenth century although discursive practices essential for establishing psychiatry as a discipline were in operation right from the Classical period to the eighteenth century (Foucault, 1972). For this reason, it is not easy to distinguish between discourses and disciplinary knowledge since they are mutually constitutive. Perhaps the closest analogy would be the dancer and the dance. It seems to me that the two terms differ marginally from each other at least in terms of the perceived audience/s. Disciplinary knowledge always has a specific target audience. For example, women's studies, an interdiscipline, is a knowledge domain with a perceived audience: tertiary students enrolled in a program of study. This perceived sense of audience is not strongly felt in discourses. One may witness discourses (eg. media discourses) surrounding feminism, and these discourses have no specifically targeted audience, although they may be part and parcel of the disciplinary knowledge capital of women's studies. Hence without perusing any disciplinary text on women's studies, one might approximate similar knowledge

through media discourses. Media texts both print and electronic, are major vehicles for propagating knowledges through discourses.

Discourses may well be regarded as huge interpretations of knowledges. Contents of disciplinary knowledge have strong orientation in theory which often carries interpretive potential; discourses on the other hand are characterized by their propensity for interpreting a particular knowledge domain. For instance, post colonial theory is essentially an integral part of a disciplinary knowledge domain whereas post colonial discourses are largely interpretations or explications of such knowledges. However, both complement each other. Media texts, both print and electronic, are major vehicles for propagating such knowledges in terms of discourses. Viewed from these perspectives, discourses are popular voices that create or foreground sociopolitical contexts. For example, what we often read in newspapers and watch on television are political discourses (interpretations of issues of political interest) that are eventually transformed into our consciousness. In other words popular discourses may be called incipient common knowledge. Very often sources of such discourses are not readily traceable (hence they remain unacknowledged in texts) since they are obscured by what may be termed information multi-channeling or the dissemination of information through different media channels and the resultant 'newsification of popular culture' (Schudson, 1995:179-80). Student writings especially in the humanities and social sciences are inundated with resources from these 'mediated discourses' (Scollen, 1998: 6) that are more often than not unacknowledged. Within the realms of textual practices, these may be regarded as instances of interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 1992: 10).

In the context of this academic investigation, I have identified three characteristics of academic discourse: first, a discourse, be it academic or non-academic, is required to have an *interpretive vigour*; second, it should be *powerful* enough to be *socially and academically sustainable* for its survival, and third it should be equipped with *appropriate linguistic resources*. Accordingly discourse may be defined as a vibrant entity, equipped and endowed with both power and knowledge, through which disciplinary knowledge or the would-be disciplinary knowledge is interpreted, and contested to justify the existence of such knowledge domains. Since interpretations of knowledge domains are always in text form (written, oral, visual, interactive), discourses are available in text form, too.

As suggested above, the nexus between academic discourse and discipline is a nebulous one; the former being more dynamic within textual construction owing to its interpretive asset, while the latter more punctuated by the manifestation of its institutional identity and perhaps superiority. In other words, discipline is a relatively dormant entity; academic discourse is the drift or the driving force of that entity. And one of the purposes of language or art or any other mode of delivery is to translate a particular discourse first into a coded reality, and then make it open for discursive reality. Hence, language is not discourse; it is rather the appropriation of language fortified with power and knowledge that is tantamount to a particular discourse.

Since writing is a 'highly contextualized social action' related to 'public moments' (Bazerman, 1988: 22-23), student writers often have a tendency to utilize various discourses in their assignments with immense confidence. Often the sources of such information remain unacknowledged since such sources are not readily traceable.

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The medium through which these discourses are accessible to a wider global readership is also important, since production, consumption, contestations are all linked to accessibility. In this context, the contribution of English as an international language to the dissemination of a vast repertoire of discourses throughout the world can hardly be overlooked, and this aspect has recently been convincingly demonstrated in the works of Pennycook (1998) and Phillipson (1992). The cumulative effect of these dynamics has been the disintegration of some monodisciplinary knowledge, yet retaining at least nominally and generically, the identity of a particular discipline.

I started this chapter with some curricular issues associated with interdisciplinary programs in the academy. The vexed issue of the legitimacy of teachers to teach these courses was also discussed. In these contexts, it is no surprise that interdisciplinarity poses challenges to students when it in fact does create problems for some academics. The relationship between interdisciplinarity and discourses was also examined to highlight the impact of discourses on student writing within interdisciplinary contexts.

Interdisciplinary knowledge is also linked to intertextual, interdiscursive, and extra-disciplinary texts. I will examine these phenomena in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERTEXTUALITY, INTERDISCURSIVITY, AND EXTRA-DISCIPLINARITY

5.1 Intertextuality

The use of intertextual and interdiscursive resources as a form of social expression is far from recent. Such features of texts may well be traced back to the ancient Greek literature (the Hellenistic period) where ‘...the forms of direct, half hidden and completely hidden quoting were endlessly varied, as were the forms for framing quotations by a context..’ (Bakhtin, 1981: 68). I believe as far as creative literature is concerned, competitiveness has always invoked intertextuality. English drama in the sixteenth century for example was literally built on the strength of intertextuality. When playwrights attempted to compete with their rivals, they often resorted to intertextual resources either to satirize, parody, or to direct innuendos or invectives against their opponents. Since ‘heterogeneity of texts’ is a major characteristic of intertextuality, interdisciplinarity is a breeding ground for intertextual relations (Fairclough, 1995: 104).

The notion of intertextuality is commonly associated with the works of Kristeva (1984) and Bakhtin (1981). It may, however, be argued that the potential of intertextuality and interdiscursivity in texts was first explored comprehensively by the new historicist or cultural materialist critics in the early 1980s. A review of some seminal works of new historicist critics (Greenblatt, 1980; Dollimore, 1984; Sinfield, 1994) would reveal that their endeavours have been centred first on establishing intertextual /interdiscursive relations in texts produced mainly in the Renaissance and then on examining how writers and their texts are implicated in their contemporary ideological forces and practices. Hence, unlike Marxist critics, their focus has been not so much on viewing texts as mere reflection of historicity with an eye to the advantage of the ruled, but rather on how writers manipulate textual strategies intertextually and interdiscursively in order to question the inadequacies of prevalent ideologies (eg. evade censorship and containment) and on how and why such textual strategies would relate to our contemporary political contexts. Hence, the intellectual profundity of new historicist

perspectives stem largely from the analysis of intertextual and interdiscursive resources (eg. play on words, parodic imitations, innuendos, concealed allusions, comparisons, contrasts, all reminiscent of other texts) encountered in a variety of interdisciplinary texts.

The concept of intertextuality, first introduced by Kristeva (with obvious indebtedness to Bakhtin's writings (1981) and then by several other theorists including Fairclough, is associated with textual borrowings that are manifest in a text, and it 'sees texts historically as transforming the past-existing conventions and prior texts-into the present' (Fairclough, 1992: 85; also cf. Grigely, 1995: 156; Graff, 1987).

Viewed from Kristeva's concept of intertextuality (or 'transposition') with its 'enunciative and 'denotative positionality', academic texts lend themselves to an infinite variety of interpretations, but their validity in academic settings depends on discursive variations produced by intertextual relationships. 'The term *intertextuality*', Kristeva observes, 'denotes the transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another; but since this term has often been understood in the banal sense of 'study of sources', we prefer the term *transposition* because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic-enunciative and denotative positionality' (Kristeva, 1984:59, italics original). It seems to me that Kristeva's denotative positionality is synonymous with interdiscursivity with the implication that it does not merely expresses itself as borrowed text but as a text that modifies its original positionality through intertextual intimacy while inhabiting a new text. Taking an extended view, Bourdieu defines 'intertextuality as 'the network of relationship among texts' (1993:179). For Barthes, 'The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture' 1977: 142-8). Foucault touches on the historicity within which texts are written, thus invoking intertextual links in texts. 'A possible oeuvre', observes Foucault, 'is prowling...on the horizon of a text' (Foucault, 1981: 59). Conversely, one might argue that a galaxy of several other texts would give rise to a particular text.

It is abundantly clear that identification of intertextual links and thereby meanings is solely contingent on an individual's textual intimacy. Hence, Bakhtin's notion of 'addressivity' (1986: 99) which refers to a writer's (reader's) personal stances in relation to claims made by others is also useful for our understanding of intertextuality.

The more we develop our addressivity, the more intertextual choices we make as writers. In fact, our personal stances are contingent on a galaxy of other texts and practices surrounding us. The superficial aspects of writer stance, where personal attitudes explicitly reveal some textual leanings may be regarded as more or less intertextual. Hyland discusses these stance markers under three categories:

‘evidentiality’, ‘affect’ and ‘relation’, which deal with the writer’s expression of precise and reliable information, ‘attitudes towards what is said ... including emotions, perspectives and beliefs’, and the extent to which the writer establishes rapport with the audience, respectively (1999: 101-103). (For a detailed discussion of this from a sociological perspective, see Gee 1990: 124-131).

Another dimension to intertextuality is the ‘interpellative’ potential of other texts. I am using this term in the sense it is used by Althusser (1977: 162). Althusser explains this phenomenon from an ideological perspective: ‘...*all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete objects...*’ (ibid, italics original). We need to be cautious here since Althusser uses the term ‘ideology’ in its constricted sense with distinct Marxist connotations. Consider for instance his reference to ‘the politico-legal and ideology’: the two dimensions that constitute the ‘superstructure’ (ibid: 129). The difficulty here is that since Althusser uses the term ‘ideology’ in a relatively negative sense, intertextuality within such an outlook will have negative or biased repercussions. Informed student writers always have a sense of an audience or readership to whom their writing is directed, and to this end, they manipulate texts in subtle ways. In this sense, they interpellate the reader, too. They would, for example, also like to know if the lecturer/marker had read their essay or case study the way they would have liked him/her to read. Similar propensities may be found in other social practices, too. For example, a sport enthusiast would like to know if the sportswriter interpreted a particular game in the same way he did. (Altschull, 1995: 93). It would also be pertinent here to examine some typologies of intertextuality developed by our contemporary theorists and practitioners.

Fairclough’s classification of intertextuality into manifest intertextuality and constitutive intertextuality (interdiscursivity) is based on the degree of transparency of textual integration and their temporal positions in relation to historicity and presence. Manifest intertextuality, according to Fairclough, occurs when ‘specific other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text..’ (1992: 85) and interdiscursivity is characterized by

‘the constitution of a text from a configuration of text types or discourse conventions’ (1992: 10; also cf. Ivanic’s use of ‘actual intertextuality’ 1998: 48)

Manifest intertextuality is present in texts in the form of ‘discourse representation’ (direct and indirect speech as cued by reporting verbs, citation practices, pronominal variations), ‘presuppositions’ (the Soviet threat), ‘negation’ (I didn’t kill him), ‘metadiscourse’ (writer distancing himself from judgments- the use of the hedges such as sort of, kind of), and ‘irony’ (not just say one thing and mean another, but the focus is on the echoes of someone else’s utterances) (Fairclough, 1992: 118-123). The main proposition here is that intertextuality is always characterized by a prominent textual reference and that within interdiscursivity such references are either blurred or untraceable. Fairclough classifies intertextuality into three types: ‘sequential’, ‘embedded’, and ‘mixed’, some of which may for some appear to be interdiscursive as well (ibid: 118).

Eco while portraying *Casablanca* as ‘a great glimpse of cinematic discourse, a palimpsest for future students of twentieth-century religiosity, a paramount laboratory for semiotic research into textual strategies..’ (1995:197), provides us with another perspective of intertextuality in developing a concept of ‘intertextual frames” (ibid: 200). For him, intertextual frames are ‘stereotyped situations derived from preceding textual traditions and recorded by our encyclopedia, such as, for example, the standard duel between the sheriff and the bad guy or the narrative situations in which the hero fights the villain and wins...’ (ibid: 200). Although this conceptualization is anchored in the cinematic discourse, his emphasis on ‘stereotyped situations derived from preceding textual traditions’ seems to be useful for our understanding of the multiple ways in which intertextuality finds its expression in student writings since ‘intertextual frames’ may well be derived from student writers’ previous textual practices, either in the academy or in the workplace. Eco’s reference to the occurrence of flashbacks both in terms of content and form (ibid: 206), a common textual strategy in cinematic production, seems to suggest the intertextual potential in such devices. So what then are the flashbacks in student writing? And why do student writers resort to flashbacks? Flashbacks are essentially a sophisticated technique of iteration frequently used for the purpose of emphasis on or reminiscence of relevant episodes in the cinema. However, flashbacks appear and are employed in diverse texts: newspapers, electronic media texts, and student writing is no exception. It would be interesting to examine how and

why student writers deploy flashbacks, inadvertently or by design, in academic interdisciplinarity. Also of importance here is the extent to which flashbacks could be intertextual or interdiscursive.

Bazerman identifies six techniques of intertextual representation in texts: 'direct quotation, indirect quotation, /mentioning of a person, document or statements, /comment, or evaluation on a statement, text, or otherwise, invoked voice using recognizable phrasing,/ terminology associated with specific people or groups of people or particular documents, /using language and forms that seem to echo certain ways of communicating, /discussions among other people,/ types of documents' (2003: 88-89). This clearly demonstrates the diverse manifestations of intertextuality in student texts or in any text, be it written or spoken.

Some theorists seem to use the two terms 'intertextuality' and 'interdiscursivity' interchangeably. Consider, for instance, Candlin and Plum's observation that intertextuality is 'motivated by four powerful communicative forces: those associated with personal intentions of the writer(s), those associated with the mediating vehicle, those with the expectation of recipient audience, and those associated with some possibly aggressive discursive colonization on the part of the hegemonic institutions and authorities' (1999:205). These could well be said of interdiscursivity as well.

Judging from the above theoretical perspectives on intertextuality, one might deduce a commonality: that is texts are populated with other texts, both conceptually and linguistically, and that meanings in texts are realized through the interplay of several other texts. This is certainly crucial for our understanding of the concept of intertextuality. In fact, intertextuality has no specific thresholds; the above categories, however, define useful areas of its application for the purpose of this study. One might notice that even a particular word could generate a number of intertextual links through its imagiability⁹. What is important, however, in the context of intertextuality is that it is impossible for someone to write, speak, or even think without conjuring up textual references of other texts.

5.2 Interdiscursivity

How does intertextuality distinguish itself from interdiscursivity? Interdiscursivity is the deployment of different text types or discourse conventions eg 'genres discourses, styles, and activity types... (Fairclough, 1992: 10). In other words, it is the establishment of the relations between diverse discursive formations. (1992:42).

Perhaps Foucault was the first to have used the term 'interdiscursive' (1972: 159) to mean 'a system of relations' that link texts to other texts. However, his definition of 'interpositivity' seems to be synonymous with interdiscursivity, as the term is generally understood today. Interpositivity, he believes, 'is not only an observable phenomenon of resemblance; it is not only overall relation of several discourses to this or that other discourse; it is the law of their communications' (ibid: 161-162). So, while analyzing texts we should focus not only on the 'presence' of other texts but also on how these texts interact with each other and communicate with each other in the construction of desired discourses.

Fairclough uses the term 'element' for the 'parts of an order of discourse' or interdiscursivity. 'The boundaries between elements may be lines of tension. Consider for instance, the diverse subject positions for a single individual across different settings and activities of an institution, along the lines of the dispersion of the subject in the formation of enunciative modalities... It is feasible that boundaries between settings and practices should be so naturalized that those subject positions are lived as complementary. Under different social circumstances, the same boundaries might become a focus of contestation and struggle...For instance, pupils may accept that narratives of their own experience in their own social dialects are 'appropriate' in designated discussion sections of lessons, but not in designated teaching sections or in written work....' (1992: 68-69).

Interdiscursivity then is the covert manifestations (hence not easily discernible) of unmarked discursive variations in a particular target text that are reminiscent of borrowings from texts, 'shadow texts', and discourses, both real and fictional. These 'unmarked' discursive variations may be constituted by text types (various genres), by deliberately unacknowledged textual borrowings (plagiarism), by the presence of

concepts and theories derived from various discourses and texts, by the formation of concepts and theories based on discourses and texts, at a more semantic level by the use of terminology or discourse markers traditionally associated with various other discourses in a more or less non-traditional way, and more importantly by the use of common knowledge. Integration of elements (eg. concepts, theories) of the Marxist discourses, for example, in a text within the discipline of business studies is a manifestation of interdiscursivity provided such integration remains unmarked or unacknowledged. Also of importance is the validity of deciphering interdiscursive potential in the use of stance markers since very often stance markers exhibit a writer's alignment in the guise of a 'personal attitude' with a proposition or with an ideologically powerful discourse.

There could also be conflicts of interdiscursivity as a result of intrerlanguage transactional mode. Interlanguage transactional mode is the psychographic condition where attempts are made by students to think first in terms of their first language, and use the second language only as a vehicle for communication. Interdiscursivity occurs through the cognitive process in the first language whereby a particular issue under review could extend itself to other closely associated issues. This is related to interdiscursivity in a more direct way.

Since discourses are interpretations of knowledges and practices, they are manifest in interpretive chains, and such chains are available to social actors through various texts (media, anecdotal, shadow, disciplinary/interdisciplinary) and modes (print, broadcast, electronic). Another important aspect of these interpretive chains, especially within academic discourses, is the primary texts and secondary texts. I might mention here that in a Foucauldian sense, primary texts and secondary texts are linked through discourses (1981: 57-58). In other words, Foucault recognizes the interpretive rigour of discourses. Hence, the interpretive ability of the reader of texts is also important, for what appears to be interdiscursive for some may be intertextual for another. Very often, the precise referential source of such texts or discourses is either amorphous or nebulous. For example, when I use the phrase 'economic rationalism', it is difficult for me to *readily* provide a precise referential source for its textual manifestation; I am familiar with the phrase as a result of my being exposed to various discourses within which the phrase is or can be understood. In other words, the meaning of the phrase 'economic rationalism'

is interdiscursively realized as far as I am concerned. Conversely, if I use the phrase ‘cultural capital’, despite it is being used frequently in cultural discourses, I can *readily* locate its referential source in a disciplinary text (eg. Bourdieu, 1993). Hence, the phrase can be intertextually situated and understood. As Belsey puts it, it is ‘the intertextual elements of intelligibility, the recognition of similarities and differences between a texts and all other texts we have read, a growing ‘knowledge’ which enables us to identify a story as *the* story ..’ (1980:21 italics original; also cf. Bourdieu, 1993: 182). The inference here is that the reader’s acquaintance with and experience of other texts is a sine qua non for unraveling intertextual or interdiscursive features in a text. This is equally important for textual consumption as well as construction. What I am trying to elucidate here is the intersubjectivity of these two terms, intertextuality and interdiscursivity, contingent on an individual’s acquaintance with other texts.

Having explored the intersubjective nature of interdiscursivity, I now propose two major dimensions of interdiscursivity in particular reference to student writing: *interdiscursive relational shift* and *interdiscursive semantic shift*.

Discursive variations, that necessitate the use of intertextual and interdiscursive resources, are the means in most instances by which interdisciplinary knowledge or knowledges are related to a particular archival property of a discipline (disciplinary knowledge) in order to clarify, discuss, interpret, analyze, and contest certain issues that have a direct bearing on such interdisciplinary knowledge, disciplinary knowledge and on a wider global/local context. As Derrida reminds us, instability of values and hence of causality is occasioned by historicity as against ‘the tradition of truth or the development of science or knowledge oriented toward the appropriation of truth in presence and self-presence...’ (1978: 291). In the light of Derrida’s theorizing, it seems to me that the possibility or probability of what was previously classified as interdiscursive to be eventually rendered intertextual is relatively high and our attempts to arrest these historical drifts and thereby locating well-wrought ‘truths’ might reveal some limitations, which appear to be unavoidable. And in order to avoid these inadequacies, again in a Derridian sense, we have to ‘defer’ positions. In fact the instability of values that Derrida reiterates may well be applicable to our deployment of linguistic resources within discourses, too. For instance, let us examine the semantic value of the word ‘sophisticated’ in relation to the discourses of new technologies.

Obviously, its meaning cannot be realized discursively without concentrating on the objectified reality and the temporality that it foregrounds. By ‘objectified reality’, I mean any signifier (eg. a finished product) that has a functional value, and by ‘temporality’, the period of time that a particular product remains unfettered by the competition of other similar products. However, even if we employ this term in its proper context, its signifier-signified nexus is transient. Once the objectified reality is conquered by another (necessarily competing) objectified reality, the former ceases to cherish its original status in the world of *objectifiedness*. Thus, when we refer to something as ‘sophisticated’, not only are we invariably prone to make value judgments, invoking some relational connections that hinge on temporality, but also we construct images/texts of *transient reality*.

It is with this background in mind that we need to understand the concepts of interdiscursive relational shift and interdiscursive semantic shift.

Interdiscursive relational shift could be manifest at the thematic or conceptual levels of discourses and texts. As mentioned before, it is also characterized by the value judgements that conjure up relational connections hinging on temporality. Hence, in textual construction, this necessarily entails the construction of images, concepts, and assumptions of transient reality. Consider for instance the science fiction film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (the 1979 version) which was widely acclaimed as having depicted the cold war tensions in the 1950s and 1960 between the USA and the former USSR. When people watch this film today (possibly being aware of the discourses of the cold war), they might relate the themes of the film not to the cold war period but to *their contemporary international politics* where superpower troops (eg. the USA) maintain peace and order in foreign countries while at the sometime threatening the sovereignty of such nations. This I believe is a compelling example of interdiscursive relational shift: that is the interdiscursively realized cold war thesis is superseded by the contemporary discourses on international policing.

Interdiscursive semantic shift on the other hand illustrates how the semantic value of a term is realized interdiscursively in diverse disciplinary contexts. For example, the term ‘ecology’ has traditionally been associated with the knowledge capital within biological sciences (eg. Smith, 1966). However, a semantic shift occurs interdiscursively, if the same term is used in the context of another discipline such as linguistics: the ecology of

language (eg. Leather & Dam, 2002). I am not suggesting here that the *semantic value* of the term ‘ecology’ in either disciplinary context has undergone radical changes; instead, the semantic shift presents itself in terms of different, often *non-traditional*, discourses within which it is used. For example, in the phrase ‘ecology of language’, the term ‘ecology’ is used in the discourse of linguistics, a non-traditional discourse for the term to be imbibed in, quite different from the traditional discourses of biology: the ecology of biochemistry (eg. Kitching, 1992), with which it has traditionally and legitimately been associated.

Interdiscursive texts have the *potentiality* to be intertextual, too. Once an interdiscursive text (eg. anecdotal text) is referred to in a disciplinary text or in an extra-disciplinary text, it is no longer interdiscursive for subsequent writers/readers since it has now achieved a physical presence in a text. For example, ‘If you’re riding a tiger, it’s hard to get off - ‘qi hu nan xia’ is a Chinese proverb the meaning of which is interdiscursively realized especially for the people of China. However, it could be a case of intertextuality, if one reads a text (eg. White’s *Riding the Tiger*, 1993) where this proverb assumes more significance.

Authorial interdiscursivity is another aspect of interdiscursivity in the context of student writing. Since most interdiscursively realized texts are familiar to students as if they are their own cultural capital, self-attribution is common when such texts are made use of in student texts. Very often such self-attribution is constructed by using phrases such as ‘in my opinion’, ‘It seems to me’, ‘I believe’. Let me provide one example: ‘I believe the ozone layer above Australia is largely responsible for the high incidence of melanoma among white Australians.’ There are of course three textual allusions here (the ozone layer, the high incidence of melanoma, and the white Australians), and it is very likely that such texts are interdiscursively realized through extra-disciplinary (eg. media texts, anecdotal texts). However, the qualifier ‘I believe’ is a self-attribution marker.

Both intertextuality and interdiscursivity play a pivotal role in constructing as well as analyzing student texts. They are strongly linked to disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and extra-disciplinarity for it is through them that strands of knowledges are selected, analyzed, contested, and appropriated in disciplinary/interdisciplinary/extra-disciplinary

discourses. In fact when we investigate disciplinary/interdisciplinary/extra-disciplinary dynamics, we always grapple with intertextual and interdiscursive imperatives.

5.3 Extra-disciplinarity

If interdisciplinarity is contingent on disciplinarity, then extra-disciplinarity is crucial to both in the context of student writing. Hence, extra-disciplinarity constitutes an essential element of discursive construction of student texts. So what is extra-disciplinarity, and how does it distinguishes itself from the much commented upon media focus? Scollon (1998) uses the term ‘mediated texts’ to refer to mostly media texts. The terms ‘mediated’ or ‘mediational’ create some difficulties for identifying a particular group of texts. By extra-disciplinary texts, I refer to all texts that are characterized by the projection of popular discourses or some cultural identity which distance themselves from legitimized academic texts. However, they play a pivotal role in the discursive construction of texts by student writers.

Extra-disciplinary texts include *all media texts* within print, broadcast, televisual and electronic media including the Internet, *paramedia texts* (eg. texts of special interest groups), *hereditary texts* (eg. adages, fables, parables proverbs), and *anecdotal* (undocumented narratives) texts, and *texts used and produced in non-academic practices*.. It is the manifestation of these texts in either intertextual or interdiscursive form that characterizes extra-disciplinarity. I am not striving here to dichotomize extra-disciplinary texts and disciplinary texts; in fact they have much in common. In fact the boundary between extra-disciplinary texts and disciplinary texts are being blurred in some areas of specialization within business studies. Consider for instance ‘promotion management’ which explores advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations. This is a relatively new interdisciplinary domain that has strong affinities with extra-disciplinary texts (eg. Burnett, J. 1990). However it is the legitimacy generated through the power of the academy that deprives extra-disciplinary texts of equal status with disciplinary texts. For example, a written assignment on science fiction film may well be executed by a student, while being solely dependent on extra-disciplinary texts. This may not be acceptable in the context of the culture of academic writing where prescriptiveness is the norm; the student should refer at least to some seminal disciplinary texts such as *Science Fiction* (Roberts, 2000) and *Science Fiction Film*. (Telotte, 2001), however rich and resourceful some extra-disciplinary texts may be for

the purpose of the assignment. Viewed from this perspective, students are often denied the right to select the knowledge capital required for a particular assignment *at their will*; it is rather the hegemonically constructed values within the culture of academic writing that seem to dictate terms in terms of prescriptive textual references and preferences. This is certainly a disciplinary impasse (super monitoring of scholarship) where there is no room for negotiations between the student and the academic community for legitimizing extra-disciplinary texts. It seems to me that these self-created asymmetrical power relations akin to textual legitimacy do impair to some extent the intellectual inclinations of a student.

Knowledge is also disseminated in the form of discourses through extra-disciplinary texts to *diverse* audiences at a given time. By contrast, the academy in its knowledge dissemination strategies targets a *specific* audience, that is tertiary students who are also part of the audiences targeted by a myriad of mediational texts.

Student writing within academic interdisciplinarity is discursively mediated by a repertoire of texts (eg. extra-disciplinary texts) other than the disciplinary ones. Hence, extra-disciplinary texts are as important as disciplinary and interdisciplinary ones, for they often provide the student writer with opportunities for interpreting and ‘interpellating’ (Althusser, 1977: 162) intertextual/interdiscursive resources depending on his or her capacity for ‘making sense of them and...making the connections and inferences, in accordance with relevant interpretative principles, necessary to generate coherent readings’ (Fairclough, 1992: 84). Most of these mediational texts figure as potent discourses, and as emblematically rich generic structures. It may also be argued that recent ‘wars’ against plagiarism would (in most course/study guidelines, ‘plagiarism’ is branded as a crime) exercise what I might call a ‘cathartic’ influence on some student writers in the sense that, while trying not to plagiarize, they may be compelled to discover to their advantage ‘new’ territories of knowledges other than disciplinary or interdisciplinary ones with a view to problematising the very institutionally ‘sanctioned’ knowledges they work with. However research on this aspect of student writing is still in its embryonic stage.

Some social theorists (Foucault 1972; Geertz 1993) have portrayed ‘lived experiences’ as contributory factors for forging values, beliefs, and attitudes of social actors. While this is true to a great extent, we should never underestimate the pervasive influence of

what I might call para-social experiences on relatively isolated but para-socially gregarious people of the new millennium. For example, media discourses, both real and fictional, can exercise enormous influence on the individual's values, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences as has never been before. My argument here is that textual resources can stem from lived experiences as well as from these para-social relationships. In other words, students often identify themselves with real people and situations, and also with informationally and fictionally created characters and situations in their analysis of disciplinary and social domains. Perhaps, closely linked to this notion of para-social relations and identities is the theory of the public sphere developed by Habermas (1989) which portrays people not as mere receivers of news and views of the media, but as producers of such news and views as well. This focus on participatory roles may bridge not only the gap between real social relations and para-social relations, but also the gap between disciplinarity and extra-disciplinarity.

Perhaps the most significant extra-disciplinary texts, especially at post graduate level, emanate from dialectical engagements with predominantly powerful discourses: media discourses, both real and fictional, the discourses of colonialism, of Marxism, of consumerism, of the free market economy, and an ever increasing constellation of what may be termed emancipatory discourses exercise enormous influence on student writing in the social sciences and humanities. Extra-disciplinarity in this sense plays the role of interdisciplinarity. The only difference is that extra-disciplinary knowledge is not an institutionally legitimized knowledge domain by the academic community. For example, very seldom do we notice extra-disciplinary texts as prescribed texts in academic programs.

Another dimension to extra-disciplinarity is the textual potential in institutions. Some theorists seem to have been preoccupied with words, both spoken and written, as being the unique feature of a particular text. Consequently, they have persuasively demonstrated the relevance of conceptualizing texts as linguistically coded entities. Hawthorn for instance suggests six ways of 'textual indeterminacy' (1988:37), primarily based on the lexical items of a text. In rather conditional terms, Bell observes : 'If we define a *text* as the record of a cohesive and coherent sketch of language, it follows that written passages, written transcripts of speech and audio or video recordings of spoken communication are all texts' (1981: 135, italics original). For some, a text is a 'unified whole' (Halliday and Hasan, (1976:1) or an entity constituted by 'expression',

‘demarcation’, and ‘structure’ (Lotman, 1977:51-53) or a ‘complete linguistic interaction’ (Eggins, 1995:5) or alternatively ‘a unit of linguistic description’ (*ibid*: 129) either in written or spoken mode (Also cf. Bakhtin’s notion that ‘images of language are inseparable from image of various world views and from the living beings who are their agents...’ (1994:49). The main thrust of these arguments (or rather observations) is that all texts should contain written, audio or visual codes for them to be legitimized as texts. Hence, written, visual or audio codes have traditionally been associated with their potential for material production or expression of knowledges. So powerful are these regimes of power (Foucault, 1995: 182) that one may not be compelled even to dream of extending the notion of text beyond these established frontiers. It seems to me that we need to extend the location of text beyond these constricted definitions; it is only then that the full potential of discursive practices surrounding us can be fully comprehended and analyzed.

Today we are surrounded by a galaxy of genres, not only written texts and their corresponding structures, but the very institutions in which genres are realized in the form of discursive practices. Institutions, I believe, are generically pregnant in the sense that they all have an element, a strong element, I would say, of depicting emblematically identifiable or perceivable images of themselves. However, institutions may not be considered as mere emblematically rich monuments with their local/global identities; instead they should also be identified and defined as elements in our consciousness. Here consciousness does not merely mean cognition; it borders on ‘the phenomenological notion of *openness to the world*... The conscious individual is characterized just as much by affectivity, motility and activity in the face of the world , as he is by sentient awareness’(Moss & Keen, 1989: 112 italics original). For me, this consciousness is activated not by the *symbolic or emblematic* potency of institutions, but by their *discursive practices*. As Derrida observes, ‘the presence of an element is always a signifying and substitutive reference inscribed in a system of differences and the movement of a chain’ (1978: 292). Derrida’s observation of the ‘presence of an element’ appears to be vital in our understanding of the ‘textualness’ of an institution, for institutions are the products of ideological consciousness just as much as texts are.

In their analysis of media institutions Merrill and Lowenstein seem to throw some light on my argument when they identify six characteristics that are representative of institutions: ‘institutions are organizations formed to serve a *social function*...,

structures set up to *fill concepts...*, extensions of *personal needs*, designed to satisfy those individuals who become a part of them..., individual functioning collectively in society as the person who make them up would want to function individually ...; the primary building blocks of a *socialistic, collective society...*; social organisms that drain the individuality and personality from individuals and stir it all together in a *common pot*' (1971: 93-94, italics added). Among these features, the ability of an institution to function socially since it has a social role to play, and to form "concepts" is important for our discussion. It is easier to explicate the former for the very existence of institutions, be they political, social or cultural, is contingent on their contribution as social mobilisers.

For me, it is the discursive practices of institutions that make them textually potent. In fact the September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre itself is related to discursive practices. What we witness here is the collision of discursive practices of the ultramodern capitalism and of the fundamentalist terrorist organizations, and these unleash the voices of extra-disciplinary texts. These intangible voices are the extended textual *images* of institutions.

As my textual analysis in Chapter 8 and 9 will illustrate, extra-disciplinary texts, just as much as disciplinary and interdisciplinary ones, are conduits or channels through which student writers harness their knowledge claims utilizing intertextual and interdiscursive resources. It is pertinent to note here that various discourses and texts mentioned in this chapter have a strong bearing on current MBA programs. Knowledge domains pertaining to business studies are constantly being informed and conditioned by heterogeneous texts.

Intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and extra-disciplinarity are vital aspects of student writing. Extra-disciplinary texts, just as much as disciplinary and interdisciplinary ones, are conduits or channels through which student writers harness their knowledge claims utilizing intertextual and interdiscursive resources. Institutions that present themselves as 'texts' often condition the ideological consciousness of student writers. It is now worth examining the extent to which interdisciplinarity has infiltrated into the discipline of business studies.

CHAPTER SIX

MBA AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY

6.1 Contemporary Disciplinary Dynamics and the MBA

Disciplinary dynamics of the academy are by and large determined by the socio-economic structures at a given time. As Clegg et al demonstrates, ‘The combination of technical constraints and complexities...and the constant need to adapt to and anticipate changes in processes and products calls for peculiar organizational features, above all flexibility in work practices and a skilled and constantly reskillable workforce’ (1990: 53). This is certainly important for our understanding of the complexity of the discursive practices in the workplace today. The new technologies of communication, the ever changing marketing and manufacturing practices, and more importantly the workforce with skills in manipulating new technologies of communication in changing and changeable new environments are issues worthy of recognition in curriculum design and practice. These have created interdisciplinary trends in almost every discipline. In business studies, for example, even professional journals have introduced novel approaches to accommodate knowledge domains belonging to some other disciplines, thus making a strong case for interdisciplinary studies (Featherstone, 1995: 3; Brett, et al. 2006; Ghemawat, 2007).

Another important facet of the territorial disintegration and erosion of disciplinary boundaries was the heterogeneity, manifest in the contents of knowledge and in the application of such knowledge in multifarious discursive and literacy practices. Referring to postmodernism, Richters (1993: 23) demonstrates that ‘the modern episteme, in which reason and its subject is a source of ‘unity and of the ‘whole’ is demolished, or simply discarded. Instead, effort is spent on the identification of heterogeneity, multiplicity, otherness and difference’. This diversity, often constituted in the form of academic interdisciplinarity, finds its expression in Business Administration, a sub discipline in the ‘discursive constellation’ of Business Studies as evidenced by its core subjects, majors and sub majors.

The distinction I am making here between the MBA programs of today and those ten decades ago is not solely based on the construct of practical application; I will also investigate the theoretical aspects of these programs.

The Faculty of Business at UTS had a population of 5,200 students in 1995 (Business Faculty Handbook, 1995: 2). Both theoretical and practical strengths of the MBA program and its local and international appeal are demonstrated in the Dean's message: 'Our partnerships with industry and the professions, in Australia and internationally, ensure our programs have the right balance between theory and practical application' (ibid: 2).

In 1995, UTS offered Master's degrees in business in nine different areas of specialization: accounting, banking and finance, employment relations, information technology, leisure and tourism studies, local government management, management, marketing, and operations management (ibid: 53-86).

In order to qualify for the MBA degree, which consists of 96 credit points, business students were required to complete eight core subjects, and an equal number of additional subjects (four MBA options and four electives), that is altogether 16 subjects.

The core subjects were: business and the changing environment, managing people, economics for management, accounting for management decisions, management marketing, financial management, employment relations, and strategic management. (ibid: 50). Although one might still recognize some interdisciplinary elements (eg. economics for management), these core subjects represent the archival property of business studies. The MBA program offered eight options: organization analysis and design, managerial skills marketing or management skills, business analysis, operations management, government business relations, contemporary business law, and global business competitive intelligence (ibid: 50). In addition, there were 52 electives to choose from thirteen disciplinary/interdisciplinary courses: international business, tourism management, banking, finance, corporate accounting, operations management, marketing, employment relations, management, public sector management, sports management, arts management, and leisure management (ibid: 50-51).

It is worth noticing that under the MBA program of 1995, there were few electives that highlighted interdisciplinary trends: international business law, tourism systems, industrial law (ibid: 50-51). In 1989, the MBA curriculum at UTS contained only three interdisciplines: international law, company law, and accounting (UTS: 1989). So, there is no noticeable difference between the interdisciplinary courses offered in 1989 and in 1995. It is also significant to note here that there were no electives in the areas of cultural studies, communication, and information technology.

However, the number of interdisciplinary electives available for students dramatically increased in 1999: employment relations, managing people, management information systems, business analysis, law and the arts, popular culture, professional practice for graduates, global information systems, contemporary business law, ecology and sustainability, industrial law, risk management of engineering, cultural diversity in the workplace, tourist behaviour (Faculty of Business, 1999).

Most of the electives mentioned above illustrate the increasing influence of globalization on business studies in the late 1990s. Hence, the new additions here are mainly related to information technology and cultural studies. The 2003 MBA program (Faculty of Business, 2003) introduced further interdisciplinary electives to the business curriculum. The number of disciplinary/interdisciplinary courses has increased from 13 in 1995 (Faculty of Business, 1995: 50-51) to 20 in 2003 (Faculty of Business, 2003: 110-111). It is evident that these centrifugal dynamics are largely related to the heavy emphasis on new technologies of communication, and globalization of business. Consider, for example, the new course titles: e-business management, e-business marketing, strategic information technology, international marketing, organizational learning and change, and business law (Faculty of Business, 2003: 110-111). The following subjects that come under these courses vividly illustrates the ever increasing interdisciplinarity in MBA programs:

the virtual value chain, conducting business electronically, legal issues in e-commerce, global e-business marketing, commerce on the Internet, contemporary telecommunications, systems integration, application of artificial intelligence, business culture in the Asia –Pacific, contemporary issues in international marketing, promotion and

advertising overseas, cultural diversity in the workplace: management and learning, international business law (ibid: 110-111).

It is also significant to note here that until the year 2001, information technology was a discipline under the Faculty of Mathematics and Science at UTS. However, in 2001, it became what I might call a ‘facultized’ discipline; in other words a faculty was named after it. It seems to me that within this faculty structure, information technology acquired more disciplinary power. It introduced for the first time a Master of Business in Information Technology Management program (MC85) in collaboration with the School of Management of the Faculty of Business (UTS, 2001: 76). This is significant in two ways: first, it is a noticeable unorthodox development that illustrates inter-faculty collaborative ventures. Second, a discipline traditionally nestled in the Faculty of Business has inhabited an alien territory signaling interdisciplinary trends in knowledge production as well as dissemination.

As has been demonstrated above, in most instances, it is through the electivization of subjects that interdisciplinarity is manifest in postgraduate business studies programs. By ‘electivisation’, I refer to the provision of courses students can choose from peripheral to the core subjects of a postgraduate program. These electives offer a greater flexibility, and are often interdisciplinary in terms of their course content, modes of delivery, and assessment tasks. Course titles such as ECOM 20001 ‘Information Systems Management: Integrating E-Commerce’ signifies the integrative behaviour of information technology and business studies. In fact the complexity of this interdisciplinary integration becomes prohibitively complex through references to more interdisciplinary strands of knowledges in study guides, leading to multiple-embedded interdisciplinarity.

MBA students can select ECOM 29008 (Autumn 2002) as an elective. This elective exemplifies what I might call ‘multiple embedded interdisciplinarity’. Multiple embedded interdisciplinarity is the simultaneous manifestation of more than two disciplines in a prescribed textual space. The study guide of this subject envelops twelve topics with their corresponding chapters drawn mainly from the prescribed textbook *Technology of Internet Business* (Lawrence, E. et al. 2002), recommended textbooks (two disciplinary texts), and supplementary readings (21 disciplinary texts). ‘The Impact

of Law and Ethics on Trading using Electronic Commerce’ (Study Guide-Chapter 10, ECOM 29008- CQU 2002), for example, amply demonstrates the integrative behaviour of four disciplines: law, ethics, information technology, and business studies, and one interdiscipline: e-commerce. The remaining eleven chapters of the study guide depict a distinct combination of three disciplines: information technology, accounting, and business studies, and one interdiscipline: e-commerce.

I will examine, in what follows, the integration of cultural studies, law, psychology, information technology, and communication into business studies. In this inquiry, my major reliance will be, as it ought to be, on some influential disciplinary texts, professional books, and my own critical evaluations. This will basically serve two purposes: first, it will act as a foil to my analyses of student texts in Chapter 8 and 9 ; second, it will critically examine the development of selected interdisciplines closely aligned with business studies.

6.2 Integration of Cultural Studies

Cultural Studies as an academic interdiscipline is essentially a British innovation (Fiske, 1992: 284; Smith, 2001:154).¹⁰ It can also be recognized as a branch of social anthropology, since most anthropological investigations have culturally identifiable premises (Firth, 1957; Geertz, 1983). The origins of cultural studies as an interdiscipline may well be traced back to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham. Cultural Studies programs were first offered, and still are, to a specifically targeted student population: socially marginalized groups representing as diverse communities as the working class, and ethnic minorities. In the USA, cultural studies has been integrated into ‘racial and ethnic programs’, and ‘gay-and-lesbian studies’ (Fleishman 1994: 154; also cf. McNeil, 1996: 90; Smith, 2001: 158). As Fleishman further observes, most of the academics on the Birmingham programs came from backgrounds similar to their students. The emergence of journals devoted to cultural studies (eg. *Cultural Studies*, *Cultural Critique*, *Culture and Society*) also highlights the growing popularity of this relatively new interdiscipline (Fleishman, 1994: 154).

In particular, intercultural communication that forms an integral part of cultural studies is significant for business studies. Expansion of business activities transcending the national frontiers signified a major shift in the fundamental tenets of organizational behaviour. Of particular importance were the implications of diverse cultural values for understanding the management of a culturally heterogeneous, hence diverse, workforce. Multinational companies started to 'operate with local staff' in the early 1960s (Beard, 1963: 275), and a need for cultural understanding was strongly felt in such business enterprises. Emphases on cultural orientation in workplace practices have also become inevitable owing to mergers and acquisitions experienced by business organizations in most developing countries (Ferraz & Hamaguchi, 2002: 388-392). These mergers were common in Europe and Britain in the early 1970s (Whitley et al. 1981: 11-12). When 'foreign companies appear as acquirers' (Ferraz & Hamaguchi, 2002:388), intercultural considerations play a pivotal role in planning as well as administrative activities in a workplace setting. These radical changes, both logistic and demographic, in business organizations have opened up new vistas in curricular designing in business studies. Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary domain integrated into business studies in order to cope with these new socio-economic dynamics. However, we should not underestimate the politico-institutional agendas to which these cultural appropriations have constantly been vulnerable.

In business studies, the disciplinary texts that explore the role of culture as a concrete issue are the ones on organizational behaviour, management, and marketing. On the other hand some interdisciplinary texts on cultural studies, too, have specific research focus on the implications of cultural values for the understanding of organizational behaviour.

Hofstede (1991) viewed culture from an organizational perspective. Hence, much of Hofstede's research is premised on reviewing salient cultural values of employees in the context of a perceived globally visible organizational behaviour. Thus Hofstede introduced some highly generalized formula for assessing culturally defined behaviour patterns within global settings. His often quoted five fold cultural analysis has in fact exerted profound influence on disciplinary texts within business studies. Hofstedian analysis of culture merits further elaboration here by virtue of its profound influence on most disciplinary texts on organizational behaviour.

Hofstede (1980; 1991) developed five main categories: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and long-term orientation, that signified culturally defined behaviour patterns of employees and employers in business organizations belonging to IBM. Power distance is related to the culturally defined hegemonic relations within an organization. In a high power distance culture for example employers exert more power over the subordinates than those in a low power distance culture. Uncertainty avoidance factor, according to Hofstede, is also culturally defined. It refers to the extent to which people can tolerate or bear up uncertainty. In strong uncertainty avoidance cultures, people always look for clarity and shun ambiguities. Individualism refers to the superiority of the individual over the group. In an individualist culture, personal achievements are encouraged whereas in collectivist cultures achievements based on group dynamics are preferred. Masculinity is related to culturally acceptable gender bias. In masculine cultures men perform more dominant and assertive roles when compared to those in feminine cultures. Long-term orientation refers to such factors as job satisfaction, and loyalty to an organization.

Hofstedian analysis of culture based on the above five dimensions is situated on a continuum. For instance, there could well be social actors to be placed between the binary opposites that Hofstede highlights.

Hofstede's cultural theory has been a popular topic in disciplinary texts, and is still considered, as evidenced by prescribed literature on business studies programs, to be a standard calibration for analyzing organization-based cultural issues (also cf. Klukhohn and Strodbeck, (1961) who identify five dimensions of culture based on value orientations).

Recent trends in business studies disciplinary texts (eg. Bradley, 1999; Keegan, 1999; Cateora & Graham, 2002; Rigimbana & Nwankwo, 2003) have been to explore issues of cultural importance in comprehensive ways, not as mere ontological or non-practical constructs but as hermeneutically significant sociological investigations. In fact, in some texts cultural issues have taken precedence over political ones. Cateora and Graham (2002), for example, devote 63 pages to fathom the 'cultural environment of global markets' whereas only 23 pages are allotted to explicating 'the political environment' relating to marketing.

Some disciplinary texts attach much importance to cultural premises in marketing on a regional basis. Of particular significance in these new directions are the ones anchored in a specific demographic region. This propensity for regionalizing disciplinary knowledge demonstrates the contemporary dynamics of knowledge production. This is significant for us from two perspectives: first it foreshadows the problems associated with the construct of globalization itself; that globalization is not something capable of exercising homogeneous effects in all the territories of the world. Second, it is important for organizations to recognize the importance of cultural identities in a particular local or regional area. *International Marketing: An Asia-Pacific Perspective* (Fletcher & Brown, 1999: 57-89) exemplifies the regionalization of disciplinary knowledge pertaining to cultural studies. The authors, devoting one chapter on 'the cultural environment of international business', discuss culture as knowledge in terms of two perspectives: 'factual knowledge' and 'interpretive knowledge' (ibid. 60). For them factual knowledge is the tangible phenomena of any culture- what people can see as cultural values. Interpretive knowledge is intangible, hence it represents feelings, emotions, beliefs associated with a particular culture.

Cultural studies today is an independent interdiscipline that cuts across the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. domains. The main purpose of introducing knowledge strands from cultural studies into business studies is to highlight the significance of acculturation in a fiercely competitive corporate world.

6.3 Law in Business Studies

The establishment and existence of legal systems are mandatory for social mobility. From times immemorial, however perfunctorily they may have been organized, there have been legal systems wherever human habitation was visible. Most legal systems in ancient civilizations were an essential part of religious activities. In fact, this is even so today in most parts of the world where Islamic law is practiced and venerated by people of that belief.

The embodiment of law components in business studies programs was due to two main reasons: first the interdisciplinary nature of legal studies itself was manifest in its quest

for various disciplinary domains where legal implications of each discursive practice were of considerable importance. For instance, for the discourse community of law, business organizations provided immense opportunities for maintaining sustainable discursive practices. Business communities themselves realized the crucial role of law in their diverse business activities. This becomes abundantly clear in the deployment of legal officers/consultants in business organizations. Disciplinary communities on the other hand noticed the significance of law as a discursive practice outside the academy, and produced texts explicating the role of law in various contexts in business organizations.

Second disciplinary communities in business studies realized the requirements of their graduates to have a fundamental knowledge of law since litigation often plays a peripheral, if not crucial, role in conducting various business activities. Curricular changes were made to accommodate the growing need of the knowledge of law in business related contexts: eg. tax law , commercial law. corporate law.

It is significant to note that the products of soft technoculture themselves have presented challenging problems relating to the notion of jurisdiction. As Amor observes, ‘the Internet creates a global village without global laws’ and ‘jurisdiction on the Internet is a very important topic’ (2000: 114). The ever-increasing transparency of business organizations in the context of a soft technoculture have in large measure fostered the understanding of the legal implications of their activities. These implications can operate at five levels: individual, local, national, regional, and global. The establishment of the international court of law bears ample testimony to the global significance of the discourses of law. As a result almost most graduate programs in the academy today contain a law component. For example, Seruga and Gibbons (2000) list fifteen units of the Master of Information Systems program, which contains one unit on the law. They define the aim of the unit as ‘...to introduce students to a range of legal perspectives which will increasingly impinge on the work of information systems professionals’ (2000: 153). One of the main purposes of the provision of such credit points is to attract international students who constitute a significant proportion of the student population (ibid: 152-155).

As I mentioned elsewhere, writing assignments presupposes several activities: reading and understanding assignment topics and a variety of other texts, developing analytical and research skills, integrating knowledge capital across a variety of other disciplines. Assignment tasks in business law differ considerably from those of other disciplines. These assignments, especially case studies, are relatively longer, episodic in narration, complex in the use of themes and terminology, diverse in focus in relation to case histories, and above all interdisciplinary (see Chapter 7:5).

Much of the literature on the language of the law focuses on court proceedings as a popular context (Mellinkoff, 1963; O'Barr, 1982). A court trial, where cross-examinations take place, is a discursive site where the language is interpreted and privileged and marginalized. This supremacy of language, I might add, is applied with equal vehemence in the academy not only through disciplinary texts, but also through varied assessment tasks couched in more often than not incomprehensible language.

Perhaps another significant aspect of law in business studies is the very disciplinary integration, and the accompanying epistemological difficulties many students experience. The course aim of Business Law (LAWS 20028), for example, epitomizes the disciplinary integration as a distinct outcome:

- 'introduce you to a study of the Australian legal environment and specific areas and concepts in commercial law relevant to business environment.
- enable you to recognise, analyse and interpret the legal issues arising in a contract.
- enable you to appreciate the effect of legislation on contract law in relation to certain business activities...' (2002:5)

It is significant to note here the reference to 'Australian legal environment', which indicates the study of business law in a local context. The study of legal discourses in a specific local context (discursive specificity) creates epistemological problems for some students, especially international students who have already completed business law courses in different local contexts, for example those who originate from countries in the Asia Pacific region where the jurisdiction is significantly different from that of Australia. Students encounter difficulties with discursive specificity in two major ways:

first they arise from the prescribed textbooks which explicate discourses alien to students (in the above example, the prescribed textbook is *Understanding Business Law* (Pentony et al. 2003) which has a specific focus on business law in an Australian context; second, students will constantly be reminded of what they had studied as business law in a different local context. This prior knowledge could effectively collide with the new knowledges they acquire in a new local context. I might call this interdisciplinary impasse ‘tacit interdisciplinarity.’ As a result of the influence of tacit interdisciplinarity, students often tend to make digressions in their assignments.

6.4 Psychology and Business Studies

Perhaps Hicks (1967) writing in the mid 1960s was the first to have explicitly explored in the context of business studies not only the significance of interdisciplinarity but also the role of psychology: ‘...psychology - which focuses on the individual person - and sociology - which focuses on the group - might provide useful insight into ... organizational behaviour...The perspectives are different - as are likely to be the findings - but they will be helpful if they provide additional insight by *complementing one another*’ (1967: 110, italics added). Again referring to the growing interest in interdisciplinarity, Hicks observes: ‘...the interdisciplinary approach has emerged characterized by a willingness to follow organizational problems *regardless of disciplinary boundaries* and to use any data or technique that seem pertinent to the problem at hand’ (ibid: 112, italics added). It is safe to conclude that these observations may have had a decisive impact on the formulation of the curricula of business studies.

While some promoted cultural factors, others still highlighted psychological factors as the driving gear of marketing behaviour (eg. Chapman 1973: 33-60). They often focused on the role of behavioural sciences with psychology being the most prominent discipline. Williams for example identifies six behavioural disciplines; economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, geography, and history that have close affinity with marketing (1981: 2-5). However, his work assiduously promotes psychological factors as crucial for marketing while totally ignoring the socio-cultural aspects (ibid: 1-227): ‘A major reason for the marketer’s interest in individual differences is to ascertain

whether a sufficient number of individuals display similar psychological characteristics to direct specific marketing effort at this particular group' (ibid: 3).

The disciplines of psychology, sociology, and anthropology came into being in Europe in the late 19th century (Kline, 1995: 207). The advent of applied psychology in the early 1900s marked an important milestone in the discipline of psychology. Its first application was in the selection of employees for new industries; hence a new interdiscipline called industrial or occupational psychology came into being.

In the early 1960s, the main qualities of a manager were thought of as '...knowledge and experience in engineering production, financial administration, or sales. It was his ability to deal with complex problems in these areas and to make intelligent decisions concerning such problems that made him an individual qualified to lead the corporation' (Longenecker, 1964: 19-20). The implication here is that, managerial responsibilities were solely geared to profit-making strategies regardless of the human factor instrumental in operating an organization. It was in the late 1960s that psychology became an essential ingredient in the portfolio of a manager in business organizations. A manager was supposed to have among other things 'a good breeding, psychological talent, ...knowledge of human nature...rational thinking...The manager is determined by his character. Education and knowledge rank in second place' (as cited in Whitley et al, 1981: 66). As Beard points out 'Psychology appeared to some Americans a surer road to success, quicker than expertise' (Beard, 1963: 270).

Again it was in the early 1970s that disciplinary communities realized the immense benefits associated with psychology in the context of business organizations. The significance of psychological considerations of human behaviour in the midst of a machine-dominated culture can hardly be overlooked. Some theorists explicated the significance of accommodating psychological realms of knowledges into disciplines associated with technology as far back as the late 1970s. For instance Evans and Murdoff (1978: 515-550) examine the implications of technological advancements for disciplinary variations in psychology. New technologies of communication have brought with them novel behaviour patterns, especially in the workplace, that merit further expansion in the discipline of psychology. The major focus has been to explore the nexus between technological advancements, especially information systems, and the

human factor. In other words, attempts have been made to explicate the impact of technocentricity on human behaviour (Rousseau 1989).

Industrial psychology (also referred to as occupational or organizational psychology) as a branch of the cluster discipline, psychology, was eventually developed to address specific psychological needs experienced by social actors within organizational behaviour. Although it was based on the principles and practice of psychology, its application signaled a noticeable change (Muchinsky, 1990). Blum and Naylor (1968: 4, as cited in Muchinsky) for instance define industrial psychology as a specialist area where psychological principles are applied in the context of human behaviour within industry and business organizations. In fact, I believe, the emergence of industrial psychology as an interdiscipline was not galvanized solely by the overwhelmingly technocentric preoccupations of the industrial sector; the ever increasing absorption of culturally diverse workforce into the industrial arena has also illuminated the significance of the realms of psychology to heal the psychometric wounds inflicted by heterogeneous work practices that often collide with the cultural capital of the new breed of employees. These two contributory factors however share a common goal: that is to make employees, both in the context of group and individual dynamics, familiarize and align themselves in a conciliatory way with the organizational imperatives and power structures of the administrative machinery brought about by new organizational cultures. Thus the implications of psychological considerations are directly related to both the work practices and the idiosyncrasies of employees. If we examine, for example, the contents of some disciplinary texts, we begin to realize that a significant part of industrial and organizational psychology is linked to human resource management (eg. McCormick, 1987: 94-187; Muchinsky, 1990: 63-93).

Viewed from a socio-economic perspective, economic rationalism in large measure accounted for the integration of industrial psychology into the workplace. Efficiency and performance of workers are partly related to psychological factors. As a result of the confluence of these factors, industrial psychology came into being as a major interdiscipline within business studies.

6.5 Business Studies and Information Technology

Technological advancements are undergoing metamorphoses so rapidly that students can hardly keep pace with the successive sophistications introduced to modern technologies. Bassette puts these new trends in a nutshell: ‘Higher technical and specialized skills are needed in the job market; but **ironically graduates with a specialized technical education are even at graduation behind the times in their fields**’ (emphasis added, 1995: 329).

In the early 1980s, information technology with its major emphasis on computers was conceptualized not so much as a discipline but as a mere facilitating tool (eg. Bailey, 1982). Technological determinism among other things has contributed enormously towards popularizing the knowledge domain that is usually categorized under information technology, a relatively new and dynamic discipline that is expanding itself while making most other disciplines dissolve their boundaries. The knowledge domain surrounding the use of new technologies of communication for the purpose of production, dissemination, storage, retrieval, consumption, and at times distortion of information is an integral part of information technology which is mainly characterized by its pervasiveness. In the galaxy of disciplines today, no other discipline, perhaps with the exception of linguistics, has become more pervasive than information technology. The Internet, essentially a major component of information technology, has contributed immensely towards this pervasive influence.

Technological determinism in the curriculum (that is the use of information technology as a must for a degree program) was in part occasioned by what may be termed the ‘projectile’ effect of information technology. Although this term seems to obscure the utilitarian value of the new discipline, the attraction of IT was ‘projectile’ in its effect, indeed.

The nexus between business studies and IT is not a complex one. It is significant to note however that in spite of its being heavily interdisciplinarized, the institutional identity of business studies as a discipline has not vanished or diminished. The ever increasing number of faculties of business in universities over the world bear ample testimony to this.

In the context of information technology, e-commerce plays a vital role in the business curricula. It was in the early 1990s that e-commerce became a truly global phenomenon, using the Internet as its platform. These e-commerce transactions however were mere discursive practices without any solid disciplinary foundation.

Internet technology in business today is considered to be a capital. As Tapscott and Ticoll point out it is a 'digital capital' (2000: 27). In fact it is the combination of this digital capital and human capital that enables networks in soft technoculture to be effective and functional. This integration is referred to as the 'molecularization of human capital' (ibid: 171). Within e-commerce, one might notice how this molecularization of human capital can envelop global dimensions within 'internet-worked' enterprises (ibid: 17).

Disciplinary texts on e-commerce first started to appear in the late 1990s; in fact prior to 1997, there were no disciplinary texts that comprehensively dealt with the discursive practices of e-commerce. E-commerce as an interdiscipline grew out in the form of a cross fertilization of business management, accounting, and information technology. The traditional transactional mechanism of business-to-business was expanded to accommodate other business contexts: consumer-to-consumer, government-to-citizen, government- to- government etc. Since disciplinary texts on this subject were not available until 1997, most universities had only courses, not programs, until the year 2000.

The multi-linguistification of e-commerce websites (that is the availability of websites in a wide range of languages), while providing a competitive advantage over the traditional modes of business transactions, facilitates the non-English speaking people to utilize the resources to achieve desired goals in his/her first language. The integration of e-commerce into business studies is linked to several factors: the projectile effect of information technology, the flexibility of the Internet technology as a platform for global communication, the popularity of online transactional mode among people in most regions of the world, the accessibility of the Internet ('access is the core of commerce,' Korper & Ellis, 2000: ix), and the phenomenal growth in the internationalization of business activities. It is perhaps the proven viability of e-commerce as an effective business communication strategy over traditional modes of

business communication that has contributed mostly to this integration. Korper and Ellis (2000: 13-15) graphically illustrates the inferiority of 'the traditional selling chain' to 'the direct marketing selling chain', where supplier, manufacturer, distributor, wholesaler, reseller, and customer role relationships have undergone remarkable changes. As they point out, in the direct marketing model, the roles of distributor, wholesaler, and reseller are made redundant. Added to this advantage are the multilingual facilities available to the users of this product of the soft-technoculture (ibid: 54-56). The cumulative effect of all these has been the creation of a 'dynamic trade' (cited in Amor, 2000: 45).

Another significant aspect of e-commerce is its legal implications for transactions on a global platform. This dimension adds another strand of interdisciplinarity, making most e-commerce course contents multiple-embedded interdisciplines: business studies, accounting, law, and information technology. As Tassabehji observes, this law component is not yet fully developed: 'As with e-commerce itself, the legal infrastructure governing it is still in its infancy' (2003: 297).

Also of importance is the emergence of another interdiscipline called m-commerce. This has already been integrated into e-commerce courses in business studies. Sadeh defines m-commerce as 'the emerging set of applications and services people can access from their Internet enabled mobile services' (2002: 5).

Perhaps e-commerce appeared to be more attractive to business studies in view of the ease with which business concepts could be appropriated through the afore-mentioned discursive practices.

Most of the courses in e-commerce available in the academy are also electives in postgraduate programs in business studies. While some of these course contents are related to the popular discourses of e-commerce, others are technology-oriented (mostly relating to software). For example, in the course titled 'Developing E-commerce Solutions (ECOM20007)' students are required to write a report on the following:

'...You are running an e-commerce business consultancy. Your consultancy has been commissioned to develop a website for an Australian online seller of CDs and DVDs.

Your client is keen to acquire a significant market share in Australia as well as to gradually expand its customer bases in Europe and USA. Your job is to develop a project outline for the proposed site. The project outline should include at very least a complete web site map, description of the software applications... Your report should be 2000-3000 word long' (CQU Autumn course profile, 2003:11).

Against this substantial focus on theory relating to e-commerce, one might notice assignments that require advanced practical applications. For example, in Electronic Commerce Project-Part A, students are required to 'design a WIS [web information system] for [a] chosen application, [and] then develop a prototype website. This assignment requires a systems analysis and design process, including documentation, as would occur with the design of any information system. The prototype should be developed with a high-level package, eg. Macromedia, Dreamweaver, Microsoft FrontPage etc.' (ECOM 2009: 10). This is a 20-page assignment that requires mostly skills in application and design.

6.6 Business Studies and Communication

Prior to 1970, most scholars analyzed communication problems in organizations in terms of the official hierarchy of such organizations. In other words, communication problems were hierarchized on the basis of the organizational power hierarchy. For example, Spence (1969) identifies five levels of communication difficulties representing an equal number of levels on the organizational chart (ibid: 14-15). 'The real problem of management communication', observes Spence, 'starts at level B, where the chief executive, the managing director, has the triple task of conferring with his fellow directors...' (ibid: 15). In fact Spence, as evidenced by his predilection for Saussure's theory of diachrony and synchrony, is an avid advocate of structuralism (ibid: 71-83, also cf. Rockey, 1977).

In the late 1980s, approaches to communication in business underwent significant changes. For the first time, attempts were made to understand the importance of communication in a technological environment. Stallard et al identifies six advantages that emanate from technology used in business communication: 'The elimination of

monotonous routine tasks, a savings in time, cost effectiveness, timeliness and greater accessibility of data/information, the accuracy and quality of output, the ability to forecast outcomes' (1989: 20). To this list one might also add: internationalizing a business, stock control, artificial intelligence, and virtual presence of a company. The observations made by Stallard et al clearly signal the technological supremacy in business communication. However, it should be noted here that communication today is not a mere human activity, nor is it a manipulation of technological devices; it is a combination of both.

In a business environment where globally visible diverse transactions, negotiations, and promotions are executed, business graduates should necessarily be great communicators. Today most MBA programs contain communications courses and such courses are often taught by communications lecturers/professors (Hartwell et al. 2000: 6). This is one of the 'expanded competencies' in an 'objectives-based curriculum' that necessitates the introduction of informational content outside of business and accounting (ibid: 1).

Recent developments in the knowledge-based professional services (Tordoir, 1995; Dawson, 2000) have significantly enhanced not only the value of communication but also the related interdisciplines that often complement communication skills. Consider for example, the postgraduate multiple-embedded interdisciplinary course in informatics, culture and communication that combines three disciplinary domains. Dawson highlights the value of these new communication skills and techniques that are indispensable for professional services in the context of client relationships (2000: 125-143).

If capitalism and business studies are inextricably intermingled, then communication should be an essential ingredient of any business studies program since the nexus between the discursive practices associated with capitalism and those of business studies is proverbial. It would not be an exaggeration to state that most of the discursive objectives (professional requirements) representative of capitalist structures are realized through graduate/postgraduate programs of the academy.

The integration of cultural studies, law, psychology, information technology, and communication into business studies crystallizes rampant interdisciplinarity in MBA programs. They have certainly contributed towards broadening the canvas of business studies, and at the same time satisfying the discursive objectives associated with a variety of courses of study. Interdisciplinarity in MBA programs is visible not only through course contents but also from assessment tasks related to knowledge domains of courses. In the chapter that follows, I will introduce the research approach, and examine the culture of assessing students within interdisciplinarity.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESEARCH APPROACH AND THE CULTURE OF ASSESSING STUDENTS

7.1 Research Scope

The main purpose of this research is to find out how student writers cope with academic interdisciplinarity in their postgraduate writings in the discipline of business studies. The postgraduate writings analyzed here are research-based. The postgraduate courses referred to here are all MBA programs in two Sydney universities.

Since student writing at postgraduate level within interdisciplinary contexts is a complex academic endeavour, this research takes into consideration the epistemological complexities of written assignments as well as their corresponding assignment topics. By epistemological complexities, I refer to problem areas associated with how students understand and use disciplinary/interdisciplinary/extra-disciplinary knowledges through intertextual/interdiscursive links in their assignments. This is also closely related to how students interpret and complete diverse assignment topics/tasks within interdisciplinary contexts. Understanding and appropriation of and attitude to knowledges have undergone metamorphosis at an unprecedented level owing in large measure to socio-economic imperatives. Equally importance is the challenges encountered by student writers in their attempts at forging discriminately selected knowledges to construct texts within academic interdisciplinarity. Pedagogical issues relating to resources and support facilities also have a bearing on student writing. Having taken into consideration these issues, this research attempts to answer seven research questions:

- a) What characterizes academic disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity?
- b) To what extent interdisciplinarity is shaped by intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and extra-disciplinarity?
- c) How does interdisciplinarity manifest itself in the academy?
- d) What are the textual dynamics of assessment tasks associated with interdisciplinarity?

- e) How do students cope with academic interdisciplinarity in their writings at postgraduate level?
- f) What do assessors (academics) think of interdisciplinary writing tasks?
- g) How can the writing pedagogy be informed by critical interdisciplinarity?

The first seven chapters of this thesis focus on the first four questions whereas chapters 8, 9, and 10 deal with the last three questions.

7.2 Methodology and Respondents

By virtue of the interpretive and descriptive nature of the data and their analytical potential, the research methodology of this thesis lends itself to a qualitative approach. Qualitative approach is widely used in research in social sciences. Its major focus is to understand human behaviour in comprehensive ways in diverse social activities. Hence, this approach is exploratory in contrast to the conclusive nature of quantitative research (Berg, 1989). Qualitative approach is also more appropriate to the thesis topic since I have been associated with this phenomenon (academic interdisciplinarity) as an academic for more than fifteen years. In other words, I have lived with this problem for a considerable period of time. Moreover this approach gives more strength and reliability to my investigation since it has a clear focus group.

Qualitative approach is specifically significant since it enables the researcher to discuss themes (phenomenological investigation), and also to interpret data in a more practical way (hermeneutics) following thick description. (Geertz, 1973). Thick description denotes contextual information pertaining to an issue being described or analyzed. Hence, it is proposed to use a qualitative approach with wider exploratory dimensions (Berg, 1989; Marriam, 1988).

While understanding of the desired issues and hypotheses are its goals, the research design is set in a familiar, flexible, and natural setting. Data collection instruments are interviews, texts (written/oral), and observation whereas the mode of analysis is inductive. I have made the findings of the research as comprehensive and holistic as possible. Since qualitative approach is an integrated one, it facilitated me to combine

diverse data for analytical purposes. For example, I was able to integrate student texts, disciplinary texts, interviews with students, and interviews with lecturers/assessors in a flexible way to form hypotheses.

This research was designed to investigate a variety of texts written by postgraduate business students in order to meet their course requirements. However the primary sources of this research extended beyond student texts; they comprised lectures, interviews with students, interviews with lecturers and assessors, assessors' written comments on assignments, course profiles, and assignment tasks. The secondary sources included prescribed textbooks for a particular course of study, reference works, students' learning materials (eg. Lecture/tutorial notes), prior knowledge and practices, assessment tasks used for their previous studies prior to undertaking postgraduate studies, and above all students' perceptions of a given assignment task. I have integrated all these source texts or documents in order to arrive at a desired conclusion or conclusions in my research. The only exception to this is the cognitive factor relating to students' perceptions.

First I classified the texts in terms of the specific disciplinary/interdisciplinary area in which each writing task was anchored. To do this the corpus of student texts were divided into two distinct groups: technocentric and non-technocentric. Technocentric assignments are characterized by the deployment of technological manipulations as a major component of an assignment. For example, designing an intranet for a business promotion project overseas is a technocentric interdisciplinary assignment since students are expected to manipulate new technologies of communication to produce a procedural text that can be tested productive (see Chapter 8). In other words, the intranet should yield desired objectives in practical ways. In these tasks, students are not merely using or discussing technocentric issues; they are producing technocentric texts or soft texts (eg. Intranet site). So the main criterion for this division is the mode of a particular assessment task and also the accompanying interdisciplinary strands of knowledges. For example, Suong, one of my research participants should write like an electronic engineer while executing her assessment task. In fact it is well articulated in the assessment topic itself:

‘You work for a company that develops intranets for multi-location companies. .. You have been with the company for many years, and while a highly respected engineer (software, electrical), your last idea was not successful, and resulted in significant loss for the company’.

This kind of electronic text production is not involved in my second category: non-technocentric assessment tasks. Non-technocentric ones do not demand such advanced manipulation of new communication technologies. This category was based on the interdisciplinary areas of knowledges (eg. cultural studies, psychology) contained in a particular assessment task. Consider for instance the following assessment task:

‘Could the Nike system of management be adapted overseas, how do third-country nationals and host-country supervisors and employees influence behavior in Nike’s foreign operations?; The company’s marketing strategies, including its lineup of super-sports personalities, reflect its approach to leadership in general. Explain this connection and what your impression is of Nike’s culture.’

Two texts (Hofstede, G. 1980& 1991) prescribed for this assignment demonstrate its link to cultural studies and business studies. All student texts analyzed under these two categories are firmly anchored in interdisciplinarity. For example, there are seven disciplinary areas of focus here: soft technoculture, e-commerce, law, cultural studies, communication, extra-disciplinarity, and psychology. Student texts were analyzed to determine the extent to which they are aligned or misaligned with pedagogic expectations.

The research develops through a series of case studies/reports/essays involving 15 postgraduate students reading for the MBA degree by coursework at two Sydney universities. First I approached 25 students out of which I selected 18 who agreed to participate in the research. The remaining seven students were eliminated since they did not have sufficient time to spend on the interviews owing to their part-time work commitments. The first meeting of the selected students took the form of a preliminary interview where I provided students with information about the data collection protocols, what the research is about, and who the researcher is. (Out of 18 students

three dropped out half way through for various reasons). Hence, the students were selected randomly, and it was by accident that they represented a broad spectrum of student population: English/non-English speaking background students, mature age students, international students. Apart from this cross sectional veracity, the selection criteria have other merits, too. For example, texts from international students enabled me to investigate conceptual variations within academic interdisciplinarity conditioned by socio-historical forces of different regions of the world, and to elucidate how this ‘otherness’ is in conflict with other ‘othernesses’. Students’ success or failure as student writers based on their prior writing tasks was not a determining factor when selecting research participants.

The participation of student writers in my research was voluntary. Student Consent Forms were given to each student for voluntary participation in this research (see Appendix III). These forms contained students’ as well as the researcher’s contact details. Prior to the selection of research participants (students/Faculty members) permission was obtained from the Deans of the Faculty of Business of the two universities to interview the participants. Interview sessions were flexible in order to accommodate working students. I also organized and conducted interviews in such a way that the time spent on interviewing should not in any way affect their studies. Some students were in fact my own students; however, I was able to establish rapport with the other students in the course of interviews. The atmosphere within which the interviews were conducted was, friendly, free, relaxing, and natural.

Since my research participants come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, I was also sensitive to their attitudes, values, and perceptions. Such ethnic diversity is in fact a tangible phenomenon of the current student population of the academy. It reflects among other things the impact of globalization on higher education, and also the growing number of international students. In this sense, the selection of participants in my research was based on true and real situations. It is pertinent here to provide some biographical information about my research participants.

The following table illustrates the profiles of my research participants (students) whose names are fictitious:

Student name	Age	Educational Background	Professional Background	First Language	Course enrolled in
Angela	30	Dip. In Hotel Management	Waitress	German	MBA
Darrell	25	Certificate in Communication	None	Russian	MBA
Flora	28	Dip. In Office Practice	Secretary	Spanish	MBA
Hong	25	BA Mandarin	None	Mandarin	MBA
Jennifer	26	Dip. in Business	Secretary	English	MBA
Joseph	28	Diploma in Communication	Shift worker(Shell)	English	MBA
Karu	28	Dip. in BS	Bank clerk	Sinhalese	MBA
Leon	30	Dip. in BS	None	Cantonese	MBA
Nath	35	BSC in Engineering	Electrical Engineer	Hindi	MBA
Patric	26	BA Agriculture	None	Korean	MBA
Paul	30	LLB	None	Malay	MBA
Ralph	30	Cert. Teaching Dip in BS	Teacher	Somali	MBA
Suong	28	Dip. in BS	Travel consultant	Vietnamese	MBA
Tong	32	BA Mandarin	Teacher	Mandarin	MBA
Vesna	27	BA Economics	Supervisor	Serbian	MBA

7.3 Data Collection Protocols

The data for this research include completed written assignments after submission to the lecturer/marker (henceforth referred to as assessor), data gathered from interviews with both students and assessors, course profiles with information about assessment tasks and assessment criteria, subject outlines, study guides, prescribed textbooks, comments on written assignments by assessors, and interview extracts from both students and assessors. Every effort has been made to maintain the confidentiality of the wide variety of information gathered from the students as well as the assessors before, during and after the research. The confidentiality of all the participants and the institution was ensured and other rules and regulations pertaining to the code of ethics of the institutes were complied with.

Completed written assignments, representative of a range of selected interdisciplinary subjects within business administration, and information about assessment tasks and assessment criteria for each assignment were photocopied and serially numbered. Comments on written assignments were obtained through discussions with the assessor concerned. I also organized a comprehensive interview schedule to accommodate both students and assessors. Student interviews, each lasting approximately forty-five minutes and conducted outside of class time, were tape recorded, and subsequently transcribed. These interviews resembled discussions rather than interrogatory procedures, and the frequency of the interviews depended on the individual student responses.

The main purpose of the interviews both with students and lecturers/assessors was to elicit vital information relating to assignment tasks, completed assignments, and pedagogic practices. Such interviews enabled me to have a deep understanding of the problems being investigated. My approach to interviews with students were mainly 'text-based' (Prior, 2003: 189). That is each interview had a clear focus on a particular text or texts: in this case students' completed assignments, assignment tasks, assessors' written comments, and course profiles. This approach enabled me to stimulate students' interest in carrying on with the interviews, and also it provided me with a realistic and authentic atmosphere which helped improve students' credibility. This ethnographic setting is ideal for a qualitative research since 'verbal interactions are related to the task at hand' (Cicourel, 1992:294).

Interviews with individual students were analyzed in terms of their contribution to social, ideological, institutional, interdisciplinary and psychological significance in the context of writing. Interviews are as important as written texts since they evince, among other things, students' attitudes to institutional practices, their intentions, perceptions and ideological stances relating to writing practices, which would otherwise be concealed in texts. Also central to these interviews were the 'non-verbal feedback cues' (Richardson, 1996: 178), which were closely monitored to ascertain the subtleties and nuances of feelings such as latent feelings, disappointments, and frustrations. The data gathered from interviews were correlated with the corresponding student writings to draw conclusions and comparisons.

Assessors' comments were examined in relation to their institutional expectations, differences and preferences, and also the individual writer's intentions and performance. The literature on each assessment task helped determine the student writer's grasp of the topic of an assignment. This infrastructural work assists in many ways in analyzing student texts using the microdisciplinary analysis, a paradigm where epistemological and socio-political considerations are fused together to analyze the integrative behaviour of disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and extra-disciplinarity in student writings.

7.4 Analytical Paradigm

At first, it was a formidable challenge for me to formulate an appropriate and sustainable analytical paradigm to envelop the complexities of this academic inquiry. However, later I realized that the analytical framework should be firmly premised on the epistemology of textual construction and consumption as well. Therefore, the methodology I have employed here for analyzing student texts and other ancillary texts is based on what may be called micro-disciplinary analysis. This analytical framework focuses on how students make use of knowledge capital from diverse sources while producing a text. For example, Suong (Chapter 8) makes use of the resources of the Internet while executing her assignment.

Micro-disciplinary approach to data analysis merits further explication. It has three easily identifiable epistemological dimensions: disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, extra-disciplinarity. In order to capture these dimensions, student texts were examined and analyzed in terms of their intertextual/interdiscursive links, and also on the basis of how their texts meet pedagogic expectations. So in this endeavour, student texts are compared with other source texts. This is in line with the prominent feature of intertextuality, ie. texts are populated with other texts. Micro-disciplinary analysis is by no means a mere detection mechanism targeting student texts and their intertextual/interdiscursive sources. Although finding out intertextual/interdiscursive links is important, perhaps more important aspect of this analysis is to examine *why* students resort to such intertextual/interdiscursive resources. This is also a salient aspect of qualitative approach.

When analyzing student texts, it is of paramount importance to examine the extent to which they are anchored in disciplinarity/interdisciplinarity/extra-disciplinarity.

Disciplinarity is certainly the key element in student texts and assignment topics. As I have mentioned elsewhere, there is no interdisciplinarity without disciplinarity. Also of importance in this regard is the disciplinary texts produced by practitioners and theorists. Consider for instance the following assignment topic in accounting:

‘There is a growing awareness of business ethics and the need to reinforce ethical behaviour in the corporate sector (Griggs et al. 2003, p. 558)’ As the CEO of a business, how would you implement policy to reflect this emphasis on ethical business behaviour?’ (Accounting, 2003: 22).

Without a firm grasp of the issues relating to disciplinarity (accounting), it is difficult to fathom the depths of the relationship between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity (ethics).

In the context of micro-disciplinary analysis, much importance is attached to the way in which students synthesize disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and extra-disciplinary knowledges in an assignment. In other words, student texts will be examined in relation to the frequency in the use of intertextual and interdiscursive resources within disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity. An intertextual frequency test in student texts involves the examination of the frequency of students’ indebtedness to intertextual resources in producing texts. Investigation of various stances (eg. transgressive intertextuality, Borg, 2002) developed by students also form an integral part of microdisciplinary analysis. Within micro-disciplinary analysis, when there is a high intertextual frequency in texts, then such texts are deemed to be intertextually dense. Consider for instance the psychology essay produced by the group members:

The two psychological mechanisms that are particularly helpful in trying to understand the psychology of teamwork are social identification and social representations (Hayes 1997 p. 15).

Social identification is the human tendency to see the world in terms of ‘them’ and ‘us’ (Hayes 1997 p. 15).

Social representations are the shared beliefs or assumptions that we adopt from others...(Hayes 1997 p. 19)

(Hayes, 1997 is not mentioned in their reference list)

So, the higher the intertextual density, the lower the student input would be. When knowledge domains are alien to them, most students resort to reproduce extracts from other texts to fill in their knowledge gaps. In these ventures, they often find it difficult to organize knowledge based on what they have read. In other words, it is hard to play the role of a *bricoleur* if the knowledge domains are totally new to students (Levi-Strauss, 1966).

Micro-disciplinary analysis also utilizes search engines for locating electronic intertextual links in relation to a student text. For example, Suong produced a text quite indistinguishable from a text from www.trainingtools.com, and I located this reference using the search engine www.google.com. Such investigations were supplemented with details obtained from interviews with students to find out why students resorted to such strategies. Similarly, I also examined prescribed textbooks and texts in reference lists and compared them with student writings. This is obviously time-consuming; however, there seems to be no other alternative at a time when students are intertextually more agile as has never been before.

Another aspect of micro-disciplinary analysis is to find out specific disciplinary/interdisciplinary contexts and genres in a student text in order to ascertain whether such contexts or genres are relevant to a particular assessment task. Narendra for example in his assignment on business law delves into Australian immigration contexts and related information. Some student texts in my research also failed to conform to acceptable genres of written discourse (see Narendra's assignment, Chapter 9).

The use of resources from extra-disciplinary texts is the major characteristic of non-disciplinary dimensions to knowledge. Students often make use of popular discourses from various channels of the media, from anecdotal texts, and from heritage texts, to name a few, in order to substantiate the claims they make in regard to disciplinary/interdisciplinary issues. The typology of extra-disciplinarity as outlined in Chapter 5 will be examined in relation to the texts constructed by students. Disciplinary texts (including lectures) and interdisciplinary texts often utilize the resources of the media to construct new knowledges. Hence, extra-disciplinarity is a major part of the synergized activity of student writing. This is also an area where interdiscursivity is

predominantly manifest in student texts by virtue of students' sheer intimacy with extra-disciplinary texts.

Closely linked to extra-disciplinarity is students' social situatedness. Social situatedness refers to the epistemological potential of students that emanates from their own social situatedness (eg. possession of cultural capital, and ideological orientations, ideological consciousness). These are all context-dependent areas of knowledge in society. In fact, one could hardly find *a priori* convenient contexts when student writers negotiate the bends in the labyrinthine contours of disciplinary/interdisciplinary/extra-disciplinary knowledges where *adventure* is a key element in the acquisition of knowledge. In their quest for knowledge in the academy, they need to fathom the depths of a variety of assessment tasks, too.

7.5 Assessing Students within Interdisciplinarity

Positivist approaches were the key factors in designing assessment measures with the development of science and scientific investigations. In these atmospheres, knowledge was thought of as a well structured set of skills to be mastered by students without questioning. In the latter part of the 19th century written examinations were introduced in the USA in conformity with this positivist approach (Lunsford: 1986). This is well demonstrated by Murphy and Grant, too: 'most traditional assessment measures were anchored in a positivist paradigm...with positivism, there is a truth, a correct interpretation, a right answer, that exist independently of the author' (1996: 285). In these academic contexts, knowledge was thought of as objective, and also as an isolated, and fixed phenomenon.

According to Hamp-Lyons, 'the first three generations in writing assessment can be described crudely as direct writing (eg. essay tests, multiple choice testing, and portfolio-based assessment' (2001: 117). In the fourth generation, it is the 'technological' nature of assessments that are predominantly popular in the academy (ibid: 120-121). So what we witness today is the emergence of technology-based assessment tasks with professional relevance as their key determinant. Professional relevance is the capacity for using knowledge in a professional environment outside the academy. This is a frame work where 'knowledge is seen not as something to be

transmitted, but as something that students actively collaborate to build' (Murphy & Grant, 1996: 288).

As Russell points out, 'If writing is to become a central focus of pedagogy, then it must be structurally linked to the values, goals, and activities of disciplines (1991: 302). In other words, it is the professional relevance of writing that is primarily important and it determines the genres of assessment tasks in the academy (Camp, 1996). Taking a similar view, Brown & Glasner (1999) attach social context to assessment tasks, suggesting that every assessment has a socially significant relevance. This is in fact in line with the postmodern condition demonstrated by Lyotard. (1984).

When considering the changes brought about by the recent disciplinary and textual dynamics to the overall academic culture, we notice not so much regulated and structured pedagogical approaches, but rather complex developments within them. These developments, above all, have foregrounded new sites where 'the superimposition of the power relations and knowledge relations assumes...all its visible brilliance' (Foucault, 1995: 185, also see *ibid*: 215-305). These developments could be investigated from conceptual as well as practical perspectives.

In any context of interdisciplinarity, assessment tasks invariably become interdisciplinary. Interdisciplinarity necessitates students to negotiate their cognitive faculties across several disciplines that constitute their chosen program of study. The implication here is that there is essentially an integration process involved in any interdisciplinary assessment task, and it is this process (which is eventually transformed into a product) that distinguishes interdisciplinary assessment tasks from those of disciplinary ones. I will examine these intricate relationships as manifest in real assessment tasks.

Assessment tasks are an essential part of any pedagogical as well as learning endeavour. From a conventional point of view, the main purpose of assessment tasks is to ascertain to what extent a student can utilize and expand (manipulate) in a given context the knowledge he/she has acquired in a particular program of study. Critical thinking, disciplinary knowledge, and linguistic competencies are indispensable for executing most assessment tasks in most disciplines {Murphy & Grant, 1996). It seems to me that

this orientation in student assessment has significantly changed in our contemporary academic contexts. The purpose of assessing students is not merely confined to ascertain to what extent they have profited from what they have learnt from lecturers and professors; it also tests students' ability to acquire and apply on their own new knowledges in addition to what they have learnt. Hence, the strategies used for assessing students have dramatically changed from what they were two decades or so ago. The major change is characterized by the strong research element introduced to most assessment tasks, especially in business studies.

By assessment topic, we usually refer to the wording of a given assignment title; in other words a topic is born of on the strength of the lexico-grammatical choices being deployed in it in the context of disciplinarity/interdisciplinarity. They involve among other things, specialized terminology and varied questioning techniques. An assessment task on the other hand is generically realized and defined; in fact it is the materialization of an assessment topic that gives rise to an assessment task. They involve essays (explanatory, argumentative, descriptive, critique etc), reports, presentations, case studies, theses, class exercises (short pieces of writing). It is also evident that both assessment topics and tasks are closely interrelated; hence I would prefer to use the phrase 'assessment task' inclusive of its accompanying assessment topic as part of it.

Assessment tasks/topics within interdisciplinarity (and, I believe in general, too) may be classified into five types: closed, extended, hypothetical, technocentric, and integrated. There are two main criteria for this categorization; first it is centred on the ways in which students (individually or in group) are required to manipulate multiple discourses in executing a particular assignment task. Second, it also takes into consideration the physically prominent aspects of a particular assessment task/topic, eg. the genre, the length, the mode of delivery. There could still be significant overlapping between these categories. In order to fulfill the requirements of all these categories, students are required to be engaged at varying degrees in some form of research related to primary and secondary sources.

Closed assignment tasks/topics are concise, and have often a strong orientation in theory or concepts. That is students are required to explicate some understanding of a concept akin to a particular discipline or disciplines. And it is not easy for students to deviate

from the thesis statement/s encountered in most closed assignment tasks. Most of these questions or statements in the form of questions are straightforward. They also have a unilateral focus, and intricate relationships are rarely encountered. Very often closed questions are framed with statements derived from disciplinary texts. The following assignment topic in the course, Law for Management, exemplifies the closed type:

Larsen (2002) stated that 'Australia's current financial reporting framework is recognized as amongst the world's best, but this obviously did not and cannot offer immunity from corporate failure' (CQU, 2003: 25).

Here Larsen's thesis is a solid one that has to be adhered to by students in analyzing the financial reporting system. Interdisciplinarity seeps into this topic through its intertextual links with company and commercial law. Although this is not a complex task, some closed tasks can be complex, too.

I would also consider some multiple choice questions (non-hypothetical ones) as closed tasks. They too have a question or a statement followed by several (usually four or five) options to choose from. These types of questions at times could be ambiguous through the calculating way in which linguistic resources are manipulated. The following is a typical example of a closed type multiple choice question in the subject International Contracts and Business Transactions:

'You are required to select the one (1) correct answer from each of the following and explain why you believe that answer is correct...

- The title of the goods sold in a documentary sale is transferred through
- a) Negotiation of the document only
 - b) Delivery of the goods only
 - c) Negotiation of the document and delivery of the goods
 - d) Title to the goods is not transferred in a documentary sale'
- (CQU 2002:26- LAW 20055)

This task obviously has two parts: first is to select the most appropriate answer, and the second is to explain why it is the most suitable option.

Lengthy assessment tasks, sometimes running into several pages, providing additional information on how to interpret the task and negotiate meanings, could be classified as extended topics. The ensuing example, (CQU 2002, ECOM 29008) introduces the task in closed form, and provides crucial information relevant to the task: '[Prepare] a detailed design and implementation plan for your chosen organization and e-commerce trading system model' (p. 23). This is followed by four paragraphs (approximately 460 words) devoted to explaining how to execute the assignment providing more details: '...Where applicable, you are encouraged to substantiate your recommendations with the *careful* use of diagrams, figures or other schematics; these will not only add visual impact to your report, but may also enhance its readability and credibility...' (ibid p. 24, original italics). Narrations of this nature are an essential ingredient of extended assignment tasks. Some assignment tasks, especially in accounting, contain lengthy tables of information for working out and applying concepts such as depreciation, trial balance, bank reconciliation etc. as part of an assignment. These also come under the rubric of extended tasks since such prolonged information is crucial for executing a task. Extended assignment tasks are complex, hence explanations are crucial in understanding and interpreting such tasks. Sometimes such explanatory information adds to the complexity of the task itself.

Hypothetical assessment tasks always contain a scenario. Hence, I use the term 'hypothetical' here to mean a series of simulated scenarios as part of an assessment task. A scenario usually contains a simulated narrative or a chain of events relating to one or several contexts. The length of a scenario may vary from one discipline to another; hypothetical assessment tasks in business law for example are much longer than those in other disciplines. They are usually presented in two ways: they can have a question or a statement, preceded by one or more scenarios, or *vice versa*. The latter, where scenarios are used as a prologue to a particular assessment task, however, appears to be more popular than the former.

Hypothetical assessment tasks are frequently used in case studies, which entail the use of scenarios. In fact, it is difficult to visualize a case study without a scenario. A

scenario may range from a simple situation where a student has been asked to interview someone for information as part of a research project to lengthy narratives often of episodic nature. Their main purpose however is to establish contextual reference/s in relation to a given question or a statement.

The following is part of a five-page-long case study in taxation law, which contains a scenario with four closely connected episodes. In the interest of brevity here, I will quote the opening sentences of each episode:

‘ John Winter has approached you for preparation of his 2001/2002 tax return, and determination of his tax liability...John has been living in Fiji since 1 February 1999...On his return to Australia John was approached by an Australian radio network... John owns a retail store in Cairns which sells surf gear and clothing...(CQU 2002 LAWS 19033, p. 25-26). This is followed by several tables of accounting information highlighting John’s financial transactions, all being part of the scenarios (ibid 26-29). The topic ends with two questions: ‘1. Set down in statement form full details of John’s assessable income and allowable deductions for the 2001/2002 year of income...2. Determine the net amount of income tax payable by John for 2001/2002’ (ibid. 30).

This hypothetical task is a relatively long and complex one, and most students may make notes to simplify it and follow the sequenced information without which they cannot construct the required context or contexts. Question one demands a complete narration of John’s complex transactions, both in Fiji and Australia, which then have to be interpreted against the taxation law. What we witness here is the confluence of three disciplines: business studies, accounting, and law.

What is implied in the section on assessment criteria is the use of the legal language; that is students are required to conform to the linguistic resources frequently encountered in legal discourses. Perhaps more importantly, to comprehend a variety of texts of the legislative literature (eg. Trade Practices Act 1974), students need to have superior linguistic competencies.

The use of new technologies of communication is mandatory for fulfilling some assignment tasks. Technocentric tasks are the ones in which the use of new technologies of communication is an integral part of the topic itself. They have close affinity with both hypothetical and extended tasks in many ways, except that the use of one or more software products is unique to them. These are the new and emerging breeds of assignment tasks of the soft technoculture.

One major characteristic of this type is that a lengthy introduction is provided for explaining software related information that is crucial for executing the assignment. The following is a technocentric assignment topic for a course in Financial Accounting:

‘For the month of July only, you are entering the transactions for the firm, Video Matrix, using Version 12 of MYOB [mind your own business- a popular accounting software package] test drive (or Trial Evaluation).

Do not use the manual accounting system to complete the transactions for July. Do not complete any transactions for the month of August.

Use the 2CDs included with “Video Matrix” text. You must purchase this text which is available from the CQU bookshop. One CD contains the computer program for MYOB ...and the other ... the Data File for the firm Video Matrix. The correct version of MYOB is required. Earlier versions will not allow the Video Matrix data files to be opened.

Read all the instructions included in the Video Matrix BEFORE you commence loading your files or entering transactions.

You must complete reversing entries on 1 July 2002...

Transactions for weeks 1, 2, 3, and 4 in July 2002

Adjusting entries as required on 31 July 2002...

You must print the following reports ...

Transaction report...’ (CQU 2002- ACCT20052 : 26-27 italics and capitalization original).

I have reproduced here only half of the assignment task (the full length of this task is approximately 700 words). It is evident that the first four paragraphs provide a lengthy introduction by way of instructions without which the assignment cannot be completed. Much of the information, however, in these introductory prerequisites is related to application software products (eg. MYOB). It is fascinating that this software acts as *preliminary contexts* to the task as well as *tools* for accomplishing the task. This certainly exemplifies the new dynamics of textual practices in the culture of student assessment. The rest of the topic contains a series of sequenced tasks to be completed using electronic resources meticulously. This is a truly interdisciplinary assignment where some selected concepts of accounting are fused with the application software products of information technology.

It is perhaps difficult to perceive the relationship of this course to other courses: according to the course profile, 'This course is for postgraduate students in the Faculty of Business and Law who have no background in Accounting' (ibid, p. 2). Hence, one might notice that this is an extremely challenging, if not cumbersome, assignment for most business students whose knowledge of accounting and information technology is meagre.

Integrated types display a combination of several other types, eg: closed, hypothetical, extended, technocentric. For example, some technocentric assignments could be accompanied with extended types. To satisfy the requirements of ECOM (200109 Autumn 2002) (Electronic Commerce Project- Part B) students have to write a twenty-five-page report on the 'factors that need to be considered when purchasing ...e-commerce software packages, and why they are important' (Course profile 2002: 6). There are nine recommended factors to be included: 'business models catered for, size of application aimed at, cost, hardware needed, maintenance, cost of modifications, security, electronic payment mechanisms, and connectivity to other systems' (ibid 6). This assignment obviously has a heavy focus on information technology, but it contains equally strong focus on business studies and accounting. For example, the first and sixth factors merit a discussion centred on business studies whereas the eighth one is centred on accounting practices.

This report should also include an evaluation of the software required for developing the proposed *WIS* based on the framework developed by' the student (*ibid*). While writing this report students are also required to concentrate on two basic models of e-commerce: business-to-business and business-to-consumer. The recommended text for this assignment is *Electronic commerce: a managerial perspective* (Turban, E. et al 2000). More importantly, I might add that this textbook contains *no information* about accounting or business studies; rather its focus has been on developing web information systems. As I have already mentioned earlier, this is an instance where students are required to cope with new knowledges through research.

The complexity of the instructions is another difficulty for students. First, the section on the factors that need to be considered before purchasing the e-commerce packages in fact is where students are required to focus on needs analysis from two perspectives: technological and business. Perhaps the most daunting task for the business student would be the section of the report that should deal with the required software for developing the web information system.

Assessment tasks are the tools that help measure students' achievements in a given disciplinary/interdisciplinary context. Hence in a qualitative research targeting student writing, assessment tasks as well as the required knowledge contents students have to cope with assume greater significance. In this sense, assessment tasks are the nexus where consumption and appropriation of knowledge meet in student writing. Hence, understanding of the contents of assessment tasks is vital for the success or failure of student writers. In the ensuing analysis, I will explore how my research participants cope with interdisciplinarity in their writings.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

8.1 Classification of Student Texts

Interdisciplinarity in business studies is manifest in various texts such as prescribed textbooks, course profiles, assessment tasks. However, it is through assessment tasks, where interdisciplinary integration is mandatory, that students really grapple with interdisciplinarity. Therefore, the primary source of my research is in fact student texts based on assessment tasks. For example I selected cultural studies as one area of analysis precisely because the assessment task has space for integrating business studies and cultural studies. It does not mean that there is an interdiscipline called cultural studies in business studies programs. So it is the assessment task that determines the interdisciplinary integration.

A rational and productive categorization of student texts was necessary to investigate the impact of academic interdisciplinarity on student writing. This serves two main purposes: first, it facilitates the researcher in organizing his analytical apparatus; second it helps the reader comprehend the contents of this analysis in a systematic and logical way. Therefore, I analyze student texts under two broad categories: technocentric and non-technocentric. Technocentric texts are characterized by the predominant appropriation of new technologies of communication whereas non-technocentric ones are by and large contingent on conventional modes of written discourse. While the former presupposes on the part of the student superior knowledge of new technologies of communication, the latter demands writing techniques that do not require complex manipulation of new technologies of communication. It is pertinent to note here that regardless of these categories, all student texts analyzed here are firmly anchored in interdisciplinarity.

Under technocentric texts, I analyze four student texts belonging to four research participants. They all have a strong orientation in new technologies of communication. For example, before embarking on these assignments, it is a prerequisite that students should have a strong background in the utilization of knowledge pertaining to the products of soft technoculture, eg. e-commerce. Under non-technocentric texts, I have

analyzed texts belonging to eleven students. These texts are premised in law, cultural studies, communication, extra-disciplinarity, and psychology.

Chapter eight is devoted to the first category (Textual Analysis Part 1), and in Chapter 9 (Textual Analysis Part 11), I will explore the non-technocentric student texts.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS (PART 1)

Technocentric Assignments within Interdisciplinarity

8.2 Students Writing Themselves into Soft Technoculture

Technocentric or technology-related assignment tasks have a strong bearing on information technology. Very often such assignments demand an integrated approach to business studies. In other words students are required to integrate various strands of knowledges from information technology into business studies, eg. e-commerce and consumer behaviour, intranet software products and business expansion. Moreover, these assignments are different from those requiring the integration of other interdisciplines such as cultural studies and psychology in that they deal with *concepts* as well as *technological manipulations*. These two dimensions, ie. conceptual and technological aspects, often require reading of new texts. The ensuing analyses illustrate how students cope with such assignments.

Suong from Vietnam is a business student in her second year. At a college in Saigon, she completed a diploma in business studies, and worked as a consultant to a private tourist organization. Despite Suong's nodding acquaintance with information technology, she opted to take it as an elective for two reasons: first, she thinks it might enhance her chances of securing lucrative employment; second, her parents want her to study information technology and such obligations are usually taken seriously.

Suong is a frequent visitor to the Learning Skills Centre for assistance in editing her assignments. Her assignment, having pre-edited with LSC assistance, is written in acceptable English with some occasional grammatical errors.

The hypothetical assignment topic for the 2000-word report Suong has completed reads as follows:

‘You work for a company that develops intranets for multi-location companies. You have a new idea, and now want money to progress its testing and production. As the team leader of a product development group, you must submit a report to your CEO.

Your CEO is new to the company. She is focused on consolidation of the company's position, and is reluctant to spend money on new developments at this stage.

You have been with the company for many years, and while a highly respected engineer (software, electrical), your last idea was not successful, and resulted in significant loss for the company.

At minimum, your report should address what the product is, how it can benefit the company, its marketability and potential buyers....You must use at least SIX resources apart from your textbook and study materials...'

As Suong says, perusing the assignment topic itself is a daunting and shocking experience for her who has had no previous experience in or exposure to any writing activity pertaining to information technology. Here Suong is asked to write a report on a new software product that could revolutionize the existing intranet facilities of the company she works for. To do this, first she has to design a new software product using her knowledge of information technology, and then analyze the product utilizing the disciplinary resources of both information technology and business studies:

R: ...Your lecturer thinks that your essay is incomplete. What went wrong?

S: It's hard for me. I didn't know what to do because I didn't know.

R: You didn't know what? The meanings of words in the topic?

S: No, no. I know the words but what to do.

R: You mean how to do the assignment?

S: Yes, yes

R: Why?

S: Before I didn't do [haven't done] any assignment like this. IT assignments [are] new to me.

The assignment task itself epitomizes high intertextual density and multiple-embeddedness. Students are expected to forge heterogeneous disciplinary knowledges in the process of executing their assessment tasks. What are these major knowledge strands envisaged to produce desired meanings through intertextual relations?

As one might notice, the discursive integration (that is the apparent manifestation of the nexus between the colonizing discipline (business studies) and the colonized discipline (information technology) as delineated through the discourse of the assignment) is dexterously conveyed by the phrases such as **‘its marketability and potential buyers’**.

In order to elucidate the disciplinary dilemma encountered by Suong, I am inclined to focus on two prominent parts of her assignment. The first deals with the limitations of the existing product and what the new product is (all confined to double-spaced three pages, approximately 420 words), and the second with how and why it is beneficial to and marketable by the company (to this, three pages have been devoted).

The headings of the first part are ‘Introduction, Issue, Product, What is ABC Flash, and System Requirements’ (pp 4-6). This part of the report contains the assessor’s adverse comments: **‘very confusing’**, **‘Who, what, where, when, how?’**, **‘Is this the appropriate place to introduce the product?’**, **‘What is the current product?’**, etc. The comments Suong makes in this section are not only vague, but they are confusing to the reader, indeed. For instance, several times in this section, Suong refers to **‘the current product’** (pp. 4-5) without explaining what the new product is.

Comments such as ‘The proposed product has enhanced animation support with higher resolution and colour production. Improvements in the downloading time have been made with [the] use of new vector image format approach’ (p.3) need more elaboration. This is, as the assessor himself remarks, very confusing since Suong has not explained what the **‘new vector image format approach’** is. So far we have witnessed the discursive characteristics of a struggling student whose knowledge capital relating to information technology is insufficient to handle this part of the assignment. Perhaps what follows the heading ‘What is ABC Flash?’ epitomizes Suong’s serious limitations in executing this assignment. It is here that the assessor has detected large chunks of unacknowledged material borrowed from a web site, and used with minor modifications

with a view to fleshing out Suong's acquaintance with the required knowledge capital. In order to elucidate this wholesale borrowing, I am using both the modified text and the text available online respectively with Suong's modifications underlined:

Suong:

‘ABC Flash will be functioned primarily as an authoring application for web developers, enabling the creation of high-impact, fully interactive web sites. Previous to ABC Flash, creating animated web sites (complete with sound) involved large files, which required equally robust bandwidth. ABC Flash can bring a level of advanced animation and interactivity previously unavailable using traditional Internet technology’ (p. 6).

Website:

‘Flash has functioned primarily as an authoring application for web developers, enabling the creation of high-impact, fully interactive web sites. Previous to Flash, creating animated web sites (complete with sound) involved large files, which required equally robust bandwidth... Furthermore, Flash has brought a level of advanced animation and interactivity previously unavailable using traditional Internet technology’ (www.trainingtools.com p. 1).

In order to overcome her difficulties with the new knowledge capital, Suong seeks solace in the pervasive intertextuality that is available online, and for her it is a convenient mode of textual construction. This is in fact one of the palliative effects of soft technoculture where novice students can exploit online resources available in user friendly ways.

The second part of Suong's report, in contrast to the perfunctorily executed first part, reveals the signs of an accomplished student writer with no comments from the assessor. This is an area where Suong has acquired substantial intertextual intimacy as a business student. In other words it is the context within which she feels comfortable. The assessor obviously may have been in a quandary as to how he could make any

favourable comments here vis-à-vis the first part of the report, and therefore may well have opted to be silent.

Quite befitting a business report, Suong uses a graphic text illustrating the target market growth of the new software product she has designed. She has also identified some effective strategies for marketing this new product.

The length of the report (approximately 950 words) falls well below the required length of 2000 words. On the basis of the act of plagiarism (the website) Suong was awarded no mark for the report; instead she was referred to the university plagiarism committee where she would be answerable to the disciplinary agents of power. Instant justice is seldom ruled out in cases like this where students can hardly defend themselves.

My purpose is not to dwell on plagiarism, although it is a serious issue here, but rather to examine the new disciplinary dynamics that seem to engulf students and incapacitate their academic ventures. While in Vietnam, according to Suong, she did not experience any difficulties in her tertiary studies since every requirement was spelt out clearly well in advance. And students were always tested on what they had learnt from lecturers. Here Suong had little opportunity of learning the new subject from her lecturers; she had to study by herself while doing a part-time job to supplement her income, but had never thought that she would experience such great difficulties in the new subject:

R: Just a couple of questions. Your assignment I mean your lecturer says has failed to satisfy the assessment criteria. What went wrong?"

S: Too hard for me, the IT part.

R: And you copied from a website?

S: I don't [didn't] know what to do, hard for me to do.

R: What really was hard for you?

S: [Silent]

R: OK, Was it designing a software product for the intranet?

S: Yes, and what we need for that. We don't get any help from the lecturer, also no help from LSU.

R: Why not?

S: Lectures are different. The report ask[s] for different things.

R: How about the reference books?...

S: Too hard for me. I don't understand them. That's a new subject for me.

R: How about the LSU help?

S: They help to fix grammar, not the question. They say they don't know...I can't organize.

Designing an intranet-based product is too ambitious a project to handle for a student like Suong who has had no formal orientation in information technology, not even at diploma level. Hence she could not succeed in fusing these two crucial elements (business studies and information technology) together in her report. As a learning experience, disciplinary integration has to a great extent inhibited her potentiality to be a successful business student in the academy. It is only in the concluding part of the report that Suong has made a determined effort to synthesize the two central parts of the assignment:

'ABC Flash surpasses the existing product offered by the company in terms of functionality, marketability, and benefits...It is expected that the product will increase the company['s] profit margin up to[by] 25%...' (p 9).

As the assessor points out, this is not the outcome of a well-sustained analysis (In fact Suong's first part of the report contains no analysis), but rather a poor strategy to address the issues highlighted in the assignment topic as a last resort:

R: So what are the main problems here?

A: To begin with, the student has failed to understand the question. It's a case study, and, and they should read it very carefully. Copying from books and the Internet... a serious problem indeed.

R: How about the problem of various disciplines here? I mean IT, accounting, taxation law...?

A: Ah yes, that appears to be a problem. That can sometimes discourage students...this complexity is a problem and some just don't know what to do ...

So, the assessor acknowledges that interdisciplinarity (This is what he seems to mean by ‘complexity’) is a problem, and that it can demoralize students’ efforts. Assignment topics within interdisciplinarity are often framed within lengthy scenarios. The hypothetical assignment topic itself displays an ingeniously contrived portrayal of a healthy disciplinary integration. The gulf between the two disciplines is deliberately narrowed down to the level of a monodiscipline. However, there are yawning gaps, often unbridgeable, between these two disciplines in terms of the knowledge capital students bring with them to the academy.

Another significant drawback in Suong’s assignment is its lack of generic integrity. In academic writing, case studies are used as assignments for simulating real-life situations. Such assignments are lengthy, and they demand relatively comprehensive response from students (in this case study, the word limit is 2000). For students like Suong, exposure to the genre of case studies and reports should be a prerequisite before taking up postgraduate courses where high level writing skills are required.

In her assignment Suong is required to harness information technology resources in order to satisfy pedagogic expectations (the report) while being implicated in professional or work place settings, eg: **‘You have been with the company for many years, and while a highly respected engineer (software, electrical), your last idea was not successful, and resulted in significant loss for the company’**. Information technology is a new subject for Suong, and her negative remarks amply demonstrate her unfamiliarity with the subject: ‘Too hard for me’, ‘I don’t understand them’, ‘That’s a new subject for me’, ‘I can’t organize’. I think these remarks are sufficient for us to understand the gap between the known and the unknown as far as Suong is concerned. Here Suong finds it difficult to cope with the epistemology of interdisciplinarity since she did not have any basic knowledge required to comprehend and organize intranet – based products for business purposes. As I mentioned in Chapter 7, case studies deal with real life situations, and for students to complete such assignments, they need appropriate orientation programs where academics can discuss issues such as generic integrity, and interdisciplinary integration.

Tong with a background in teaching Mandarin in China is another research participant who completed a technocentric assessment task (a 3,500-report) for International Marketing (course code 20018). He is required to write a report on 'An international marketing plan for Ausredwine company' under the following format:

- a) environmental analysis
- b) entry strategy
- c) product strategy
- d) promotional strategy with an electronic model
- e) pricing strategy
- f) distribution strategy

While dealing with the promotional strategy in this extended assessment task, Tong experiences difficulties arising from interdisciplinary integration relating to information technology. A micro-disciplinary analysis would reveal that, under the subheading 'promotional strategy', his introduction is only an extract from *International Marketing Analysis and Strategy*:

'The purpose of promotion is to communicate with buyers and influence them...to inform prospective buyer about a product, to persuade people to become buyers, to develop positive attitudes, and to cause other changes in people's thinking and behavior that will be beneficial to the exporter' (Onkvisit & Shaw, 1997- no page numbers given).

This introduction is followed by three questions: 'What messages? What communications media? How much effort or money to spend?' The assessor remarks that Tong has 'to relate this to his topic' and develop an electronic model (p. 5). Although he has done reasonably well in the rest of his report, there is very little contribution from Tong in the most important part of the report: promotional strategy. The interview I had with Tong revealed that he was not very enthusiastic about the technology-related aspects of his report, and that there was no assistance from the lecturers concerned.

A: ...Why only one sentence for your introduction?

T: IT is difficult for me. I am not interested.

A: In IT?

T: Yes.

A: Why aren't you interested?

T: It is hard and nobody to help us...

Tong's introduction, although confined to one short paragraph, contains useful concepts, all borrowed from a disciplinary text, and reproduced verbatim. As the assessor points out, this is not acceptable in academic writing, since it does not spell out what the writer is going to do in the section on promotional strategy:

R: ...It seems Tong has done well in his report except one section here.

A: True, but he's messed up what we are looking for in a report like this. I mean the promotional section is very important...The introduction is very weak, and it's not his writing in the first place. And there's no electronic model for promotional strategy...

It is interesting to note here that disciplinary integration has caused Tong to lose his interest in new knowledges. So what are these epistemological issues here? First, of course, is the electronic model for the promotional strategy to promote 'Ausredwine Company'. Tong was uninterested, (and perhaps at a loss) because the new knowledge capital of information technology was beyond his comprehension. Second, one might notice that another new knowledge domain, environmental science, has crept into this assignment since Tong is asked to take into consideration the environmental factors while preparing his global model. And more importantly, that is the first item of the prescribed format of the assessment task. As Lea and Street (1999) observe, sometimes student writers have to grapple with crucial information peripheral to a given disciplinary context, and this is true of Tong's execution of his assignment. I think this is another manifestation of academic interdisciplinarity. Peripheral yet significant knowledge domains such as environmental science (an interdiscipline itself) often seep into other disciplinary areas for various reasons, eg. government policies, ethical considerations, health issues.

This is partly due to lack of proper orientation and support. The student's attitude to new knowledges is another crucial aspect here. Similar to Suong's case, Tong is unable to utilize technocentric knowledge since it is difficult for him, and for this reason he was not successful in this assessment task (He received 18/50). As revealed from the interview, it is this epistemological difficulty that caused him to form negative attitudes (eg. **It is difficult for me**', **I am not interested**', **It is hard and nobody to help us**) to technocentric knowledge required for executing his technocentric assignment. One might also notice that these negative remarks are very much in common with those made by Suong.

8.3 Technocentric E-commerce

The enrolment of students whose educational background is not commensurate with business studies is not a new phenomenon. As Whitley et al points out even in the early 1970s, graduate schools in business studies were '...transfer organizations for those caught out with 'wrong' educational background and type of skills' (1981:25). In fact, most MBA programs today are frequented by a student population, whose skills and qualifications are either inappropriate or inadequate to pursue studies in business studies. These inadequacies could be seen particularly in electives peripheral to the core subjects of a program of study.

Patric one of my research participants, holds a BA in agriculture, and a diploma in business studies. And his knowledge of information technology is limited to the use of the word processor and the Internet. However, as part of his MBA program, he has chosen e-commerce as an elective since he believes it is a useful course in view of the current soft technocentric business environment. According to him, it specially carries weight when securing lucrative employment in industry, hence the selected course, he thinks, would help realize his desired discursive objective.

Patric attempts a 5,000-word essay, an extended assessment task, as part of the requirements of the course Electronic Commerce Trading Systems (ECOM 29008):

‘Prepare an e-commerce trading system for a business organization using the following guidelines:

- a) type of industry and the organization’s place in it
- b) size of the organization and its structure
- c) goals and objectives of the organization
- d) e-commerce solution and the organization’s place in it
- e) type of equipment and technology etc.’

Under the sub heading, ‘Reasons for [the] suitability of e-commerce trading system model to [the] organization’, Patric grapples with the new knowledge while executing the most important part of his assignment. In other words, this is where Patric should demonstrate his critical observation of the integration of a technology-based system to a business organization.

Patric’s comments, confined only to one short paragraph, on the suitability of e-commerce trading system model to the organization under review (p. 7) raise some crucial questions. According to Patric, his main reliance here has been on generalized information filtered through extra-disciplinary texts which foregrounds useful features of a common website: ‘news, sports, stock market, television, and weather resource’ (p. 7). His remark **‘Web portals are able to provide these services free because their revenue is primarily generated by selling advertising space’** is also a statement derived from his familiarity with extra-disciplinary texts, not with disciplinary texts. The only disciplinary text he cites here is *Technology of Internet* (Lawrence et al 2002: 47-48). Instead of justifying the trading system model he has proposed, Patric resorts to some information culled from a disciplinary text that hardly seems to support his proposition here: **‘... more successful web portals such as yahoo have set up their own auctions and virtual communities to increase the likelihood that [the] user will have everything they need at the one location in cyberspace’** (www.yahoo.com.au).

At the interview, it was revealed that he did not read the disciplinary text to understand the concepts introduced and explained therein, but he rather browsed through to find any information that could be related to websites in general; hence the option to refer to the well known website, yahoo. com. Patric admitted that although the purpose of reading the disciplinary text was to find information that warrants a reference in relation

to the model he has developed, it was difficult for him to do so owing to some incomprehensible information contained in the text, and also to his attitude to reading disciplinary texts:

R: I've gone through your assignment. It seems you haven't read the reference books well. The assessor thinks that way.

P: [silent]

R: Patric, We need to read the reference books for assignments.

P: I tried, Rana.

R: You tried to read them?

P: Very difficult.

R: Why difficult?

P: I can't get information. I like [the] Internet.

R: Why can't you get information from the books?

P: Difficult

R: Difficult, Why? Is there any reason?

P: New words ... the books are long

R: So, what did you do?

P: I copied some parts from books...

Patric is a reticent student. It was difficult for him to get information from the prescribed texts because of the disciplinary contents and the terminology.

The assessor has identified five instances (and there are many more) where Patric has failed to acknowledge the sources of disciplinary texts (eg. pp 4 & 5). According to Patric these omissions are intentional; however he attributes them to his nonchalant attitude to disciplinary texts. He reveals that he often uses his general knowledge to substantiate claims he makes in his assignments on e-commerce, and that it is valid:

R: ... You used the Internet.

P: Yes

R: What else, Patric?

P: I remember things.

R: Like what?

P: I know from other information. My knowledge.

R: Where? Other information from where?

P: Newspapers

R: How about television?

P: Yes, [a] lot.

R: You think such information is acceptable?

P: It's OK. Nothing wrong. That is my knowledge.

In fact what Patric means by '**my knowledge**' is the knowledge derived from his selective consumption of extra-disciplinary texts, and eventually registered in his extra-disciplinary consciousness. By extra-disciplinary consciousness I refer to this deeply rooted awareness of the knowledge capital acquired through the consumption of extra-disciplinary texts. Also of importance is the fact that extra-disciplinary consciousness is conditioned by one's ideological consciousness. I use the term ideological consciousness to mean one's persistence in the veracities of selected values, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences pertaining to a particular issue or knowledge domain.

As I mentioned before, Patric associates common knowledge with the knowledge he acquires through extra-disciplinary texts, and his insistence that such knowledge is useful for his assignment purposes represents his ideological consciousness. These two dimensions are extremely useful for our understanding of how and why students exhibit transgressive stances when constructing texts within academic interdisciplinarity. I might also mention here that both epistemological and cognitive dimensions are mutually constitutive in forming one's ideological consciousness. In this instance, one could notice how extra-disciplinary texts take precedence over disciplinary texts when forging new knowledges to suit interdisciplinary demands in student writing. As revealed in the interview, Patric is mostly guided by his extra-disciplinary consciousness and he attaches much importance to extra-disciplinary texts; the disciplinary texts were by and large unused by Patric since they were beyond his comprehension.. Patric's assignment therefore amply demonstrates what happens when a student finds it difficult to negotiate the integrative behaviour of several disciplines while executing a writing task. As the assessor has pointed out, Patric's assignment is very insubstantial.

While coping with interdisciplinarity one could notice how Patric attempts to *introduce*, and *critically discuss* the most important sections of his assignment within the space of just one page: page seven. Hence the length of the text in this part of the assignment itself demonstrates his limitations. It is quite obvious that items 4, 5, and 6 of the table of contents necessitate more descriptive and analytical responses from the student. One could hardly even summarize these in one page:

Table of Contents

1. Name of organization (1)
2. Description of organization (2)
3. Reasons for choice of organization (6)
4. Proposed e-commerce trading systems model (7)
5. Suitability of e-commerce trading systems model to organization (7)
6. Methodology for completing plan (7)
7. Conclusions (8)
8. References (9)
9. Appendix –1, 2.’

Let me review some other segments of his essay. Patric devotes six pages to explain the *reasons for his choice* of the organization. This is a Business to Consumer (B2C) organization available online. As a business student, Patric is well acquainted with the salient aspects of a business organization. Useful graphics are accommodated here to illustrate ‘Organization structure’ (2), ‘User sessions’ (3), ‘Membership growth’ (4), and ‘User interests’ (6) of the organization. Since graphic texts are an integral part of business discourses, attempts have also been made here to interpret them at an acceptable level. However in his attempts at explicating the more software-based aspects of the organization, Patric experiences difficulties.

On page 5, for example, Patric uses unacknowledged sources to describe four software-based aspects of the organization: ‘**Satisfying Pent-Up Demand for Country-Specific Online Communities**’, ‘**Technical Platform**’, ‘**Duration of Visit: An indication of quality**’, ‘**Search Engine Placement: A barometer of success**’. One could notice prominent discourse markers (eg. statistical information, highly technical jargon) that reveal Patric’s indebtedness to intertextual resources:

‘More than 26,000 surveys have been conducted...’, ‘...a seamless browsing experience and ...synergies between their websites...’, ‘...site users devote[s] an average of 11 minutes and 48 seconds per visit to the site, a strong indication of site quality and ‘stickiness’, ‘...ranked among top 10 websites on search engines.’

These software-based aspects of a business organization are alien to Patric, and it was, as he admitted in the first interview, convenient for him to borrow materials from interdisciplinary texts and use them abundantly without proper acknowledgement. Avoidance of citation markers was deliberate since Patric had no other alternative to complete this part of the writing task. It is the inability on the part of the student to approximate a particular knowledge domain that has resulted in the construction of texts of this type.

Patric has made use of two disciplinary texts: *Internet Commerce: Digital Models for Business* (Lawrence, E. et al. 2000) and *Technology of Internet Business* (Lawrence, E. et al. 2002), which he had read in part.

The assessor I interviewed accepted that some students might be affected while coping with new knowledges in their writing tasks:

R: How about Patric’s assignment. It seems he has difficulties with textbooks?

A: Well, to learn new things they have to read books. That’s a fact.

R: It seems that some students I interviewed ... They seem to think that it’s a teaching problem as well. I mean the real beginners. Some disciplines are new to them.

A: Yes, partly true. Then as I said before we’ve staffing problems, and it’s not always economically viable. I would say to have lecturers for every branch of discipline. This is a very common problem, and some students may be affected, but we’ve no other choice. Having said that, I know courses are getting sophisticated. There are always new things...

It is evident that the availability of and accessibility to disciplinary texts do not necessarily facilitate a student to unravel the mysteries of unknown knowledges. For example, Patric's comments '**I can't get information... from the books**', '**New words**', '**The books are long**', all are related to the epistemology of interdisciplinarity. All new terminology in a particular discipline carries new concepts behind them. So understanding of new words means understanding the new concepts imbibed in them. Hence, it is an epistemological issue. Patric is a novice to information technology; needless to say that to conceptualize the appropriation of e-commerce in organization settings Patric needs superior skills in and knowledge of information technology. Perhaps a foundation course in information technology needs to be made a prerequisite for this course, so that students like Patric may not be disadvantaged.

Another issue that surfaced here is the staffing problem. Utilizing the services of specialist teachers, as the assessor points out, is an expensive solution. This is another instance where the notion of interdisciplinary discourse communities is significant within interdisciplinary programs. Such communities can at least make students aware of the difficult areas of disciplinary integration in selective writing tasks through seminars and workshops.

Ralph, another research participant, comes from Somalia where he worked as a teacher of history. He completed a Diploma in Business Studies at a Sydney TAFE college. Ralph took up Electronic Commerce Project (ECOM 20010) as part of his MBA.

Ralph is required to write a 25-page report on e-commerce software evaluation and development:

'The report should discuss the factors that need to be considered when purchasing these e-commerce software packages, and why they are important. Factors that might be included are: business models catered for, size of application aimed at, cost, hardware needed, security, electronic payment mechanisms, and connectivity to other systems... You may choose to develop your web application using Microsoft IIS, ASP, and Oracle. Then you have to evaluate these software with the framework developed' (ECOM 20010).

The suggested reference for this assignment is Turban et al's *Electronic Commerce: A Managerial Perspective* (ECOM 20010: 8).

Instead of a 25-page report, Ralph produced a five-page report, and received a mark of 4/50. He said his main problem was to combine various aspects of the assignment. In his introduction Ralph writes:

‘This report will discuss the factors that need to be considered when purchasing these e-commerce software packages, and why they are important. E-commerce is useful for any business because nowadays business is always electronic...’.

It is evident that Ralph reproduces in his introduction one sentence from the assignment topic. There is no indication here of what the software package is and how he is going to use it.

According to the assignment topic, there are seven factors to be taken into consideration when purchasing the software package. In the body of his report, Ralph deals with only two factors: security and cost:

R: It seems your report is not complete. That's what the assessor says here.

Ra: May be, but this is what I can do. I am not used to this long reports. Twenty-five pages. I am not used to. I used to get good marks in TAFE. There assignments were simple.

R: So, what were your problems here?

Ra: Well, I can write well. I cannot understand the topic of the report because there are many things to do. And some words I don't understand.

Later on in response to my questions, Ralph showed me an assignment task which he had done for his Diploma in Business Studies at a Sydney TAFE College:

‘Write a 1000-word report on the following:

- a) select a business organization in your suburb.
- b) identify various departments within the organization.
- c) describe the functions of any two departments.
- d) prepare an organizational chart'

This is not a complex assessment task; its purpose is well spelt out. And more importantly, there is no interdisciplinary integration here. However, at postgraduate level, students are often required to cope with interdisciplinary integration in their assignments. I took up this issue with Ralph's assessor:

R: ...Ralph's report looks weak?

A: Of course it's incomplete. Just five pages with bits and pieces of information.

R: It seems the assessment topic is long and more complex.

A: Well, it's a new subject and there are new things. May be complex in the sense that the selection of a software package is a complex procedure. And also the seven factors...

R: It seems this is the first time Ralph is attempting an assignment like this.

A: Could be. There's no way we can assess students' competencies other than this...

Ralph while writing his report experienced three difficulties. First, the subject 'e-commerce' was new to him and second, the assignment topic was too complex for him to handle. And above all, a 25- page-report was something beyond his reach. Third, the language of the new discipline was hard for him. A business student struggling to do an assignment, which requires complex manipulations of the new technologies of communication, really has to contend with knowledge: eg. how to do a task successfully by following a series of procedures using the new technologies of communication. Here, of course, the language is related, but even if he/she has no problems with the language, the required procedures for executing the assignment, which include among other things different stages of designing and programming, and creating data bases would be a daunting task for the novice writer.

The central themes of assessment tasks attempted by Suong, Tongo, Patric, and Ralph read as follows: designing an intranet- based development product, producing an electronic model for international marketing plan, preparing an e-commerce trading system for a business organization, and developing an e-commerce software evaluation development product. All technological in nature, these need to be integrated into the core discipline: business studies. A micro disciplinary analysis of the four case studies/reports analyzed above would illustrate four problem areas for student writers. First, it is the epistemology of interdisciplinarity; that is the new knowledges associated with interdisciplinarity. They should know how to access such knowledges, and also to use them in technocentric contexts. This involves conceptual as well as practical aspects of knowledges. Conceptual aspects emerge from the integration of various strands of knowledges through conceptualization in a given context whereas practical dimensions relate to technology-oriented manipulations.

The second problem area lies in the complexity of assessment tasks. Ralph in particular experienced difficulties in understanding his assessment task, and he had never attempted such complex tasks prior to this course. An assessment task can be complex for two reasons. First, when it demands the integration of two or more different knowledge fields, and second the physical length of the description of the task. The longer the task, the more difficult it becomes for the writer to understand it.

Lack of adequate resources to assist students in their writing tasks is the third problem area. It seems students need a sustainable support program while coping with interdisciplinarity in their assignments with a technocentric bias. This may help students know what to do in a particular assessment task, and also how to do it. A support program may also help students with their research, especially when reading texts that involve new knowledges. Such support programs should extend their boundaries beyond editing student writings for grammar and syntax.

The fourth is students' lack of interest in new knowledge that is difficult for them. This demoralizing effect is evident particularly in Tong's attitude to the use of electronic promotional models in his report. This is in fact the inability of a student to approximate a particular knowledge domain for lack of knowledge and support to access what is new in a course of study.

In the chapter that follows I will analyze a series of student writings that are not technology-related. The assignments discussed here are theory-oriented. Here students cope with interdisciplinary knowledges ranging from law, cultural studies, communication to media discourses and psychology.

CHAPTER NINE

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS (PART II)

Assessment Tasks Integrating Law, Cultural Studies, Communication, Media discourses, and Psychology

9.1 Law in Business Studies

Litigation as a discursive practice, perhaps more than any other discursive practice, is contingent on the use of language in exclusively conscious and precise ways. The main reason for this exclusive use of the language emanates from infinitely vast intertextual chains of interpretations of the law embracing almost every sphere of human activity within diverse jurisdictions. I might also add that the discipline of law operates largely on the manipulations of the language: eg. equivocations, quibbling, rhetoric of lying and ‘unlying’, intertextual chains of various acts, sections, terms, and conditions, deeds, and many more besides. These are commonly heard of in a court of law; however they are part and parcel of legal literature as well.

The following analysis focuses on how and why the interdisciplinary component of law in business studies creates difficulties for students in their writings.

Narendra is a first-year MBA student with a Diploma in business studies, and three years’ experience as an accounts clerk in a sugarcane company in Fiji. His experience was mostly in inventory control, which did not entail any descriptive or analytical writing activities except for filling forms and other related routine work, mostly oral transactions.

As part of the course requirements (LAWS 20023- Taxation Law), Narendra is supposed to complete a hypothetical assessment task (case study) which begins as follows:

‘In 2001, Johann Steinbach, a German national arrives in Australia to visit relatives. He arrives on 21 August 2001 and departs after six (6) weeks on December 2001. During his visit to Australia, Johann takes a liking to Australia and decides to move to Australia permanently. On his

return to Germany, he sells his family home and settles his affairs, and arrives permanently in Australia on 19 February 2002. Johann has approached you for preparation of his 2001/2002 tax return, and determination of his tax liability' (Taxation Law- p. 21).

The preceding scenario is followed by a lengthy narration of Johann's business transactions, highlighting his income and sources of income.

As the ensuing analysis foreshadows, Narendra's inclination to refer to the contemporary socio-political events in Fiji are in fact not even remotely connected to the investigation of the legality of Johann's residential status in Australia for taxation purposes.

As revealed in the interview I had with Narendra, the Fijian connections in his assignment (a case study) are eventuated by his exposure to both anecdotal and media discourses. My analysis will be facilitated if I reproduce the full text of Narendra's introduction, and an extract from the section on 'resident category':

'Taxation is a necessary part of any government. In Australia the main form of taxation is income taxation. Any country putting an income tax will face several policy options. In some countries, taxation comes in different forms, and in Fiji leasing the land brings in large income for the government. Land lease is a good example of the racial bias of the government against the Fiji Indians. For them, it is difficult to set up a fully owned busines[s] because of the government policy. They are only leasing the land and uncertain about the future. However, Fiji Indians have a large part of businesses in Fiji, and taxation on business is a main source of income for the government. These business activities were affected due to recent racial violence in Fiji. Most businessmen migrated to Australia for a better life and most cannot start businesses here due to insufficient funds. Businesses in Fiji suffered a lot and racial bias is the main reason. Responsible governments must introduce a fair taxation system without any biased treatment of selected community as in Fiji. This assignment will discuss and analyses of Johann Steinbach's

assessable income, determining his income tax payable with allowable deduction that may apply to his case' (p.3).

As the assessor's remarks indicate, Narendra's assignment suffers from redundant information. eg. unnecessary comparisons and contrasts. In fact, intertextuality plays a major role here. The terms, '**resident**' and '**land lease**' occupying diametrically opposed contexts are germane to the establishment of intertextual relations. And the pivotal role of these two terms leads to the relativization of concepts, attitudes, and values enveloping a broad spectrum of socio-political canvas. The point here is that, according to the assessor, such digressions do not add weight to his assignment:

R: ...So, what do you think is the problem here? (referring to Narendra's assignment).

A: Well, there are many. In most cases, he uses a lot of irrelevant material. That doesn't help him at all. His references to his country (Fiji) and criticism of the government there obviously not relevant at all. The main problem is his understanding of the case study. Well, the subject is obviously new to him. And remember the writing task is also new to him...

The major intertextual link manifest in the introduction of the essay is '**land lease**' which invokes Narendra's resentment towards the Fijian government through his allusions to '**racial bias**', government policy on land acquisition, '**racial violence**', business migration, economic hardships experienced by the migrants from Fiji, and culminates in his reference to the discriminatory treatment of the Indian business community by the Fijian government.

Narendra is not merely making comparisons here in relation to the political context in Fiji; he is in fact comparing himself with the persona of the case study, Johann. I think we need to analyze this phenomenon not from a mere phenomenological perspective, but from a deconstructionist vantage. Why does then Narendra identify himself with Johann in this hypothetical (scenariorized) case study? As revealed in the interview I had with Narendra, Johann who migrated on a permanent visa to Australia from Germany is a privileged person unlike Narendra who is on a student visa. For him,

Johann is not a mere persona, he is a real social actor who acts as a foil for Narendra to rediscover himself through this case study, and this is accomplished through a series of intertextual and interdiscursive resources culled from both anecdotal and media texts.

‘Resident categories in Australia are many and different. For instance, there are citizens, residents, visitors, refugees, students, and temporary residents... Taxation in Australia is equal to everybody, but in Fiji , Fijian natives always have an upper hand. Because there are many categories in Australia, we need to conduct several tests to find out whether Johann Steinbach from Germany is “resident” or “non-resident” (p. 4).

‘He and his family arrived in Australia 19 February 2002... Within one year he was able to bring his family and enjoy the permanent resident’ (p. 4).

As the interview I had with Narendra suggests, the status of a permanent resident is extremely important for Narendra whose intention of pursuing studies was galvanized by his desire to secure resident status in Australia. He is therefore familiar with the literature on Australia’s immigration policy (Narendra is a regular visitor to the Department of Immigration website), and he uses such intertextual resources with ease.

Except for the first two sentences, the introduction has no relevance to the assignment under review. As evidenced by the digressions he makes, it is more of an overture to Narendra’s own social situatedness than a well-articulated introduction to a complex case study. Narendra is in fact writing himself into the assignment. Both intertextual and interdiscursive resources he uses elsewhere (eg. the section on resident category) are largely geared to fostering his own biographical interests through Johann’s.

Interdiscursivity here is manifest through intertextuality; that is his references to the immigration law here conjure up memories of the political regime of Fiji. In other words, precise textual references lead towards exploiting extended interdiscursive allusions. This is an instance of interdiscursive relational shift. According to the assessor, such digressions in fact results from his poor grasp of the assessment task.

It is also worth looking at the analogies he makes in this case study. One might notice two major ways in which Narendra has exploited the use of analogies: first to continue with his desire to relate the hypothetical context to the socio-political context in Fiji, and second to identify himself with Johann's situation. These two preoccupations are epitomized in the following extract:

‘He [Johann] sold his family home and his business affairs with the intention of moving permanently to Australia. This is what Fijians do when they decide to come to Australia. The sale of ones property shows that he is genuinely interested in coming here’ (p.5).

Since the discourse of law is characterized by the deployment of specialized terminology geared to produce what I might call semantic precision, it is imperative that students of law should familiarize themselves with the standard use of such terms. Narendra is not a student of law; he is a student of business studies struggling to write like a law student. The rhetorical choices he has made in explicating some concepts merit our attention. This is in fact a challenging area for student writers attempting new interdisciplinary knowledge domains. Interdisciplinary knowledge is realized through specialized terminology associated with a particular knowledge domain.

In what follows, I will analyze the rhetorical choices Narendra has made, and illustrate the tensions and ruptures manifest in them in relation to his intertextual intimacy within interdisciplinary contexts. As the assessor points out it is evident that his acquaintance with the use of legal discourse is minimal. This is well evidenced by the use of phrases and sentences such as **‘putting an income tax’, ‘final income’, ‘all tax payers can claim certain deductions’** (‘imposing an income tax, assessable income, eligible tax payers can claim certain deductions or rebates’ would have been better alternatives to Narendra's informal use of language

His use of the expressions such as ‘The tests to apply **according to** section 6 (1) are...’ in fact deindividualizes Narendra from the discourse of law.¹¹ It should be noted here that some lexical items in the discourse of law are not easily paraphraseable. And it is

very likely that attempts at paraphrasing such lexical items used in the legal discourse may mark students' terminological limitations.

The discourse of law is only tangentially utilized here. I believe there are two reasons for this. First, it highlights the disciplinary chasm between the core subject (Business Management) and the elective (LAWS20023) that isolates the student writer in a no man's land. Second, the student was not provided with the necessary assistance to cope with the discourse of law during the period of his study.

It is significant to note here that Narendra attempts to approximate the legal discourse by borrowing generously from the legal literature. His main purpose as revealed by the comments he made at the interview is to bridge the gap between the known and the unknown. It was difficult, indeed, for him to grapple with the legal terminology on his own since he had had neither training in nor exposure to such discourses.

So the rhetorical choices Narendra makes could perhaps be taken as representative of those made by a larger student population with limited intertextual intimacy with the legal discourse. Such students may find it extremely difficult to read and comprehend legal texts owing to their rigid and regulated structures as well as the contents. (eg. Trade Practices Act). It is this aloofness, this distancing that baffles Narendra while executing the hypothetical assignment tasks in law. It is hard not to believe that since writing is informed by frequent reading, incomprehensible texts with unfamiliar discourses often deprive students of their desire to approximate such texts in their writing tasks.

Perhaps another crucial issue is the inappropriate intertextual links that are discovered and developed by students as a last resort when their interdisciplinary knowledge and the accompanying discourses are inadequate to cope with a given context:

R: You seem to have problems with your introduction. I mean the Fijian connection doesn't seem to go well with it. What really made you include such comparisons?

N: I think it all came naturally. Sometimes you think a lot and you apply anything suitable. I know the situation in Fiji and it is easy to talk about

taxation there. Introductions, in introductions, we can talk about relevant things. I learnt a lot about writing essays.

R: What did you learn about writing introductions?

N: A lot, we wrote essays on many topics. We can talk about and comparing [compare] things in introductions. It is all right.

R: Your assignment is a case study, not an essay.

N: I didn't study case studies before. They are difficult. We need to remember things, many things and the questions [are] too long... I didn't study immigration law there because there is no immigration [policy] in Fiji. Taxation law is very simple. It is always easy and you know [it's] very simple.

Here Narendra is required to harness diverse resources in order to satisfy pedagogic expectations (the case study). However, he is also implicated in his work place practices and settings (eg. Prior knowledge of inventory control and form filling). If Narendra had some orientation in generic identities in case studies prior to undertaking his postgraduate studies, things would have been much easier for him.

For Narendra, taxation law in Australia is complex; it is firmly linked to the immigration law which in itself is highly complex, especially in terms of resident categories. When he studied taxation law in Fiji, he was not faced with difficulties since everything was straightforward. For example, since Fiji has no immigration policy (according to Narendra), the issue of resident categories never surfaced.

Another significant aspect relating to Narendra's introduction is what I might call tacit interdisciplinarity. While in Fiji he was accustomed to writing essays on various topics, and the introductions to such essays permitted him to dwell on comparative analysis of relevant issues. This interdiscursive intimacy galvanizes Narendra to use in his case study references to Fijian contexts, just for the sake of making comparisons. In a case study, such instances of tacit interdisciplinarity, as the interview with the assessor revealed, are considered redundant, hence inappropriate.

It is worth mentioning here that legal discourses often utilize comparisons and analogies through intertextual chains of various types of cases what may be referred to as '*versus*'

cases. By contrast, the comparisons Narendra makes seem to have an appeal to disciplines such as sociology.

Narendra has included six disciplinary texts in the reference list: *Australian Tax Handbook*, *Fundamental Tax Legislation*, *Tax Questions and Answers*, *Taxation Law in Australia*, *Taxation Law: Study Guide*, *Core Tax Legislation and Study Guide*.

The acclaimed sense of disciplinarity projected here through the complexity of this assessment task portrays only a quasi-disciplinarity. The student's understanding of the case study hinges on his familiarity with the political discourses surrounding native and non-native relationships in a broader sociopolitical context that even transcends local, if not regional, boundaries.

As the assessor's remarks suggest, Narendra's yearning for delving at length into these political discourses without having adequate recourse to the prescribed disciplinary readings is a problem. This is also linked to the problem of decontextualization which occurs as a result of students' limited acquaintance with interdisciplinary knowledge.

Narendra's assessor readily picks up weak points in his case study with remarks especially targeting lexical choices and interdisciplinary contents: **'Poor grasp of the legal terms... misinterpretation of the case study...Mostly irrelevant narrative...'**

The short interview I had with the assessor confirmed such limitations:

R: How would you comment on Narendra's case study in general?

A: Poorly done, I would say, no doubt. I mean in many ways. The subject is new for him. I mean he didn't have any grounding. The legal terms were not used appropriately and you see unnecessary narratives, and he is really a struggling student.

R: Is this a common problem for many students who attempt this law component?

A: Ah. Yes a significant number of, I would say, overseas students or say international students as they say these days. They are like Narendra. Not much difference. They face more or less the same problems...

R: Do you think the assignment task, I mean the wording, was a problem?

A: Well, it's long no doubt, and understanding it may have been a problem. I think it's above all the subject, law, you know, pretty hard for some students ...

As evidenced by the assessor's comments, Narendra experienced difficulties with the business law component in two ways: first the terminology-ridden discourse of the law was alien to him. Since it is through the language that interdisciplinarity is realized, assessors easily pick up non-standard terminology. Second, he finds it difficult to focus on a particular issue without unnecessarily dwelling on remotely connected intertextual relations peripheral to that issue. In other words, Narendra was unable to figure out the interdisciplinary integration required for the execution of the writing task. Such digressions (as the assessor says 'unnecessary narratives'), in the discourse of the law, are considered inappropriate although they may be relevant in a descriptive essay.

Narendra's difficulties emanate largely from five main areas: the epistemology of law, the terminology attached to the new discipline, the intertextual chains of extra-disciplinarity and the resultant digressions, the misinterpretation of the assessment task, all related to the epistemology of interdisciplinarity. The insufficient exposure to lengthy analytical writing, which is a requirement for most hypothetical assessment tasks, a common pedagogical issue which could be addressed in a foundation course where students can be exposed to a variety of genres and their identities in academic writing.

9.2 Cultural Dilemma

The ever increasing number of global subsidiaries located in most Third World countries that claim to have vibrant economies are essentially a product of globalization. Behind these global subsidiaries are some giant multinational corporations with their headquarters based either in Europe or in the USA. Taking off-shore ventures as a more lucrative business strategy, these corporate giants often recognize the significance of yoking corporate interests together with local ones. And among the areas of importance in this respect is human resource management with a focus on indigenous personnel, cultural premises of the host country, political leanings, and the overall management

process which is more or less indigenized or deemed to be indigenized. Recent research suggests some positive effects of acclimatizing foreign workers on overseas assignments to cultural values, especially communication skills, prevalent in those countries (Gordon et al, 1991: 114-116). These realities are reflected in any Business Studies curricula committed to keep abreast with the current trends in global as well as local business environments. For example, a Business Management core subject necessarily contains cultural aspects of management which often necessitate the student writer to integrate the discourse of management with that of cultural studies in most writing tasks. This is a case of referential interdisciplinarity.

Karu, a Sri Lankan student with a Diploma in business studies, has worked in the capacity of a clerk in a foreign bank in Sri Lanka. The following is an extract from a case study involving the international operations of a global company called Nike, prepared by Karu in partial fulfillment of the requirements for International Management 21717 (MBA 2000) at a Sydney university. The purpose of this case study is threefold:

‘Describe Knight’s (CEO) general approach to leadership and the success he has had as an individual who has transformed the athletic shoe industry; Could the Nike system of management be adapted overseas, how do third-country nationals and host-country supervisors and employees influence behavior in Nike’s foreign operations?; The company’s marketing strategies, including its lineup of super-sports personalities, reflect its approach to leadership in general. Explain this connection and what your impression is of Nike’s culture’ (pp. 2, 5, 8).

One might notice that the case study contains three easily discernible introductions (a common feature in writing within academic interdisciplinarity). There is an element of interdiscursivity in his reference to specialists' remarks on culture as **'the learned, shared way of doing things in a particular society'** which in fact intertextually surfaces in the ensuing paragraph in the form of a flashback: **'Finally, people share culture, and it defines the 'boundaries' of different groups of people'** with the citation '(Wood, 1998: 73). When he says **'Specialists tend to agree...'**, Karu proves himself to be an unacknowledged textual borrower not only from one source, but from

several sources, which he probably cannot recall (or he uses this for sheer rhetorical ends). However, the use of modalization '**tend to**' appears to be deliberate so that the writer can mitigate or extenuate the awkwardness arising from the absence of a citation or citations, thereby 'legitimizing' his transgressive attitude to discourse conventions and also to his own writing position. This may also be viewed as a common and convenient 'strategy' in the realms of interdiscursivity where writers opt not to acknowledge borrowings, perhaps with the perceived idea that they themselves have identical stances or beliefs to share with what they borrow from. This is an instance of self-attribution that projects a sense of textual intimacy where precise authorial identities are blurred. In the third paragraph the shift from a culture from an attitudinally defined one to a materially defined one instantiates an integration of cultural values and management principles:

‘Cultures vary in their underlying values and attitudes. The way people think about such matters as achievement and work, wealth and risk... may influence how they view work and their experiences in organizations...in many Asian organizations, managers must seek consensus before acting and team commitment and cooperation are foundations of management’ (p. 2).

Although Karu had no previous exposure to cultural studies, he uses most intertextual resources more resourcefully:

‘Knight and his top guns control core decisions, but have tremendous personal loyalty from employees who are relatively free to innovate and control their own work...According to the case study Mr Knight’s high individualism and also the decision making style which participate subordinates can be seen as a Transactional Leadership Style (p. 4)’.

Here Karu strives to yoke his knowledge capital with that of interdisciplinary knowledge, which he borrows but leaves unacknowledged in most instances. We can sense his indebtedness to Hofstede (1980), at least. However Karu is struggling to approximate new knowledges, namely cultural studies, by using the Hofstedian terminology eg. high individualism, transactional leadership style (1980).

Interdiscursively realized texts are prominent when Karu critiques Nike's foreign operations:

'Most of Nike's foreign operations are headed by a host country manager or by a [an] expatriate manager. Some of these managers are accused of running sweatshops or exploiting workers' (p. 6).

His references to '**sweatshops**' and the exploitation of labour are clear evidence of interdiscursivity which as revealed by the interview with Karu could well be attributable to extra-disciplinary texts:

R: Just a couple of questions about sweatshops. Karu, who's accusing the managers of running sweatshops?

K: There are various people. I have got this information sometimes in [from] the newspapers, television. It is a known fact. Labour costs low and that is the way in most developing countries.

R: Karu, have you seen any of these sweatshops?

K: No, in Australian media this is pretty common topic. They show pictures on TV. How children work in factories and their conditions.

R: You mean Nike factories?

K: Possible. In Pakistan, children make carpets...

It was evident from the interview that Karu was not sure of the accusations leveled against Nike relating to sweatshops although he had referred to such allegations in conclusive terms in his case study. In fact, what he had in his mind was the fact that child labour is used in some industries, notably in the carpet manufacturing industry in Pakistan. However Karu, associates this interdiscursive text with Nike operations. This is certainly an instance of interdiscursive relational shift. Interdiscursive relational shift is a convenient strategy, and often, as in this case, assessors are deceived by its ostensible appropriateness.

Although attempts have been made to normalize relationships via cultural discourses, power based on official hierarchy and the accompanying remunerative discrepancies,

according to Karu, instigate an element of indignation among the disadvantaged employees. These anomalies that exist within organizations can hardly be overcome by introducing measures that improve social and cultural understanding. Nike is not a symbol of the corporate culture of the west; it is a shadow text that narrates its ideology through discursive practices. In fact, Karu inadvertently refers to 'sweatshops' (p. 6), 'disparities in expatriate and local remunerations' (p. 7), which could well be taken as standard discursive practices of this institution.

The paradoxical nature of Karu's argument is obvious in his analysis of Nike's corporate culture:

'We examined 'culture' as it applies internationally and ethnically to the various nations and peoples of the world, that is, we looked at national culture. Here, we are concerned with organizational culture- the system of shared beliefs and values that develops within an organization and guides the behaviour of its members...' (p. 8).

Here, the organizational culture is conceived of as something alienated from the national cultures concerned, which is certainly not befitting the thesis statements of the three questions under review in Karu's case study. The case study, as far as question 2 and 3 are considered should focus on how Nike management has been informed by the local cultures in their off-shore operations. In other words, what is expected of the writer is the juxtaposition of the cultural component within the management structures of an organization. Instead, Karu discusses or rather refers to some cultural theorists' work, and reflects on them but does not attempt to relate them to the assignment. The assessor notices these shortcomings:

R: Karu seems to write well...

A: Yes he uses some expressions with confidence, but in most cases he doesn't relate theories to the assignment. This is a problem for many students.

R: Why do you think so?

A: Well, here they have to highlight the connection between cultural studies and organizational behaviour... along with their own impressions of the company. That's why it's difficult...

For Karu, cultural studies is a new knowledge domain. He refers to some cultural theories in his assignment without relating them to the topic under review. Very often he resorts to interdiscursive resources (eg. sweat shops, child labour) that are not really relevant to the topic. Students like Karu need opportunities for developing critical thinking while dealing with these epistemology-related issues. Students should be familiar with the discourses of disciplines within which they operate. Prior enculturation into interdisciplinary communities would be a great advantage for students like Karu. In such atmospheres students can learn new dynamics of knowledge as well as assessment tasks. Despite Karu's reasonable mastery of English, he was unable to complete the assignment to meet pedagogic expectations.

9.3 Communication and Multiple-embedded Interdisciplinarity

Students, especially international students, do not simply enter a university these days; they instead make an entrance (I mean , it involves several protocols such as meeting the English language requirements, attending a series of locally organized seminars, applying for visa, obtaining a valid visa), and at times universities make them enter. When Leon was interviewed by the university representatives in his country, Hong Kong, he was alleged to have been given some information relating to the business studies curricula. Based on such information Leon was convinced that it was just an extension of the Diploma in Business Studies, which he had completed in Hong Kong. However when he joined the university, he realized that there were compulsory courses that were not even remotely related to business studies courses he studied in his country. The frustration Leon experienced may be attributable to two reasons: first is of course the alleged false promises and hence the eroded trust between the university and him; the second is related to the eroded boundaries of business studies themselves that made his study more complex and difficult.

Leon's case then is closely related to the product orientation of the new market economy. When marketing education as a product, especially in lucrative overseas

markets, most university representatives attempt to entice prospective students into their popular programs such as business studies. These marketing ventures are often launched with an eye to their own advantage; in these circumstances it is the economic gain that seems to take precedence over the disciplinary considerations (These marketing strategies and the influx of international students into universities have been the focus of most Australian newspapers in recent years).

Leon was enrolled in the course Informatics, Culture and Communication as an elective at a Sydney university. The multiple embedded interdisciplinarity is revealed by the course title itself; it is further revealed by the essay topic of his first assignment:

‘You are asked to write guidelines on how to manage cross-cultural issues for an organization that has offices in Indonesia, Singapore and Brisbane; the introduction of e-commerce will contribute to the economic development of South Pacific nation states such as Fiji, Vanuatu, Samoa and Papua new Guinea; the web dramatically increases the number of communities that you can bond to.’

So Leon has to focus on how cultural studies, information technology, and e-commerce operate within a broader communicative context.

It is the first part of the assignment that Leon has found difficult to handle. Instead of writing about the cultural issues within business organizations in Indonesia, he refers to some highly generalized information about Hong Kong where he was born and bred:

‘British control broke Chinese traditional customs in Hong Kong. Because the people under British control, they had to follow some of the British customs although most of the people in Hong Kong were Chinese. ..Today, people still celebrate New Year, Easter,...Christmas although Hong Kong has been handed over to China’ (p. 2).

Much of the information used in this part of the assignment is drawn from a website which Leon has acknowledged: www.expathongkong.com/general/culture (p. 2).

The information provided here (The assessor believes there is neither discussion nor analysis here) is irrelevant to the assignment under review. There is no reference to the management of culture within an organizational framework. Leon has been strongly

influenced by tacit interdisciplinarity when he talks about Hong Kong. Then he focuses on Brisbane, and uses borrowed materials from a website: www.eccq.com/au.multi.htm. As in the section on Hong Kong, no attempt has been made to explore the aspects of managing cultural issues.

It is towards the end of this part of the essay that Leon makes some comments on political organizations: 'In the case of politics, Brisbane environment should be favourable for Hong Kong organizations, because that is a suitable government' (p. 7). In fact Leon does not say a word about Indonesia or Singapore. Then he tries to make comparisons between companies in Hong Kong and Calcutta:

'In Hong Kong and Calcutta, companies give great emphasis to create a family atmosphere. So all the members of the organization maintain a very good relationship with each other...employees expect their supervisor to look after them and to help them with their personal problem... (p. 7).

Leon's essay contains manifestations of tacit interdisciplinarity and discursive void. He was unable to comprehend the assignment topic, and had no idea of juxtaposing cross-cultural issues with organizational expectations.

In the second and third parts of the essay, where e-commerce and communication as interdisciplines are integrated, Leon surprisingly performs better than he did in the first part. The reason for this 'better' performance is that he borrowed heavily from one of his friends:

R: So, you found the assignment task a bit difficult? Why?

L: I didn't understand enough. I put in together all stuff. I just finished a Diploma and came here and I studied in Cantonese, not in English...

R: What did you write about in your assignments in Hong Kong?

L: I write [wrote] about the Internet, about 500 words. 2000 words [is] too much for me.

R: Why do you think communication subject is hard for you?

L: It is hard. Too many things to put together, and [it] takes time. I study other courses, too.

R: What do you mean by too many things?

L: Communication, culture, IT [information technology] and other stuff.

R: Other stuff, like what?

L: (awkward pause) like research and, and reading electronic journals... [It] takes time.

Leon's case reveals the tyranny of multiple-embedded interdisciplinarity. He experienced difficulties while coping with the discourses of communication, e-commerce, and information technology. Since he was unable to capture the knowledge capital of these interdisciplines, he was obliged to produce assignments borrowed from a friend who was generous enough to let him copy. Perhaps, a sustainable solution to Leon's problem might be the introduction of an enculturation process into an interdisciplinary discourse community. Such interdisciplinary discourse communities can be arranged through inter-faculty tutorials/workshops where academics from the disciplines concerned take up the crucial issues to be explicated to students in open discussions. These opportunities may be regarded as a platform not only for providing solutions to students' writing problems, but also for eliciting information from students relating to the efficacy of interdisciplinary programs (eg. course profiles, learning materials, textbooks, lectures, tutorials, assignment tasks).

9.4 Insurmountable Interdisciplinary Impasse: Extra-disciplinarity

As I have pointed out in Chapter 5. 3, extra-disciplinarity is considered to be a form of interdisciplinarity. In fact much of the disciplinary knowledge is relayed through the extra-disciplinary texts to unspecified audiences. Although there seems to be no institutionalized policy instruments (eg. prescribed extra-disciplinary texts for a course of study) to legitimize extra-disciplinarity as a valuable source of interdisciplinarity, students are in fact heavily dependent on extra-disciplinarity in constructing, consuming, and analyzing interdisciplinary knowledge.

Hong is an MBA student with a BA degree in mandarin. She completed her Bachelor's degree in China, and has a certificate in English for Academic Purposes from a Sydney TAFE college. Her assignment for the subject Organization Analysis and Design (21718) discusses some key issues relating to organizational management: 'Decisions generally fail where managers impose solutions, limit the search for alternatives, and use power to implement their plans.' In order to explore these management strategies Hong resorts to several disciplinary texts in the field and also to relevant articles in the print media.

The first part of the essay where she refers to thirteen disciplinary texts is characterized by the minimal presence of analytical output on the part of the student. Each paragraph is intertextually constructed using in most instances reporting verbs and inappropriately cited direct quotations (eg. 'stated', 'mentioned', 'define', 'claim', 'said') as paraphrasing techniques:

Pfeffer, J. in Shafritz, J.M. (1992) define[s] organizational politics as those activities taken within organizations to acquire, develop, and use power and other resources to obtain one's preferred outcomes in a situation in which there is uncertainty or disensus about choice (p. 3).

Magnusen, KO (1977) state[s] that there is a continuum or range of possible leadership behaviour available to a manager... authority and freedom are never without their limitation(p. 3).

Nutt, P. (1999) state[s] that ..the success in contrast can be achieved by involving people in ... practices what they know...accept uncertainty and ambiguity, recognize subtleties... (p. 4).

Quite contrary to the thesis statement of the essay: '**The aim of this paper is to assess critically the position of managers and the power granted.**', the enumeration of theories and concepts in successive paragraphs (pp1-4) demonstrates among other things the writer's difficulties in contextualizing the claims explicated in the prescribed literature. To Hong, the contents of the subject 'organization analysis and design' is

alien, and in the interview it was revealed that in the first part of the essay she deliberately appropriated chunks of material from textbooks since there was no other alternative:

R: Hong, it seems there isn't much analysis in the first part of your essay.

I mean you simply reproduce some information from the textbooks. Is there any reason?

H: [I] don't know how to use them. I can't put in my words. They are hard.

R: What's hard?

H: In the textbooks

R: You mean what the textbooks contain?

H: Yes, yes, I can't put in my words.

R: How about analysis? There isn't much.

H: I can do it if I know the subject...

Here, Hong's assertion that she **can do it (analysis) if she knows the subject** is significant for our understanding of why students like Hong produce assignments with minimal analysis. Analytical writing is a difficult strategy where one needs to know very well what is to be analyzed. As Bartholomae points out, 'when the writer says "I don't know", then, he is not saying that he has nothing to say. He is saying that he is not in a position to carry on the discussion' (1985: 138). This is true of Hong.

At times Hong observes citation conventions, and at times she doesn't. Thus she is determined to create an impression of her acquaintance with the subject at the expense of carefully chosen and manipulated intertextual resources. For example, the 'elevated style' (Bourdieu, 1991: 152) that is generated through intertextual links of this essay demonstrates a sense of 'discoursal legitimacy' (ibid 152), which was in fact the intention of the student. This elevated style is epitomized by lexical items such as **'continuum ... of possible leadership', 'uncertainty or disensus about choice', 'accept uncertainty and ambiguity, recognize subtleties.'**, all improperly cited, but derived from the texts she refers to. So the elevated style she uses while deviating from the acceptable citation conventions is a strategy that entices the reader into

understanding that at least the writer possesses a nodding acquaintance with the disciplinary domain she is supposed to explore.

According to Bourdieu, 'It is through the elevated style of a discourse that its status in the hierarchy of discourses and the respect due to its status are invoked' (ibid 152). Quite appropriately, the first part of the essay is based on disciplinary texts since Hong believes they are often hierarchized in the order of significance as legitimate texts in the academy. Extra-disciplinary texts on the other hand are rarely prescribed in her discipline (hence hierarchically less important than disciplinary texts) and Hong uses them in the second part of the essay. The employment of elevated style derived from intertextual resources itself suggests a determined attempt on the part of the student at discursive construction of texts. Transgressive intertextuality is facilitating her here in the sense that she has been successful in establishing what might be called a disciplinary façade:¹² (She was awarded 24/35 for her essay).

The second part of her essay is based on ten articles, seven from newspapers and three from Internet sources. The articles include diverse topics such as **'Southcorp sale'**, **'Telstra's bid for remote calls'**, **'Telcos battle'**, **'British Airways and Air India'**, **'Sydney Future Exchange'**, **'Bank locked in court battle'**, **'Staff strike for bonus'**. Some of these are follow-up news items that require prior knowledge. Hong employs the same strategy as she did in the first part here, too: that is the use of reporting verbs and unmarked quotations in each successive paragraph. It was observed that her intimacy with the interdisciplinary discourses relayed in the articles was insufficient to contextualize intertextual relations and relate them to the assignment. Her alienation from the disciplinary knowledge is also punctuated by the frequent use of impersonalized (Hyland 2002: 351-58) and passivized structures. An intertextual frequency analysis, that is the analysis based on the frequency of the manifestation of intertextual resources in a text, reveals that not only is Hong solely dependent on such resources, but also she contributes very little on her own in terms of analysis. This could be construed in part as a corollary to attempt at integrating interdisciplinary elements in an essay, which necessitates the deployment of intertextually manipulated texts encompassing a variety of discourses, genres, and disciplines. We need to emphasize here that before students work with new knowledges, they need to acquire such

knowledges, and that containment in the form of restrictions on plagiarism in these contexts often lead to intertextual transgression.

There needs to be some processes whereby student writers are trained in writing strategies prior to their real writing begins in the academy. As Bartholomae points out such measures can be ‘marked by courses, and in an ideal curriculum, the preliminary courses would be writing courses...(1985: 157). In fact an integral part of any introductory writing course for postgraduate students should have a healthy combination of generic models of writing and the intricate relationships between disciplines in the epistemology of interdisciplinarity.

Another two of my research participants, Darrell and Paul also faced difficulties in using extra-disciplinary resources in their assignments. At a time when students have become intertextually more agile, the use of extra-disciplinary resources in their writings is no surprise. Darrell comes from Russia, and has been in Australia for three years. He has completed a two-year communication course in a Sydney TAFE college. He is bilingual (Russian/English) and speaks English fluently. Paul a law graduate from Malaysia has completed a diploma in information technology in a suburban TAFE college.

As part of his MBA, Darrell attempted an assignment task in the course Auditing, Professional and Ethical Practice (Accounting ACCT20040). He is supposed to write a 2500-word essay on the following:

‘There is a growing awareness of business ethics and the need to reinforce ethical behaviour in the corporate sector (Griggs et al. 2003, p. 558)’ As the CEO of a business, how would you implement policy to reflect this emphasis on ethical business behaviour?’ (Accounting, 2003: 22).

Here the question is framed in the form of a statement that is an extract from an interdisciplinary text, *Managers and the law-a guide for business decision makers*. The brevity of this assignment task by no means masks its complexity within interdisciplinary contexts. Students are required to investigate the significance of ethical

behaviour in business environments, and develop strategies for implementing policy decisions to ensure ethical behaviour in a selected business organization. The task is complex in the sense that it at least explicitly involves two disciplines: business studies and ethics.

Darrell selected an Internet service provider company in Russia as the business organization for this assignment. He was of the view that discourses inter alia constituted what he retained from reading newspapers and watching TV. When he refers to the freedom of the press in Russia, he is reminded of some information from various channels of media which he gathered while he was in Russia:

‘Recently the successor to the KGB began forcing Internet service providers to install surveillance equipment. Security services can now monitor Internet communications without a court order. Internet service providers can lose their licens[c]es for denying security forces access to private Internet traffic. Fears for freedom of information increased when authorities temporarily blocked one online provider. With the fast growth of the Internet in Russia, such restrictions threaten the freedom of Russian citizens. This example shows that the government still tries to create boundaries for the free press.’

His references to various activities of the KGB were in fact associated with media discourses the sources of which he cannot specifically identify and locate. The appearance of such voices of discourses may well be legitimized as interdiscursivity. The evidence Darrell provides here is interdiscursively constructed using the resources of several media discourses on the current restrictions imposed on the Internet service providers in Russia. Darrell deviates from the acceptable referencing conventions which borders on transgression (Fairclough, 1992: 96); however, it may not be viewed as academically unproductive. The interview with Darrell revealed some useful information relating to students’ attitudes to plagiarism as well:

R: ...Why do you think cheating is not good?

D: I don’t cheat, never.

R: Why not?

D: When people cheat, it's not good for other students. Some get high marks by cheating and it's really, really a problem for good students...

In this interview, the concept of intellectual property did not surface at all. Instead, Darrell associated plagiarism with students' competitiveness. Darrell is a frequent user of such discourses since he is familiar with media discourses, especially when he was living in Russia:

R: How come you use much information from media discourses?

D: Really I use a lot. In Russia people read newspapers a lot. And watch TV too. Really more than here...

R: Is it something like part of your culture? I mean to be familiar with the media?

D: Yes, everybody does. We use such information in the college, too.

R: You mean in your writings?

D: Yes, we can use...

So, according to Darrell, the use of media discourses in academic writing is a cultural habit. And it is hard to argue that this is not interdisciplinary knowledge, but due to the absence of sources, there are difficulties with the academic culture here. As Pennycook observes (1996: 201-230), such cultural habits of students can often collide with the dominant ideologies of plagiarism in the west. According to Darrell's assessor, references to extra-disciplinary texts must have proper citations:

R: ... Darrell got a very low mark? 7/50.

A: Yes we need to know his sources, and it seems he's copying from various sources. I doubt if that's his own writing. And his comments, mostly not related to the topic. And there's no reference page. This is not research. He simply writes without any clear focus. There's no evidence to support ethical behaviour... Such students ask for a fail grade...

Apart from the problem of extra-disciplinary resources, Darrell was also unable to cope with the interdisciplinary element of the assignment, eg: ethics:

‘...Business ethics is there in any business organization. In Russia, the installation of surveillance equipment is not ethical for service providers. With the fast growth of the Internet in Russia, such restrictions threaten the freedom of Russian citizens...’

Here Darrell has reproduced some information from his previous extract : ‘With the fast growth of the Internet in Russia, such restrictions threaten the freedom of Russian citizens.’ In fact this is the only paragraph in his essay where he refers to the ethical behaviour. As the assessor pointed out, ‘there’s no evidence to support ethical behaviour’ in Darrell's assignment:

R: ...The ethical behaviour part of your assignment needs improvement,
Your assessor says.

D: I don’t know much about that. We didn’t learn that.

R; You mean nobody taught business ethics?

D: Nobody. We don’t know. It’s new to me...

Here Darrell is ‘not in a position to carry on the discussion’ because the new discipline, ethics, is new to him (Bartholomae 1985: 138). Darrell especially experienced difficulties with developing the ethical behaviour of the business organization since this interdisciplinary aspect was not taught in the course (see also my discussion of the teaching of ethics in Chapter 4). Engulfed in a colony of new disciplines and interdisciplines, it is difficult for a student like Darrell to be an untutored genius. Darrell’s other difficulty is that although he tries to develop an argument, he cannot be a successful writer since writing conventions demand citations.

Paul is another research participant who generously used extra-disciplinary resources in his assignments. Having completed his LLB, Paul worked as a lawyer in Malaysia for two years. In his report on music piracy he reveals his indebtedness to extra-disciplinary discourses (all unacknowledged) and also to disciplinary texts (all acknowledged):

‘It has been revealed by the research that in Asian region...the worst possible place for music piracy is taking place. Countries like China, Indonesia are the leading places for pirated music (p2)’.

According to Paul, for the above information he is indebted to his reading newspapers, which he cannot easily locate:

R: ...again there’s a problem of the original sources?

P: I have law background, and ...and I read newspapers. Too many in Malaysia. I can’t remember all. Impossible.

R: Yes, but you need to remember the titles at least?

P: No, not possible. Sometimes...sometimes they say the same news in different papers.

R: You mean newspapers?

P: Yes. Many, and can’t remember...

The assessor however is interested in knowing the source since Paul specifically mentions the word ‘research’. As there is no consultative process between the assessor and Paul, it is hard for Paul to prove his innocence:

R: ... Paul got 10/50. Obviously some problems here?

A: Yes a significant number. He’s obviously copying, and that’s why references are missing. I mean it’s not acceptable. He uses the word research several times. We need to know what research and where? Not acceptable for assignments at any level...

Since Paul has a legal background, he was exposed to extra-disciplinary discourses almost everyday in Malaysia, and his writings are invariably informed by his discursal self (Ivanic, 1998). The topic of his assignment, piracy, has also some affinity with litigation. So when Paul writes about piracy with which he has close intimacy, then it is natural that he tends to use extra-disciplinary resources akin to such practices.

Hong, Darrell, and Paul share a common problem. That is the use of extra-disciplinary resources for which it is hard to locate citations. Both Darrell and Hong experienced

difficulties with new knowledges, eg: Organization analysis and design, and business ethics. As far as pedagogical aspects were concerned, Darrell in particular, did not have adequate support from tutors or lecturers for analyzing ethical behaviour in a business organization.

As I pointed out elsewhere, the legitimacy of interdiscursively realized extra-disciplinarity is a problem for students as well as academics since the sources of extra-disciplinary resources are not easily recognizable. For example, ‘decarbonization of electricity’ is a phrase that we hear often from the media these days. However, it is difficult to readily find a reference to this phrase from a disciplinary text. Obviously there is no need for this if we come to know about this through the media (may be, for example , listening to the radio while driving a car).

9.5 Writing like Psychologists in an Interdisciplinary Group

When constructing texts in the form of group assignments, interdisciplinarity becomes even more complex. In what follows I will analyze a group report by five of my respondents: Flora, Nath, Angela, Tong, and Joseph. The first four come from Peru, India, Switzerland, and China, while the fifth is an Australian. Flora, a diploma holder in office practice had worked for two years as a secretary in a mining company in Peru before coming to Australia. Nath is an electrical engineer with four years’ experience in Bangalore. Tong worked in Shanghai as a teacher of Mandarin. Angela has a diploma in hotel management from her country. She is working part-time as a waitress in a Sydney RSL club. Joseph, having completed his HSC in Sydney, is a night shift worker in a petrol station. These respondents (all MBA graduands) produced a group report on ‘leading culturally mixed teams’ as part of course requirements for the core subject ‘Managing People’ (2183) in the School of Management, UTS. The learning outcomes of the course are outlined as follows:

- describe the contributions made by behavioural sciences to the understanding of behaviour in organizations
- use behavioural science theory and research to diagnose individual performance issues and organizational processes

- critically evaluate the major theories and models that have been developed to explain individual, group and inter-group behaviour in work organizations
- describe best practice in the management of human performance at work

(Master of Business Administration: 8 Core Subject Outlines 2000 : 1).

As the learning outcomes suggest, this subject which comes within organizational behaviour, has close affinities with behavioural sciences such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology. In fact, Luthans demonstrates the multidisciplinary of organizational behaviour encompassing a myriad of other cluster disciplines and disciplines: humanities, physical sciences, biological sciences, economics, history, political science, and behavioural sciences (Luthans, 1973: 46-49). To this, we may also add some independent interdisciplines such as cultural studies, environmental studies, and peace studies.

In their introduction, the writers problematize the issue of managing culturally diverse teams by referring to the notion of globalization and the resultant interactive behavioural patterns of social actors within business-oriented organizations. It is this cultural dimension that occupies a substantial part of this assignment.

Discourses of globalization and that of the ideology of multi-national companies have been subject to lengthy debates and as a result there are differing schools of thought surrounding these constructs. While some believe that globalization has brought about a unified, monolithic world, others are of the view that it has resulted in more complex cultural and social problems. The writers here seem to advocate the former emphasizing the homogenizing effects of globalization, and expand the cultural dimension to accommodate ethnic and linguistic components and thereby attempt to develop a concept that assimilation is a must for culturally diverse teams within organizations. While discursively constructing their text, the writers seem to identify themselves with the popular discourse of globalization within business studies which prescribes that cultural diversity and heterogeneity should be overcome by introducing strategies that help developing a business culture where assimilation is the norm. This is partly because of the hypothetically assertive dogma pertaining to the organizational repercussions of globalization as stipulated by the popular disciplinary discourse and also partly due to practices prevalent in business organizations. As Krause and Clark

(1993 :20) observe, ‘To say that the identification of an item of evidence *influences* the degree of belief in a hypothesis is to place a directionality on the relevance links between evidences and hypothesis.’ Hence, the writers are influenced by the discursive practices of organizations managing culturally diverse teams and also by the theory-grounded and hypothetically prominent disciplinary discourses surrounding such group dynamics. One of the drawbacks of forming stances that seem to yoke these two approaches is its failure to recognize contesting discourses that crystallize conflicting encounters in the course of homogenizing socio-cultural phenomena within globalization. Viewed from this perspective, interdiscursivity is manifest here not only from the way the writers deduce from the surrounding disciplinary and more popular institutional discourses, but also from the directional personal stances developed by means of hypothetical, substantial, or perhaps, anecdotal evidence.

Also of importance is the discorsal identity of group writers. Their nationalities – Peruvian, Indian, Swiss, Chinese, and Australian- themselves suggest the cultural diversity. This is echoed in their introduction where they observe that people ‘have to interact increasingly with business people from other cultures, nationalities and religions’ p 2). They may have believed that cultural integration as a fundamental societal framework in their new country could equally be applicable to organizational environments, too. This may be viewed as an attempt at projecting multiculturalism as a macro organizational behaviour in line with the increasingly popular political discourse in Australia. Thus the group members from different cultural backgrounds attempt to establish their discorsal identities while observing the complexities of managing people in culturally diverse settings.

As a result of the internationalization of business activities, coupled with the establishment of off-shore ventures by most industrialized nations, the management of culturally diverse people in the workplace has become vital not only in global but also in local contexts. In their report, these relatively new business enterprises are referred to as organizations that ‘implement culturally mixed teams.’ However this aspect has not been adequately explored in the report. Perhaps, one of the reasons for this lapse would be the fact that their discorsal identities are not rich enough to accommodate the interdiscursive resources pertaining to the issues under review. For example, conflicting encounters in managing culturally diverse groups remain unexplored. Instead, the

writers have resorted to highly generalized statements that foreshadow contemporary discourses on intercultural communication and awareness in business related contexts.

By taking a stance that grounds itself in unified and universally ‘standard’ values to be observed by employees of an organization, the writers are inclined to sympathize with the universalistic approach to intercultural communication:

‘As an alternative we examine the universalistic approach which encourages manages to identify core communication needs and techniques that are universal in nature and can assist in bridging the differences between people of different ethnicity, cultural and language backgrounds.’

Against this backdrop, one might notice discourses that question the relevance of this simplistic and universalistic attitude to managing culturally diverse groups. Johns for example in his influential *Organizational Behavior* takes a culture-specific approach and emphasizes the importance of the ‘appreciation of differences in cultural values and the implication of these differences for behavior in organizations’ (1996: 129). So what makes student writers sympathize with the universalistic approach to cultural appropriation?

In the process of appropriating these universalistic paradigms, student writers seem to have explored their own experiential knowledge. All group members but one are migrants who are being coached pedagogically, culturally, and socially to toe the lines of the dominant codes of practices in the new country. When people make choices, or change choices, social mobility is a key factor, and social mobility is determined by the prevailing discourses of social, cultural, and political institutions. Bourdieu’s notion of ‘cultural capital’ seems to collapse in the midst of these new waves of social mobility triggered by the impact of socio-economic dynamics, particularly relating to new technologies of communication. Hence, the group members’ preferred set of orientations brought about by various discourses condition their values, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. This is what Krauss calls ‘vertical mobility’ which is the ‘change or movement of individuals, aggregates, collectivities, and groups from one level of control over social goods to another’ (1976: 32).

The writers at times resort to their own ethnic roots while trying to explicate or illustrate certain concepts relating to business studies. For example when discussing the advantages of having groups and teams in organizations, they quote from a Chinese proverb: ‘Any three ordinary people’s ideas will overtake the ideas of the cleverest man in the world’ (Any three ordinary people’s ideas are preferred to the ideas of the cleverest single person.) The relevance of this proverb in this particular context is questioned by the assessor. This amply demonstrates how interdiscursivity can at times entice students into territories where the designated or foreordained contexts are either decontextualized or disinhibited. Within these discourses, individuals are reduced to mere ‘bearers of economic categories such as labour and capital...’, bereft of cultural resources (Thompson & McHugh 1990). It is no surprise that the two Chinese students contributed this reference by virtue of their ethnicity.¹³ Similar use of the Chinese proverbs is found in Tong’s assignment on ‘organizational reframing’ which begins with a Chinese proverb:

‘The frog in the well is a Chinese saying to describe the people who have little knowledge about the world but they think that they are the cleverest in the world and know everything. The well prevents the frog from seeing the sky outside the hole of the well and it has no idea of its own position in the world. The organization frame is like the well; the people in organization are like the frogs living in the well...’ (p. 1).

Tong’s assessor appreciates the use of the proverb since an attempt has been made to integrate this hereditary text into the assignment.

The report also contains some instances of unacknowledged textual borrowings that demonstrate another dimension to interdiscursivity. It is also significant to note that in these instances, classification or expansion of interdiscursive markers is kept to the minimum by the writers. Their reference to the concept of ‘social loafing’ is a classic example where interdiscursivity is manifest through unacknowledged textual borrowings. The brevity with which the writers treat these borrowings in their analysis seems to unmask their propensity for plagiarism. Social loafing may be defined as **‘the tendency that people have to withhold physical or intellectual effort when they are**

performing in a group task' (Johns 1996:254), and this concept merits more elaboration in the report. However, the group writers have devoted only one sentence in their report (p 5).

It is also worth noticing the total absence of analyses or attempts at analysis in the section on psychological dimensions of teamwork (p 5). Instead, the group writers depend solely on intertextual resources and present them in paraphrased form:

The two psychological mechanisms that are particularly helpful in trying to understand the psychology of teamwork are social identification and social representations (Hayes 1997 p. 15).

Social identification is the human tendency to see the world in terms of 'them' and 'us' (Hayes 1997 p. 15).

Social representations are the shared beliefs or assumptions that we adopt from others...(Hayes 1997 p. 19)
(Hayes 1997 is not mentioned in their reference list)

One of the reasons for this difficulty might be their insufficient exposure to the realms of knowledge associated with industrial psychology, a relatively new branch that deals with the psychology of human behaviour at work. None of the students, as revealed in their student profiles, had any disciplinary background relating to psychology. Viewed from a microdisciplinary perspective, it is worth pointing out here that none of them had prior knowledge of introductory disciplinary texts on psychology such as *Basic Psychology for the Work Life* (Parham, 1983). Without this orientation, it is hard to believe that students can understand advanced disciplinary texts such as *Group Dynamics* (Forsyth, 1999) prescribed for the course.

Interdisciplinarity in this instance is a stumbling block that seems to debilitate the students' predilection for interpreting, explicating, or contesting the claims found in intertextual resources (This is very much identical with the way the writers manipulated the section on 'social loafing', a theory firmly anchored in sociology). The assessor, as revealed from his notes, would like to know the sources (eg. **any references?**), and

also why social loafing is important in the context of the assignment. Hence they fail to satisfy the third learning outcome, outlined in the course profile:

‘critically evaluate the major theories and models that have been developed to explain individual, group and inter-group behaviour in work organizations.’

Another instance of unsolicited textual indebtedness is manifest in the use of reporting verbs where the source remains concealed:

‘...this approach (universalistic) emphasizes the fundamental commonalities or similarities in inter-cultural communication and argues that even in culturally diverse settings significant convergence occurs’ (p 12).

There are other instances of the use of terminology where intertextual resources are poorly utilized. Consider for instance the citations in various places (p 4-5) to define the terms ‘group’ and ‘teams’. Quoting from Devine et al (1998), the writers repeat themselves. The dilemma here seems to have resulted from the students’ familiarity with pedagogic discourses that prescribe formulae for report writing. This may be viewed as another dimension to interdiscursivity. For instance, under the heading ‘Nature of Groups and Teams’ (p 4), the writers define the terms ‘group/teams’ since they seem to believe, following the discourses surrounding generic integrity, that an introduction always warrants definitions. And they define the terms for the second time under the heading ‘Nature of Teams’ (p 5) quoting the same intertextual resources. This is a difficulty in which any student disciplined in prescriptive and emblematically rich writing strategies may easily be trapped. What we witness here is an instance where intertextuality and interdiscursivity are at work simultaneously.

One might also notice in this report several instances of elevated style (eg. the use of stilted and dense language with a view to approximating the discourse of an alien discipline), which I referred to in analyzing Hong’s assignment. While discussing the nature of groups and teams, the writers borrow heavily from unfamiliar disciplinary

texts and use such material as if their own ideas just to create a rhetorical as well as disciplinary façade.

Because of the diversity in the demographic and psychological characteristics, it is important to have interpersonal compatibilities, membership heterogeneity and status congruence (P. 4).

None of the group members could remember the source of this, but they all agreed that it was not paraphraseable and that they used it by virtue of its succinct analysis of group dynamics:

R: Joseph, you've used phrases such as interpersonal incompatibilities, membership heterogeneity... without any explanations. Why?

J: Ya, we all had problems. First, it's hard to paraphrase, and also didn't have time to spend on such explanations. We all work part-time and I reckon it's also a problem, of sharing ideas and working together.

R: Any other problems?

J: Well, psychology is totally new to all of us. We need some form of tutoring before doing assignments like this...

Joseph's remark that they '**need some form of tutoring**' should merit our attention. How could students approximate and utilize new knowledges without, as Joseph remarks, 'some form of tutoring'? Here, again, we notice the need for interdisciplinary discourse communities to cope with this pedagogic issue.

A larger part of the intertextual/interdiscursive manifestations in this report occur in terms of paraphrased versions of the primary and secondary sources, unacknowledged textual borrowings, direct quotations, or quotations with insufficient information (eg. missing page numbers etc), use of terminology, and of personal stances. It is also evident that in most instances interdisciplinarity has resulted in the appropriation of intertextual and interdiscursive resources, often creating difficulties for student writers to analyze, interpret, or contest the issues concerned. In the ensuing part of my textual analysis, it becomes abundantly clear that when student writers collaborate with each

other in the current soft technoculture, intertextual resources are subject to manipulation as has never been before, often much to the chagrin of the disciplinary community.

Vesna is another student who attempted a similar assignment where psychology and business concepts had to be yoked together. Having completed her tertiary studies in economics (a-four year degree), she came to Australia from Serbia as a refugee.

Vesna completed a -2000 word report on **‘The psychological aspects of consumer behaviour and product analysis in business organizations’** as part of her first-year MBA. It is also significant to note here that most students enrolled in interdisciplinary courses rely heavily on secondary sources than on primary sources. My interview with Vesna was convincing enough to conclude that it is in fact the incomprehensible conceptual rigidity of most primary texts, and also the time constraints that preclude most students from perusing the primary sources:

R. You have talked about some of Freud’s concepts without actually reading him. Any reasons for that?

V. It is important. I think. His books are difficult to understand. Jargon is new to us and, and I tried once reading

R. Which book?

V. I don’t remember exactly. I think it is important. Sometimes time is the problem and we need to study books separately, not always possible.

R. So, you think it’s easy to use other books on Freud, instead.

V. I think so. We can save time and they are not difficult...

While quoting from ‘Lawson et al. 1996’, a secondary source, Vesna in her individual assignment on consumer behaviour and product analysis refers to the Freudian interpretation of human behaviour:

‘Freud, the father of psychoanalytic theory proposed that every individual’s personality is the product of a struggle among three internal forces: the id, the ego and the superego’ (p.2).

She has not made any attempt to relate these concepts to consumer behaviour and product analysis. In other words such quotations project an ostensible disciplinary presence without any signs of disciplinary integration. So students' predilection for secondary texts could be viewed as a convenient strategy for approximating interdisciplinary knowledge domains alien to them. Vesna at least follows academic conventions and cites the secondary source. However, Vesna was awarded 21/50, and the assessor noted, '**doesn't relate to the topic well,**' '**poor referencing.**'

Ralph, another respondent, also completed the same assignment which Vesna had done. He was a teacher of mathematics, and had completed a teacher training course in Somalia. He too came to Australia as a refugee.

While doing the same assignment Ralph devotes one paragraph to personality types:

'Another influence is the personality of the consumers that influenced the consumers' behaviour during their purchases. In this context, the consumers have *neuroticism* personality which influences the consumers to purchase fresh, quality, healthy foods, followed by *innovative* personality which influences the consumers to purchase the new products, and then, *ethnocentrism* which influences the consumers to purchase only Australian made products' (p. 8. italics added).

Unlike Vesna, Ralph has attempted to relate personality types to purchasing habits; Ralph however is bold enough to use terms such as 'neuroticism' and 'ethnocentrism' without any citations. Ralph was unable to recall the secondary sources he gleaned such terms from. In fact his **10-page** report had only **one citation**:

R: Ralph, citations are a problem in your report.

Ralph: Sorry.

R: I mean you don't seem to write down the references

Ralph: I write them.

R: yes, but only once. Why?

Ralph: I don't like this report. It's difficult and the new words are very difficult. We cannot concentrate.

R: So, you didn't want to put the references.

Ralph: Not really. It's difficult. I take the words, I don't understand them.

R: Ok. So you missed the references because you didn't understand them.

Ralph: Yes....

There is an element of transgressive intertextuality here. Ralph does not pay attention to citation conventions since, as he says, he does not understand them. His report was awarded 8/50, with the assessor's remarks: '**Irrelevant information**', '**sources of info?**'.

Ralph's remarks, '**I don't like this report. It's difficult and the new words are very difficult. We cannot concentrate.**', need to be taken seriously. These remarks clearly foreshadow Ralph's predicament; they also suggest in a way the predicament of the pedagogy itself. Ralph's transgression here seems to arise from his helpless situation. With an academic background in mathematics, Ralph for the first time in his life is handling a complex assignment task in business studies: '**The psychological aspects of consumer behaviour and product analysis in business organizations.**' As Lillis (2001) points out, as academics we need to be sensitive to the requirements of non-traditional university students. Ralph belongs to the category of non-traditional students in two ways. First, he is a refugee who is trying to start his new life in the academy, and also in the new country; second, he is also trying out a non-traditional disciplinary area as far as his background is concerned.

However, there are some exceptions. Some sophisticated writers yoke interdisciplinarity and intertextuality in dexterous ways. Jennifer from New Zealand is an example. She had completed a diploma in business studies at a Wellington university before arriving in Australia. She attempted the same assignment on consumer behaviour:

'According to Zaichkowsky (1991), the third major change on our Australian buyer behaviour environment force besides senior community members and baby boomers is the immigrant, especially the Asian immigrant. *In my opinion*, due to a low birth rate among

Australian women, immigration is a necessity for continued economic growth. Without immigration, our population would actually be decreasing' (p. 5, italics added).

This is in fact an instance of what I might call authorial interdiscursivity, where interdiscursive resources are 'deattributed' by using the phrase, 'in my opinion'. Jennifer first uses a disciplinary text followed by her stances developed through extra-disciplinarity:

R: ...You have got 45/50. That's a good mark.

J: Yes, I always get good marks.

R: Why?

J: In my diploma I covered similar topics back in New Zealand, and you know mmm this course, pretty easy for me ...

The interview with Jennifer confirmed that prior exposure to interdisciplinary knowledge domains does facilitate students to perform well at postgraduate level. For example, in Jennifer's analysis of consumer behaviour, she handles interdisciplinary texts and intertextuality while developing her personal stances:

'According to Zaichkowsky (1991), the third major change on our Australian buyer behaviour environment force...', *In my opinion*, due to a low birth rate among Australian women, immigration is a necessity for continued economic growth. Without immigration, our population would actually be decreasing' (p. 5, italics added).

Jennifer's case speaks eloquently of the need for preliminary courses in interdisciplines at least at diploma level before students undertake postgraduate students. In a psychology essay, students need to write like psychologists, and without being familiar with the discourse of psychology, it is difficult for them to read and understand psychology textbooks or other related literature (Bazerman & Paradis, 1991; Baynham, 2000). One might argue that the academy is a place where students should pursue scholarship. This is true; however, without proper orientation, a student may find it difficult to display his/her scholarship in an entirely new disciplinary domain, especially

at postgraduate level. That is why in universities in most countries, students are not allowed to undertake medical degrees without a very high standing in the related disciplines in HSC or in any university entrance examination. If a postgraduate business student without any prior orientation in psychology or mathematics is required to complete assignments belonging to these two disciplines as part of his/her course requirements, then, he or she needs (to put it in Joseph's words) 'some form of tutoring' in the new disciplinary areas. This should include not only the knowledge contents in disciplinary textbooks, but also the accompanying assessment tasks and integrative processes.

Psychology is a realm of knowledge once exclusively used by students of psychology and medicine. Now, it has crossed its boundaries to enrich other disciplinary domains whose infrastructures are not identical with that of psychology or medicine. Students of psychology and medicine, for example, have provision for in their curricula ample time to spend on this discipline. Moreover, such students are taught by teachers of psychology, mostly with doctorates and publications to their credit. Business students are often deprived of such privileges. They study a course within twelve weeks, and business faculties hardly hire psychologists. I took up this issue with a Sub-Dean of a Faculty of Business at a Sydney university:

R: I noticed that some of your students experienced problems in their writings. I mean the integration of psychology in business studies assignments. It seems they don't have a solid background or experience in such discourses.

SD: Well, it is a serious problem. I personally don't like the term integration, and in fact psychological aspects are part of business studies. You find some excellent textbooks to show these connections. I mean business studies and psychology.

R. Does it mean that you don't have expert lecturers in psychology in your Faculty?

SD. Well we wish we had. We can't afford to have professors or lecturers for each and every course. I don't think it's practicable in the current circumstances. Students need to learn a lot from textbooks in what you call interdisciplinary courses...

R: Any solution to this problem? I mean there are a relatively large number of poor achievers. I mean among the MBA students coping with interdisciplinarity.

SD: I don't think it's a problem of interdisciplinarity. It's a learning problem. Isn't it? We have course profiles and they give sufficient guidance to students. It boils down to a learning problem.

I think this interview is significant for several reasons. The sub dean is reluctant to recognize the integrative behaviour of disciplines, but later he refers to the 'connections' between the two disciplines: business studies and psychology. Also in a sense students become untutored learners when a Faculty or Department lacks in expert human resources. And he points out that students have to resort to course profiles and textbooks to acquaint themselves with such knowledges. This is certainly a superficially valid point with andragogic, not pedagogic, orientations; however when knowledge domains are totally alien, students as absolute beginners are hardly equipped to approximate such domains of knowledges from textbooks alone. As the Dean states it is a learning problem, but for most students I interviewed (eg. Joseph) it is a teaching (pedagogic) problem. His implicit reluctance to recognize the significance of interdisciplinarity is another issue. I might mention here that even the market research component of business studies is interdisciplinary, let alone psychology. As Abbott points out, 'Market research began within sociology as Lazarsfeld and others used their new variable methods to predict consumption behaviour' (2001: 21).

It is worth highlighting four crucial aspects that emerged from the student texts I analyzed in these chapters. The first aspect is related to the *epistemology* of interdisciplinarity; that is how interdisciplinary knowledge is consumed, analyzed, constructed, and synthesized. Both pedagogic and andragogic values are fused here. Understanding of and exposure to texts that provide basic knowledge of a particular interdisciplinary knowledge domain should be a prerequisite in courses where new knowledges are introduced using advanced disciplinary texts. Epistemology operates at two prominent levels: first students' ability to consume new interdisciplinary knowledges; second, their ability to produce texts to meet pedagogic expectations. These two aspects are interrelated, and if they cannot do the first, that is to read and understand new knowledges, the second becomes invariably hard, if not impossible.

This is what happened to most of my research participants. Without sufficient prior knowledge of or experience in respective interdisciplinary knowledge domains, Suong was required to write like a software engineer, the group members were trying to write like psychologists, and Karu like a cultural theorist.

My research participants with the exception of Jennifer were not able to develop a sustained argument using intertextual/interdiscursive resources in interdisciplinary contexts. For example, Suong finds it difficult to be a *bricoleur* (a person who can perform activities based on something he/she learnt or experienced before) since her intimacy with information technology is very limited (Levi-Strauss, 1966). Her report contained only 950 words whereas the required length of the assignment was 2000 words. Ralph wrote only five pages for a 25-page assignment.

It may also be useful to consider the issue of plagiarism in the context of epistemology of interdisciplinarity. Most of my research participants used borrowed materials without proper citation or acknowledgement. This inability to mask their indebtedness can also be taken as a sign of their limited acquaintance with interdisciplinary knowledge. Suong for instance uses sources from the Internet without any form of acknowledgement, eg. (www.trainingtools.com p. 1). This is clearly an epistemological issue, and it is easy to get to the heart of the problem using micro-disciplinary analysis.

Another significant aspect associated with the epistemology of interdisciplinarity is students' perception of what disciplinary knowledge should constitute. For example, Ralph, who was a successful student in a TAFE college, thought that business studies deals only with business related issues. He in fact produced an assignment which he did for TAFE at the interview:

‘Write a 1000-word report on the following:

- e) select a business organization in your suburb.
- f) identify various departments within the organization.
- g) describe the functions of any two departments.
- h) prepare an organizational chart’

This relatively homogeneous content of the assignment is in stark contrast with the heterogeneous nature of knowledge manifest in assessment tasks Ralph was required to do in the academy.

The second is the complexity of *interdisciplinary assessment tasks/topics* for which most students do not have proper enculturation. When dealing with extended and hypothetical assessment tasks, students experienced difficulties in integrating interdisciplinary knowledge (eg. Narendra's assessment task runs into 700 words). Suong, Narendra, and Ralph in particular were affected by such lexically dense assessment tasks. Some students, Leon in particular, found the prescribed length of assignments daunting. Leon compared this with the assignments he did when he was studying overseas: **'I write [wrote] about the Internet, about 500 words. 2000 words [is] too much for me'**. There is certainly a need for disciplining assessment tasks so that students may not lose their morale, interest, and more importantly marks in a new discipline.

The third is the *power structures* of the academy within which most students teach themselves. Hong, Suong, and the group members on the psychology essay did not have basic prior knowledge to execute their assignments. Referring to Karu's assignment, the assessor points out that the students have to 'highlight the connection between cultural studies and organizational behaviour... along with their own impressions of the company. That's why it's difficult...' Based on the learning process as a journey from the known to the unknown, it is fair to conclude that my research participants were relatively helpless learners struggling to cope with interdisciplinarity. Suong for example referring to LSU assistance epitomized this situation: **'They help to fix grammar, not the question. They say they don't know...I can't organize'**. Tong's assertion that **'nobody to help us'** also demonstrates students' helplessness in coping with interdisciplinarity. This is certainly a pedagogic issue where disciplinary communities need to find alternatives (see Chapter 10).

The fourth is related to the students' lack of *enthusiasm*. This is certainly connected to their consumption of new knowledge which is a learner-centred issue. But more importantly, lack of interest emanates from their attempts at integrating diverse disciplinary strands in their assignments. Another issue related to this is students'

attitude to new knowledge domains of which they have little understanding. Consider for instance Hong's terse utterances: **'[I] don't know how to use them... They are hard... I can't put in my words... I can do it if I know the subject...'** These negative remarks seem to foreshadow the demoralizing effect of interdisciplinarity on students who are yet to be enculturated into new knowledges at postgraduate level. These negative attitudes also demonstrate the extent of students' interest or enthusiasm. Obviously this kind of disillusionment also contributes to students' poor performance in their writing. In order to develop interest among students in new interdisciplinary knowledge, they need to have some basic knowledge of such knowledge at least at diploma level. It is difficult to motivate students to undertake knowledge domains that are totally alien to them, especially at postgraduate level. As Foucault points out, 'The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of the 'ideological' representation of reality; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called 'discipline' (1995: 194).

As my research has demonstrated, most of my research participants were not able to cope with interdisciplinarity in their writings to meet pedagogic expectations. It is not being suggested here that for this situation students are to blame or academics are to blame. However, it is hightime that scholars and practitioners embarked on productive discourse surrounding interdisciplinarity in particular reference to student writing. In the ensuing chapter, I have made some propositions that might foster such discourse. In these disciplinary environments, the need of a theory of critical interdisciplinarity is strongly felt.

CHAPTER TEN

IMPLICATIONS FOR WRITING PEDAGOGY

10.1 Towards a Theory of Critical interdisciplinarity

In our contemporary world, knowledge domains are being constantly defined and redefined by themselves, adding wide dimensions to discursive practices (Kress, 1993: 2-4). Not surprisingly, in these environments we are inundated with generalizations, eg. ‘disciplines such as geography, economics, and business studies are more prone to curricular changes in interdisciplinary contexts than physics and mathematics’ (Becher, 1994: 59). Critical interdisciplinarity is a construct devoted to critically investigating important issues surrounding interdisciplinarity in academic writing.

It seems to me that critical investigations often entail a strong element of departure or distancing from a prevailing status quo of practices, concepts, and assumptions related to a given context. So what then is this status quo of interdisciplinarity? And to what extent could critical interdisciplinarity enrich our understanding of the subtleties and nuances of disciplinary knowledge we might otherwise not have taken cognizance of? Is critical interdisciplinarity a mere ontological stance bereft of any practical orientation? Or isn’t it, one might ask, representative of just another superseded reality, another type of disciplinarity that student writers have to contend with? These are some of the questions that a skeptic might raise.

Most discourses on interdisciplinarity seem to promote a one-directional approach to interdisciplinary knowledges. That is the major focus of recent work on interdisciplinarity and other related issues has predominantly been to examine the extent to which interdisciplinarity has infiltrated into the academy through course structuring, and its relevance to interdisciplinary research (eg. Epton et al. 1983; Newell, 1986; Becher, 1989, 1992, 1994; Klein, 1996; Moran, 2002). Some have however examined several curricular issues such as who is going to teach what and how in relation to interdisciplinary programs (eg. Chua et al. 1994; Fleishman, 1994; Cash, 2000). In doing so, as I have mentioned in Chapter 3, they have in large part deemphasized or ignored some crucial dimensions of interdisciplinarity. In particular, the impact of interdisciplinarity on student writing has rarely been explored, and such observations, if any, are often confined to mere tangential treatment (eg. Baynham, 2000; Chandrasoma

et al. 2004). Another pivotal aspect that has slipped from scholarly attention is the nexus between interdisciplinarity and assessment tasks. These epistemological and pedagogical issues are in fact at the core of the theory of critical interdisciplinarity that I am advancing here.

As a paradigm, critical interdisciplinarity does not merely reside in the content or context specificity of interdisciplinary elements, nor does it dichotomize disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity into convenient compartments. Its theoretical strengths stem from three dimensions: constructing texts within interdisciplinary contexts, pedagogical applications, and the curricular relevance and the accompanying implications for integrating interdisciplinary elements into a mainstream discipline. To put it in a nutshell, critical interdisciplinarity problematizes the epistemology of interdisciplinarity.

If the vagaries of socioeconomic structures and their accompanying imperatives lure students as well as the academy into interdisciplinary study programs, then it is ironical that most writing tasks of these programs repel students from successfully completing them. The implication here is that there exist serious deficiencies not only in mere theorizing interdisciplinarity but also in explicating its practical applications in student writing. Critical interdisciplinarity will explore how interdisciplinary elements are comprehended, synthesized and deployed in student texts in a given academic culture in the midst of labyrinthine intertextual relations that span disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and extra-disciplinarity.

The corpus of student writings I have analyzed here provides overwhelming evidence of the inextricable difficulties associated with interdisciplinarity both from pedagogical and learning perspectives. It seems to me that much of the writing pedagogy within transdisciplinary settings treats symptoms without delving into causes through appropriate diagnostic procedures. For example, I have come across some students' draft assignments edited for grammar and expression by members of transdisciplinary institutions such as academic skills units; some drafts are ridden with comments such as 'more research needed', 'insufficient information', 'need more work'. While these remedial measures are convenient strategies, they are at the same time inadequate.

So how could these remedial measures be developed? I might emphasize here that any remedial measures pertaining to interdisciplinary programs should have a heavy focus on epistemology related issues.

The investigation of how texts are discursively constructed is a salient feature of critical interdisciplinarity. It is through these inquiries that one might discover how students are implicated not only by the three dimensional epistemological framework (disciplinary, interdisciplinary, extra-disciplinary) but also by the power structures (both academic and non-academic) attached to them. Much of the writing pedagogy seems to be less inclined to direct their attention to the discursive construction of student texts where disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and extra-disciplinarity are indiscriminately intermingled. As I had discussed in Chapter 2, this narrow focus has largely been due to the dominant ideologies that often eclipse epistemology related issues of the writing pedagogy. My argument here is that it is not just enough to establish ontological positions surrounding these knowledge domains; in other words it is convenient to theorize the nature of these three constructs in isolation; however their appropriation in student texts merits serious pedagogical scrutiny in terms of remedial action.

It seems to me that the kind of moral persuasion and responsibility that was so vigorously pursued by a large segment of the academic community right from the Aristotelian tutoring to the late 1960s made the university indisputably the highest seat of *teaching*. In the 1970s, the academy became the highest seat of *learning*. This shift from teacher-centredness to student-centredness has in fact brought about several changes to the pedagogy. A significant portion of most courses in the academy today is not taught; instead, students need to teach themselves. This situation becomes more critical in interdisciplinary programs where students often do not have a grip on the epistemologies of the interdisciplines concerned even at basic levels. On the other hand, the literature made available to students within the academy appears to be inadequate to cope with interdisciplinarity. For example, not a single reference to interdisciplinary issues is found in a 'Guide to Writing Assignments' (UTS, Faculty of Business, 1990) meant for business studies students.

In most interdisciplinary courses, students are expected to perform at postgraduate level when their knowledge of a given interdiscipline is at near beginner or absolute beginner

level. As my analyses of student writings have exemplified, the integration of e-commerce and business law into business studies has resulted in most instances in rampant plagiarism, and tacit interdisciplinarity. Furthermore, the resource materials for informatics, culture and communication (a postgraduate elective for the MBA) contain readings from disciplinary texts that are incomprehensible for students who have no conceptual foundation either in cultural theory or in communication theory at basic level. Most students are absolute beginners in these courses. A productive pedagogy in this context should seriously explore the avenues for making interdisciplinary knowledge accessible to students at a level they can cope with. In situations like this, students may be immensely benefited if they are introduced to preparatory courses; this is where interfaculty/department resources could be utilized. Although preparatory courses are a useful means of denovicing students, there could certainly be economic constraints on the part of students as well as the academy, and such constraints could even become critical when considering the phenomenal growth of international students who usually pay fees for the courses they have selected.

Convenient contexts in academic discourses, often determined by their situational identities and veracities, need to be a stepping stone for analyzing discourses. In fact, such contexts should extend their boundaries to ensure that there is a space for integrating interdisciplinary knowledge domains. In these environments, ESP programs can present themselves as part of a solid foundation studies program for MBA students. This needs some elaboration here. As it is now, most ESP programs focus on situational or contextual English; that is be it language or content, it is the situation and the context that matter most. However, most assessment tasks, as this research has highlighted, are characterized by disciplinary integration process. So, the integration process is as important as contents or linguistic competencies pertaining to a particular course of study. ESP for teaching law, psychology, or information technology as discretely separate disciplines is not enough. Students need to be taught how such disciplines/interdisciplines interact in assessment tasks.

Critical interdisciplinarity does not consider linguistic competencies as the sole criterion for effective writing. In fact, most ESP courses have always a heavy bias towards the use of terminology. While this is useful, there are situations within interdisciplinary contexts where linguistic competencies alone cannot lead a student to success in

academic writing. For example, a business student struggling to do an assignment which requires complex manipulations of the new technologies of communication would really have to contend with the knowledge capital, eg. how to do a task successfully following a series of stages or processes using new technologies of communication. Here even if the student is familiar with the related terminology, he/she may not be able to do the assignment without a proper knowledge of how to perform a task following a series of stages. In such situations, assistance of a tutor is necessary, if not mandatory, for a novice student writer.

Another significant aspect closely related to ESP programs is different text types or genres anchored in a variety of contexts. Genres provide students with culturally and functionally appropriate exposure to text types: essays, reports, case studies. Within interdisciplinary contexts, genres may assume different forms that can even blur their generic integrity. As far as genres are concerned, it is the predictability factor that seems to facilitate students when dealing with academic writing. By ‘predictability factor’, I refer to students’ acquaintance with a particular text type on the ground that they had prior exposure to similar text types in their writing. My research has demonstrated that students who were lacking in this predictability factor produced culturally and functionally ineffective assessment tasks.

Critical interdisciplinarity stresses that the notion of discourse communities needs to be conceptualized beyond its limited semantic connotations. It should always be viewed as heterogeneous diverse communities as far as academic interdisciplinarity is concerned. The epistemology of knowledge (interdisciplinary/extra-disciplinary) should necessarily focus on rampant intertextuality and interdiscursivity in disciplines/interdisciplines, and also invariably in student texts. This is where interdisciplinary discourse communities can talk to each other and to their students as well in more productive ways. For example such communities can illustrate disciplinary/interdisciplinary integration (eg. how heterogeneous knowledge domains can be managed in a writing task), intertextual and interdiscursive dimensions, and pedagogic expectations, and provide guidance to students in well organized seminars/workshops where active participation of students should be encouraged. Another significant aspect of these interactive academic encounters is that writers get opportunities to have an idea of how to ‘build bridges between their point of view and the readers’ (Bartholomae, 1985: 139).

The bias towards linguistic considerations (English language) in ESP programs need to be viewed cautiously these days. Instead, I propose KSP (Knowledge for Specific Purposes) programs, since it is the epistemology of knowledge (interdisciplinary and extra-disciplinarity in particular) that seems to baffle the student writer at postgraduate level. KSP is a new concept and its primary concern is interdisciplinary knowledge and extra-disciplinarity that form part and parcel of what is commonly known as disciplinary knowledge. Such KSP programs can have significant implications for curriculum as well as pedagogy. And more importantly they can enhance student performance in advanced academic writing. In these atmospheres, KSP programs can focus on two areas: heterogeneous knowledge contents, and generically diverse assessment tasks. Heterogeneous knowledge contents are not limited to disciplinary texts; they are also derived from extra-disciplinarity.

KSP programs merit serious attention of the academics who are interested in advanced student writing (eg. at postgraduate level). I have raised this problem in Chapter 4 where I discuss the contemporary MBA and the disciplinary dynamics. I also quoted from Gilbert (1992) who raised a very significant question relating to pedagogic practices in business studies while referring to the teaching of ethics: If business lecturers cannot teach ethics, asks Gilbert, ‘then who is going to teach ethics?’ To arrest this epistemology, and also pedagogic, problem, the best solution seem to be the introduction of KSP programs where academics from diverse disciplines can get together and explicate conflictual knowledge domains, and teach them to students. KSP programs can also be a platform where academics can discuss diverse assessment tasks and their accompanying genres. Most of my research participants were unable to make an informative text into a pedagogically appropriate communicative one within interdisciplinary programs. KSP programs have another advantage over ESP programs; they can have universal application, not just confined to a geographical area where the medium of instruction is English. In fact there are many universities in many parts of the world where English is not the medium of instruction. Another significant knowledge domain that can inform KSP programs is extra-disciplinarity. Non-academic practices (eg. routine form filling by an inventory clerk) can have significant impact on student writing. Activity theorists foregrounds such activities as crucial for any writing

activity since they form useful contexts for academic literacies and discourses (Russell & Bazerman, 1997; Prior, 1998).

Critical interdisciplinarity also foregrounds extra-disciplinarity as a phenomenon that should specifically be taken into consideration when assessing student texts. When new knowledge domains appear to be alien, student writers often rely on related information elicited or gleaned from extra-disciplinary texts. Such texts often remain unacknowledged since they have become part of students' extra-disciplinary consciousness. Very rarely do such students make a determined effort to decipher disciplinary texts for analytical purposes when a particular knowledge domain proves to be incomprehensible. The dominant ideology in the academy that prescribes disciplinary texts as mandatory for executing assignments needs to be revisited and problematized at a time when discourses have become more accessible to students as has never been before. For example, there is no harm in allowing students to tap the resources of extra-disciplinary texts if such texts contain sufficient knowledge capital required for a particular assignment. Students' creative abilities could be in jeopardy if institutional power structures stand in their way with prescriptive intertextual chains of guidelines that often erect rigid boundaries of knowledge categories.

Extra-disciplinarity is also recognized as interdisciplinarity in the context of critical interdisciplinarity. Extra-disciplinarity is not a mere secondary source. It generates knowledge production, and it is a breeding ground for intertextuality. Since students make extensive use of extra-disciplinary texts in their writings, it is fair to consider extra-disciplinarity as an interdisciplinary phenomenon that supplements or modifies disciplinary knowledge. Extra-disciplinarity should not be recognized as a mere 'alternative epistemology' (Abbott, 2001: 4). I propose it should occupy a disciplinary status on a par with established disciplines in the academy. Another important aspect we need to consider is that allusions to most extra-disciplinary texts are interdiscursively realized and that the precise sources of such texts are often nebulous. Critical interdisciplinarity acknowledges that such extra-disciplinary contents of knowledge channeled through interdiscursivity, and authorial interdiscursivity in particular, should not be taken as manifestation of plagiarism.

Critical interdisciplinarity insists that in textual construction and consumption, the consideration of the role of intertextual relations as mere interactive textual strategies is not adequate. Instead, it stresses the importance of discovering ulterior discursiveness or discursive realities beyond the superficial interplay of texts. This certainly necessitates the decontextualization of the *textual situatedness* of texts in conventional (and convenient) contexts. In other words students should be made aware not only of intertextual links that map out diverse knowledge strands but also of how such knowledges are defined and redefined by prevailing politico-institutional power structures.

Plagiarism, which resists any finite definitions, is another issue that has been problematized within critical interdisciplinarity. If student plagiarism is defined as manifestations of textual borrowings without appropriate acknowledgements, then such instances need to be examined on an individual basis. The reason for this is that the continuum of cheating and non-cheating is a flimsy one where student intentionality, common knowledge, deficiencies in a given knowledge capital, linguistic incompetencies, intertextuality, interdisciplinarity, social habits, and cultural and ideological orientations have to be taken cognizance of (cf. Pennycook, 1996; Angélie-Carter, 2000; Evans & Youmans, 2000; Hyland, 2001; Chandrasoma et. al. 2004).

As revealed in Darrell's comments, students' success stories should not be construed as puerile for they signify what plagiarism really means to most students. Couched in abstract phraseology (eg. academic crime, authorial presence, intellectual dishonesty, intellectual property), much of the literature on plagiarism available to students has a heavy focus on citation and referencing conventions. However, very little, if at all, in such literature relates to how and why the notion of intellectual property is important for students, not simply in citation and referencing, but in their real writing strategies. I am by no means underestimating the teaching of citation and referencing conventions; we need to know to what extent such mechanical exercises could convince students of the significance of the notion of intellectual property in appropriating intertextual resources in their writings. Critical interdisciplinarity proposes that an effective way of inculcating the idea of intellectual property would be through epistemological means. That is students need to be trained in comprehending the ways in which strands of knowledges are integrated to produce desired meanings in various writing tasks, and also in perceiving the supposed authorial presence of and claims for such knowledges. This

issue, I believe, assumes enormous significance when students cope with academic interdisciplinarity.

When coping with plagiarism, disciplinary communities often philosophize the importance of intellectual property. This is significant; however it seems to yield very little desired outcome. Within critical interdisciplinarity, it would, I believe, be more useful to utilize the concept of intertextuality in order to elucidate the tangible phenomena of textual ownership. In other words, critical interdisciplinarity encourages the comparative analysis of disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge strands so that students would know the properties of *textual differences* before they learn the *differences in authorship*. It is unfortunate that the latter has always been the prime concern of most scholars and practitioners as evidenced by the proliferation of related literature.

Another significant contribution critical interdisciplinarity can make to the writing pedagogy is in the area of assessing students. Since assessing students is largely an ontological exercise, there is greater likelihood that an assessor could treat intertextuality in student texts superficially and perfunctorily. Intertextual links in Narendra's text, however inappropriate they may be, are an eye opener to the deficiencies of students as well as the pedagogy of the undisciplined. Most students would prefer to add to what they have learnt from a course while executing their assignments for it is often a frustrating experience for them to regurgitate the contents of a course. One of Nelson's research participants voices these frustrations in unequivocal terms: '...the assignment was a waste of time because it basically called for rewriting what we had been given [in lectures and assigned readings]' (1990: 363).

As I have discussed in Chapter 7, the five types of assessment tasks- closed, extended, hypothetical (or scenariorised), technocentric, and integrative- play two different roles: the predominantly linguistic framing of questions/statements/instructions, and the undisciplined projection of disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledges. Since hypothetical assessment tasks are prohibitively longer than the other types, it is often difficult for students to have a sense of task, let alone a sense of discipline. Most such tasks are couched in long sentences, and students often simplify them several times. Novice student writers with limited language skills, and from different academic

cultures, experience serious difficulties in comprehending such tasks. For example, the case study Narendra was attempting to cope with would even be hard for a law student conversant with the discourses of law. How could a student, who had never had even a nodding acquaintance with the discourse of law, also achieve competencies and proficiencies in that discipline commensurate with a student of law? These difficulties could be significantly overcome if questions are made in plain English, and lengthy scenarios kept to the minimum.

Second issue is the undisciplined nature of the projected knowledges within assessment tasks. As explicated in Chapters 8 and 9, some assessment tasks can have strong orientation in more than four or five disciplines/interdisciplines. In such circumstances, disciplinary knowledge is the pivotal issue; study guides, and even prescribed disciplinary texts, often fail to provide students with adequate knowledge capital to execute a given task. This issue becomes very crucial when students are absolute beginners in a given course of study. This situation could be alleviated by providing students with sufficient resources to cope with ‘undisciplined’ assessment tasks. As I had mentioned earlier, the traditional role of education from the Aristotelian tutoring to the modernist rigid disciplinarity was the teacher-centredness; the postmodernist view of tertiary education by contrast promoted the value of student-centredness. In other words, there is more space today in the curricula for students to work on, and less space for teachers to teach in. In such circumstances, interdisciplinary knowledges are a bottleneck for most students whose initial acquaintance with such knowledges is initiated not in the secondary school, not even in other tertiary institutions like TAFE, but in the academy itself. So the boundary crossing between the teacher-centredness to the student-centredness has brought about significant implications for the construction of student texts within interdisciplinarity.

The nexus between interdisciplinary knowledge and students’ cultural orientations, especially in the context of assessment tasks, also plays a major role in critical interdisciplinary perspectives. At a time when disciplinary boundaries are being eroded, cultural and religious values, too, undergo changes. But as Paynter points out, ‘cultural differences stem from geographical isolation. Even if isolation ceases, cultural conservatism continues to maintain different mindsets’ (1994: 53-54). When student writers cope with knowledge domains premised in cultural contexts, it is hard not to

believe that their ideological consciousness would not be conditioned by ‘cultural conservatism’ (ibid: 54). Hence, ideological consciousness is the intransigent nature of social actors’ perceptions; in other words, they persist in what they believe while being resilient to external pressures. In these instances, assessors need to cross the boundaries of assessment mechanisms to consider such cultural orientations.

Another significant aspects that merits our attention is the students' propensity to provide examples for substantiating their claims from their own cultural capital. Tong for example in her analysis of the reframing of Hong Kong and China Gas Co. Ltd, extensively uses this strategy:

‘Another disadvantage of reframing is that some of the frames are unable to be reframed. For example, in China, many people including famous entrepreneurs, professors and communist party members believe in Falungong. Falungong, while it has strengths, it also can constrain the managers or the organization depending on the situation...’

Quite appropriately, the assessor of Tong’s assignment picks this up as a strength. Depending on the culture of a particular academic discourse, critical interdisciplinarity considers such interdiscursivity as constructive writing strategies for reinforcing writer claims. In fact, as evidenced in Narendra’s case, there are situations where the provision of far-fetched examples can often impair a particular assignment. In the discourse of law, in particular, such examples are construed as unnecessary digressions.

Critical interdisciplinarity may open up new vistas to the complex issues I referred to in the foregoing discussion. I believe interdisciplinarity should not be viewed as a vexed problem. Despite its complexity and intricate relationships, it should be taken as an asset, a resourceful knowledge site. It is high time that intellectual debates on interdisciplinarity extended their frontiers beyond the issues of research methodologies and course restructuring; the diverse epistemological dimensions of interdisciplinarity should also be subject to critical scrutiny. In other words, our approaches to interdisciplinarity should be multi-pronged. Our interpretation of knowledges encompassing disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and extra-disciplinarity is a *sine qua non* for producing and consuming new knowledges. This is one of the productive ways

of investigating the nexus between writing and the epistemology of interdisciplinarity, too.

Finally, critical interdisciplinarity problematizes the phenomena of achievability and measurability of knowledges in postgraduate/graduate programs. That is to find out to what extent students can comprehend the new interdisciplinary knowledges before venturing into writing tasks *per se*. Introducing well sequenced course profiles alone does not, as this research has highlighted, guarantee students' success in coping with interdisciplinary knowledges. In other words, if students are unable to comprehend and use such knowledges, well organized assessment criteria may not yield desired results; they may present themselves as mere tools of measurement. Since disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge domains are in flux, and are at times incomprehensible, dynamic, and nebulous, writing pedagogy should develop sensitivity to such volatile conditions, and also to the literacy practices of an ever-increasing heterogeneous student population.

ENDNOTES

1. Thomas Kane's *The Oxford Guide to Student Writing* (1988: 5-317) is representative of this approach which elaborates on the significance of such items as grammar, structure, and diction for aspiring student writers at tertiary level.
2. I am reminded of a comment recently made by the media magnate Rupert Murdoch: 'We do not believe in market shares; we create markets.' (I'm not very sure of the exact wording, but this was the gist of meaning). This is precisely what discourses do; they create contexts.
3. I am indebted for this classification to the suggestions made by Professor Alastair Pennycook.
4. Chomsky challenged these concepts of behaviourism, and reiterated that language learning is an instinctive process (see *Syntactic Structure*, 1957; *Language and Mind*, 1968),
5. It is interesting to note how teachers themselves could develop resistance to the dominant ideology of a pro-western curricula. Enoch provides us with an account of pedagogical resistance in the context of an Indian school (Enoch, J. 2002. Resisting the Script of Indian Education: Zitkala Sa and the Carlisle Indian School. *College English*. 65 (2).
6. Lyon does not like the border or territory metaphor that is commonly associated with interdisciplinarity. Her alternative is the river metaphor with its tributaries and currents, and she argues that the border or territory metaphor is static (1992).
7. Clark observes that in the early 1980s, 'the natural ambiguity of purpose of university education' whether it should be 'knowledge-intensive, knowledge-extensive' had become clearer (1983: 18).
8. This information is based on a discussion (ABC Radio) I listened to two or three years ago.

9. The concept of imagiability, although not relating to intertextuality, was perhaps first introduced by Paivio (1971: pp. 433-478).

10. Jamieson (1980) refers to the establishment of the 'entrepreneurial history' research centre at Harvard in the late 1940s, which paved the way for exploring the 'non-economic factors in economic analysis' (1980: 13), and also for the publication of the journal: *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (ibid). However, I am inclined to view this centre as a site for crucial discursive practices related to cultural issues prior to the formal launching of cultural studies as an interdiscipline at the University of Birmingham.

11. I am using the term 'deindividualize' in the sense that Greenblatt uses it in her analysis of the proverbs used by Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* (1980: 208). The proverbs Barabas uses hardly resemble the ones popular among the Jews, but are typical of the ones used by the rest of the society: 'Proverbs in *The Jew of Malta* are a kind of currency, the compressed ideological wealth of society, the money of the mind' (1980: 207). Barabas in fact loses his identity in the play; he is never a 'unique' individual (ibid 207-208). It seems to me that this is how Marlowe makes Barabas 'dismember' or ostracize himself from the discourses of the Jewish community.

12. I am indebted to Professor Alastair Pennycook for this phrase.

13. In fact, proverbs are an integral part of the Chinese culture; they are so powerful that White uses part of a Chinese proverb as the title of his book on post-Mao economic reform: *Riding the Tiger* (If you're riding a tiger, it's hard to get off-'qi hu nan xia' (See White. G. 1993. *Riding the Tiger*. London: Macmillan). A discussion I had with Professor Pennycook, who has had extensive experience in teaching in China, also confirmed that Chinese students frequently resorted to such hereditary texts in their assignments.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The ensuing terms and phrases frequently appear in this thesis; hence the definition of such lexical items as I have used them here, I believe, would benefit the reader immensely. However, in addition to the ones listed below, one might still encounter a significant number of relatively new terms and phrases in the body of this text. I have explicated such terms in order of their initial appearance.

Academic discipline: an organized body of knowledge with a strong intellectual heritage. It is categorized into relatively homogeneous entities through institutionalized means such as study programs, courses, faculties, departments, academic titles, course profiles, textbooks. It is also distinguishable from other disciplines by its legitimized institutional identity, informational content, discursive practices, applicability, linguistic resources, and evolutionary process.

Applied/Critical/Critical Applied interdiscipline: a newly discovered and introduced (usually following the poststructuralist paradigm) critical dimension of a discipline or an interdiscipline that expands its own domain while enriching the domains of other disciplines or interdisciplines (eg. critical management studies, critical applied linguistics).

Archival site: A traditionally established institution that is susceptible to boundary crossing (eg. the conventional library)

Archival property: the intellectual heritage that constitutes the knowledge domain of a particular discipline. Disciplinary identity is often enshrined within archival property.

Authorial interdiscursivity: instances where interdiscursive resources are ‘self-attributed’ by using phrases such as ‘in my opinion’, ‘it seems to me’ etc.

Coded realities: prima facie realities of a text manifest through traditionally established linguistic and visual codes, themselves vehicles for stabilizing politico-institutional power structures

Dependent interdiscipline: a knowledge domain where mutually constitutive elements belonging to one or more disciplines interact with each other (eg. educational psychology).

Disciplinary texts: Professional books, study guides, lectures etc. associated with a particular discipline or an interdiscipline.

Disciplinary textbooks: Textbooks prescribed for an academic program.

Discursive objective: The employment-oriented purpose/s for which a particular course of study is designed.

Discursive realities: veracities of discourses that surface once the coded realities of a text are decoded, problematized and destabilized. This is usually the outcome of a deconstructive reading of texts (eg. discursive realities within prima facie consensual voices of a text would reveal their strategic value for maintaining socio-political power structures, also see my analysis in Chapter 10.4).

Discursive specificity: Localization of academic discourses, eg. the study of law in an Australian context.

Discursive textuality: This is the discursive construction of student texts (eg. using disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and extra-disciplinary resources). I have identified three levels of discursive textuality based on intertextual frequency: high, plateaued, and low. High discursive textuality is characterized by the heavy dependence on secondary sources, hence such textuality is intertextually dense. The relatively high dependence on primary sources is the hallmark of low discursive textuality where one's own interpretations take precedence over intertextually rich secondary sources. Plateaued discursive textuality lie in the middle of this binarism.

Extra-disciplinary consciousness: the propensity on the part of students (social actors) to conjure up textual resources from extra-disciplinary texts on the strength of their intertextual/interdiscursive intimacy.

Extra-disciplinary texts: all texts, other than disciplinary and interdisciplinary texts, that mediate disciplinary knowledge (eg. media texts, paramedia texts, hereditary texts, anecdotal texts).

Facilitative interdisciplinarity: the beneficial influence of prior disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge on coping with a new interdisciplinary domain.

Hereditary texts: texts that are cherished as traditional wisdom (eg. adages, fables, parables, proverbs). Social actors inherit such texts through an untutored process as part of their cultural capital.

Ideological consciousness: The intransigent nature of social actors who persist in what they believe while being resilient to external pressure.

Independent interdiscipline: an emerging new knowledge domain that is relatively independent of other disciplines or interdisciplines (eg. women's studies). It is the institutional structures (eg. centre for women's studies), and differentiation that make them independent entities.

Institutional agents of power: These are disciplinary communities vested with discretionary powers to determine student performance in assessment tasks (cf. Foucault's 'regime of disciplinary power' 1995: 182).

Interdisciplinarity: a condition where elements belonging to other disciplines are integrated into a particular discipline.

Interdiscipline: a knowledge domain constitutive of elements from two or more disciplines (eg. biometrics), or a relatively new knowledge domain that has potentiality to be a discipline through popular discursive practices (eg. terrorism studies).

For me 'interdiscipline' is a mere generic term, an umbrella under which several subdivisions exist (eg. dependent interdiscipline, independent interdiscipline, critical/applied interdiscipline, multiple-embedded interdiscipline). According to Squire, 'An interdisciplinary course can be defined as one in which two or more disciplines are

taught in conscious relation to one another' (Squire, 1975: 7). While this is superficially true, interdisciplinarity within student writing is a more complex concept. Squire, like many other theorists (eg. Becher, 1994, 1989; Klein, 1996; Moran, 2002) does not take cognizance of the various types of interdisciplines available in the academy.

Interdiscursive relational shift: This is characterized by value judgements that invoke relational connections hinging on temporality. Hence, in textual construction, this necessarily entails the creation of images of transient reality (eg. we can use the word 'sophisticated' in relative terms, but at the same time our value judgement is subject to temporality. Hence, what is considered 'sophisticated' today may be obsolescent next month, and this relational shift is realized interdiscursively.

Interdiscursive semantic shift: This illustrates how the semantic value of a term is realized interdiscursively in diverse disciplinary contexts. For example, the term 'ecology' has traditionally been associated with the knowledge capital within biological sciences. However, a semantic shift occurs interdiscursively, if the same term is used in the context of another discipline (see Chapter 9.2 for further information).

Multiple-embedded interdiscipline. Relatively new courses of study that combine more than two interdisciplines into an integrated whole through institutional means (eg. introducing a single course profile, a single study guide, a single resource material, a single assessment criterion for the course 'informatics, culture and communication').

Objectified reality: physical manifestation or realization of an outcome as against the initial conceptualization required for it to be an outcome.

Paramedia texts: these include texts produced by special interest groups (eg. refugees, human rights activists, environmentalists) in the form of news letters, brochures, pamphlets etc., usually on a non-profit/commercial basis.

Postutilitarianism: By postutilitarianism, I refer to the *realizable* or saleable value of knowledge as an *asset* (cf. Lyotard's exchange values of goods, 1984: 4). Utilitarianism by contrast is directly related to the utility value of knowledge; that is, the notion that

knowledge should always be produced with an eye to its practical value and appropriation.

Referential interdisciplinarity: a condition where interdisciplinarity is not manifest as an institutionalised entity (eg. in a course profile) but as a referential entity (eg. an interdisciplinary element referred to in an assessment task).

Soft technoculture: a globally visible culture characterized by the integrative behaviour of three identifiable phenomena: sophisticated software texts, predominantly electronic-based technology, and new socio-cultural identities ushered in by such technology.

Tacit interdisciplinarity: This occurs when students attempt to utilize their prior disciplinary knowledge corresponding to a seemingly identical knowledge domain in a different local condition (eg. using inadvertently the knowledge of Chinese business law in a context where Australian business law is the theme). I might add that tacit interdisciplinarity could manifest itself in a more vestigial and residual form in student writing.

APPENDIX I

1. Interview Questions (Students)

Questions relating to Prior Learning

1. How would you describe your academic background?
2. What was the language you used for your writing tasks?
3. What kind of writings was involved? Essays, reports?
4. Were there any difficulties in your writings? Please explain?
5. What did you learn about writing tasks?
6. Have you done any work-related writings before? Please explain.
7. How would you describe your writing tasks? eg. simple or complex?

1.2 Questions relating to current course of study

1. What is your current course of study?
2. What kind of writings was involved? Essays, reports ?
3. Could you explain the difficult areas of you writings?
4. Do you go to LSU for help with your writings? If so, why?
5. Are there any subjects new to you in your course? Please explain?
6. Have you experienced any difficulties in reading textbooks? Why?
7. Have you experienced any difficulties in understanding your assessment tasks?
If so, What are they?
8. Are lectures and textbooks enough for your assignments? If not, why?
7. When you really need help with your writing tasks, what do you do?

2. Interview Questions (Assessors)

1. Is interdisciplinarity a problem for students? If so, why?
2. How can we improve the problem areas in student writing?
3. Why do some students not perform well in doing their assignments?
4. Do you think lack of resources is a problem? Why?
5. Other spontaneous questions arising from assessor remarks.

Note: Each interview session is preceded by polite expressions, eg. greetings.

APPENDIX II

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Researcher Name:.....

Contact Details:

Phone:.....

E-mail:.....

Research Topic:.....

Student Name:.....

Contact Details:

Phone:.....

E-mail:.....

Current Course of Study:.....

I give my consent to be a voluntary participant in the above research, and I will cooperate with the researcher within my ability.

Student Signature:.....

Date:.....

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